

M. J. GRANT

AULD LANG SYNE

A Song and its Culture





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9. Take Leave, Brothers: The German Reception of *Auld Lang Syne*

His best poems are no less loved and quoted in England for being written in a southern Scottish dialect. For generations to come, his “Auld Lang Syne” [...] will sound as the song of friendship and joy, and his “Is there for honest poverty”, so well conveyed in German by our own Freiligrath, will sound like a Marseillaise of spiritual freedom and love for humankind.¹

I first heard “Nehmt Abschied Brüder Ungewi[ß]” when I was a small boy and in my imagination it became a German traditional folksong. Then I realised it’s not.²

In the first of two chapters which lay a stronger focus on the reception of *Auld Lang Syne* beyond Britain and North America, Germany will be used as a case study.³ Though Germany was primarily chosen for practical and logistical reasons—I speak German, and lived in Germany during the research for this book—this example brings many of the factors already discussed into further focus. In Chapter 1, it was argued that to understand *Auld Lang Syne* we must regard it as a phenomenon whose constituent elements may at any one time and place demonstrate only a tenuous link to one another. Many of the German versions of the song discussed in this chapter show how, as a song of parting, *Auld Lang Syne* developed a life of its own, at one step removed from the text published in the 1790s, and yet repeatedly referring back to this and its legacy.

9.1 The Art Composer’s Song

Scottish poetry, song and literature had an enormous influence on the Romantic movement in Germany—a subject too immense and too fascinating to be discussed at

1 “Die besten seiner Gedichte, obgleich in einem südschottischen Dialecte, sind darum in England nicht minder beliebt und sprüchwortlich. Wie viele Generationen noch wird sein Auld Lang Syne, “S ist lange her, mein Freund’ klingen wie das Lied der Freundschaft und Freude und sein ‘Ein armer Mann, ein Ehrenmann’, von unserm Freiligrath so schön nachgedichtet, wie eine Marseillaise der geistigen Freiheit und Menschenliebe.” Silbergleit 1869, 8.

2 The musician Bros II, introducing his *Abschied Brüder* (*Happy Little Auld Lang Syne*) on the compilation *Auld Lang Syne* produced by Comfort Stand Recordings (www.comfortstand.com); see Chapter 12, below, for more on this compilation. *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder*, discussed further below, is one of the most well-known German versions of the song.

3 The latter part of the chapter focuses on developments in West Germany.

length here.⁴ Aided in no small part by the cult of Ossian, the ancient Gaelic bard whose texts were supposedly published in an English “translation” by James Macpherson in the later 18th century, Scotland came to be revered as representing one of the most ancient and noble cultures in Europe. The spirit of Ossian, many presumed, lived on in contemporary Scots, who were taken to be of solid, unsentimental stock, with firm and unchanging moral values. The influence of this view was only strengthened by the contributions made by other Scottish writers, particularly Scott, and of course Burns.⁵

The first German translations of Burns come only a year or so after the publication of *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* in 1786; and at an early stage, the works of Burns, and other Scots songs, found their way into the hands of some of the most influential German writers and thinkers.⁶ The philosopher and man of letters Johann Gottfried Herder, who is credited with coining the term *Volkslied* or folksong, owned volumes 1–3 of the *Scots Musical Museum* and also made a translation of *John Anderson My Jo*, possibly without realising it was by Burns. He may have become familiar with Burns through his friendship with the Ossian promoter James MacDonald, who in turn was friendly—over-friendly, gossips said—with Emilie von Berlepsch: she had included a large section on Burns in an account of her travels in Scotland, published 1802–1804.⁷ A greater influence on the reception of Burns in Germany was Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. His interest in Burns was probably due in part to the efforts of another Scottish writer, Thomas Carlyle, who introduced the great German man of letters to his work. Goethe was an enthusiastic supporter of translations of Burns, which however—with the exception of a few isolated translations from the late eighteenth-century onwards—only started appearing consistently after Goethe’s death.⁸ The cultural exchange went both ways: Carlyle translated Goethe and Friedrich Schiller into English; and as we have already seen, George Thomson’s publishing efforts demonstrated a Scots enthusiasm for continental art music, and Austro-German composers in particular.

The arrangements of Scots songs made for Thomson and other publishers by composers of the standing of Joseph Haydn and Ludwig van Beethoven may seem an obvious route for the dissemination of Scots song in continental Europe. Regrettably, the general disregard of these arrangements in academic discussions makes it difficult to establish whether they had any real impact on musical life. A broader analysis of their reception goes far beyond the remit of this study. In the specific case of *Auld Lang Syne*, the impact does not seem to have been significant. Beethoven appears not to have thought particularly highly of his own setting of *Auld Lang Syne*: though he pushed for continental publication of many of his other settings, which appeared as the 25 *Scottish Songs*, op. 108, *Auld Lang Syne* was not among them: it first appeared in a set of

4 On music and song specifically, see, e.g., Fiske 1983; Gelbart 2007.

5 On the impact of Ossian on European composition in the nineteenth century, see, e.g., Fiske 1983, Daverio 1998, Gelbart 2007.

6 Kupper 1979, to whom I am indebted for much of the background for this section.

7 Gillies 1960.

8 Kupper 1979, Chapter 1.

songs drawn from his *Select Collection* that Thomson published in the 1820s, and then in vol. VI of the *Select Collection*—now named *The Melodies of Scotland*—in 1841 (where he claimed, in fact, that this was its first publication).⁹ Thomson commissioned the setting in a letter written on June 22 1818, in which the songs are listed with reference to their previous publication in other volumes of the *Select Collection*. When publishing the airs for a second time, however, Thomson generally set them together with a new set of lyrics, and of the eight songs in this letter, only two were published to the same texts, *Auld Lang Syne* and *Duncan Gray*.¹⁰ Thomson appears to have sent Beethoven French versions of the originally intended texts, and he certainly summarised their content. *Auld Lang Syne* is described as follows: “Un recontre des amis après plusieurs années de separation, se rapelant avec delices le passetemps innocens de leur jeunesse” (Cooper’s translation: “A meeting of friends after several years of separation, recalling with delight the innocent pastimes of their youth.”)¹¹

Neither Beethoven’s setting, nor Haydn’s for William Whyte, nor indeed that by Leopold Koželuch originally published by Thomson, are particularly elaborate. All three composers provide an eight-bar introduction: Koželuch and Beethoven state the tune’s opening in these introductory symphonies, Haydn presents a delicate variation on it. Haydn’s version is the only one of the three for solo voice throughout—Koželuch’s chorus is written for two voices—and while Koželuch and Beethoven both give the tempo marking *Allegretto*, Haydn prefers a statelier *Andante*. Beethoven’s setting, which is in F major, has one melodic variation: at the start of the second line of the chorus, the melody descends via a brief B flat, rather than jumping from C to A. Barry Cooper concludes that he probably misread Thomson’s handwriting; Thomson changed the “wrong” note B flat back into a C and had to change the harmony accordingly; likewise, he changes the first E in the preceding bar’s third voice to a D. Figure 9.1 shows these changes and also flags examples of how Thomson altered the rhythm at some points, too: the simplification of the piano part at the end of this example demonstrates Thomson’s terror of the little black notes, as mentioned in Chapter 4. The Beethoven *Gesamtausgabe* of 1862–1865 included the setting of *Auld Lang Syne* complete with the B flat.¹²

Though the arrangements commissioned by Thomson, Whyte, and others do not seem to have made a great dent on the German musical market, other channels for distributing Burns’s song, at least in text form, proved more successful. From the 1840s, Goethe’s new-found enthusiasm for Burns found echo in a series of German translations. In his study of these, Hans Jürg Kupper has drawn attention to two aspects

9 McCue (ed.) 2021, xciv; Thomson 1841, note above song 300.

10 For example, in the same letter Thomson also asked Beethoven to arrange *Now Spring Had Clad*—in other words, the Burns poem he had originally published to the tune M1. The tune he indicated was not however M1, but a version of “Ye’re welcome Charlie Stuart”, and was in any case published to a completely different text, *Polly Stewart*. See Cooper 1994.

11 Cooper 1994, 79.

12 Beethoven 1862, 29.

Beethoven's original (according to the *Gesamtausgabe* of 1862):

Voices

Piano

Thomson's adaptation as published in 1841:

Voices

Piano

Fig. 9.1 Comparison of Beethoven's setting as published in the *Gesamtausgabe* in 1862 with the version published by Thomson in 1841. Main differences are highlighted with boxes; arrows point to melodic/harmonic differences specifically. Figure created by author (2021).

of this craze: firstly, the non-lyric poems and satires received much less attention from translators than the songs; and secondly, although interest in Burns peaked around the centenary celebrations of 1896, it diminished rapidly thereafter. In a pattern which is echoed in other countries as well, Burns's works inspired interest by sheer dint of being Scottish, but also because of his democratic reputation—this was, after all, the era of European revolution—and because he dared to write in a language which was considered a dialect. The many editions of Burns's works which appeared between the

1840s and the century's close included several which use Low German to approximate to Scots dialect, and also some Swiss-German translations. Most of the translators include *Auld Lang Syne* in their collections, though none of those that I have seen—the vast majority—give it any degree of prominence.

For means of comparison, Appendix 4 contains eight different German translations of *Auld Lang Syne* from the nineteenth century, including one Low German version. All stay close to the content and, generally, structure of Burns's text, but many could not be sung to any of the common tunes for *Auld Lang Syne*. These "songs" were, in any case, intended for readers rather than singers. None of the nineteenth-century editions consulted include music, and only Wilhelm Gerhard's edition gives a list of the tunes, noting that these are "known throughout Scotland and England, and available there both individually and in complete collections". He also suggests, however, that "It is possible, indeed even desirable, that composers could create new compositions in order to make the songs present here suitable (*mundrecht*) for German singers".¹³

This is exactly what Robert Schumann did. Only a few years after Beethoven's arrangement was first published, and at the height of the democratic movement in Germany which included Burns among its heroes, he published a choral setting of Burns's text. Nowadays, Schumann is known primarily for his solo songs with piano, his solo piano music, and his symphonies, but he wrote around seventy pieces for choir which, in terms of later critical reception, have fared almost as badly as Beethoven and Haydn's folksong settings. This is in stark contrast to the popularity of these works at the time: *Der deutsche Rhein* (1840) for solo voice and piano with a part for choir, for example, was Schumann's most frequently published work in his own life-time.¹⁴ Schumann scholars often regard these pieces as marking a general change in the aesthetic direction of Schumann's work, relating to events preceding and following the failed German revolution of 1848.¹⁵

Schumann's *Five Songs by Robert Burns* for mixed choir, op. 55, were written in 1846 for the Leipziger Liederkrantz, an amateur singing association that developed out of another, the Leipziger Liedertafel, which had counted Schumann's good friend Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy among its members. Schumann based his settings on Gerhard's translations, which were among the first to be published; Schumann and Gerhard were also personally acquainted. Aside from *Auld Lang Syne*, which appears as the fourth song in the set, op. 55 sets *Highland Lassie O* (K107), *Address To The Tooth-Ache* (K500), *I'll Ay Ca' In By Yon Town* (K574), and *Highland Laddie* (K578).¹⁶ Like much of Schumann's choral writing, these songs have received little attention in the critical literature on Schumann, partly due to an only recently contested view that they

13 "Es ist möglich, ja wünschenswerth, daß Tonkünstler vorstehende Lieder durch neue Compositionen deutschen Sängern mundrecht machen", Gerhard 1840, 367.

14 Synofzik 2006, 458.

15 See, e.g., Mahler 1983.

16 The corresponding German titles in Gerhard's translation are *Das Hochlandmädchen*, *Zahnweh*, *Mich zieht es nach dem Dörfchen hin*, and *Hochlandbursch*.

are merely “functional” compositions.¹⁷ The delicate, melancholy setting of *Die gute alte Zeit*, however, offers us an interpretation of Burns’s *Auld Lang Syne* at a tangent to the mainstream of the song and its reception, since the music bears no relation to either M1 or M2.

Whether or not Schumann was aware of these other tunes, he was certainly aware of other settings of Burns’s songs which had been published in the preceding years. According to a review attributed to Schumann of H. F. Kufferath’s *Sechs Lieder von Robert Burns* op. 3, published in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* in 1842,

Burns is the favourite poet of today’s young composer. The poetical “ploughman of Dumfries” most probably never presumed that his songs, to which he was mostly inspired by old folk melodies, would almost a hundred years later inspire so many other melodies, including on the other side of the Channel.¹⁸

A month later, in the same periodical, there is a review of another set of compositions on songs by Burns, Henry Hugh Pearson’s *Six Songs by Robert Burns*, op. 7. Here, the reviewer complains that Pearson has been slightly over-enthusiastic in his treatment of the songs: “there are too many notes for the simple words”. He continues:

Burns’s songs, for the most part, disavow from the outset the more expansive type of treatment apparent in composition; although these are the outpourings of a true poetic spirit, they are always straightforward, short and succinct; this is why composers love them so much, this is why his words seem to marry themselves so effortlessly to song, most naturally in that form which comes closest to true folksong.¹⁹

Pearson’s settings, however, he finds too dramatic for this purpose, although some of them do reflect “a certain something, a strong sense of nobility of the sort we are acquainted with from so many of his countrymen [...] Weeping and wailing is not the way of our Englishman; he produces more striking melodies than one normally finds in German songbooks, and this is what we find so worthwhile here”.²⁰ The review of Schumann’s own op. 55 by A. F. Riccius which also appeared in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* focuses on exactly those qualities which Pearson apparently lacked:

17 Synofzik 2006 discusses this issue in more detail.

18 “Burns ist der Lieblingsdichter der jetzigen jungen Componisten. Gewiß hat der poetische ‘Pflüger von Dumfries’ es nie vermuthet, daß seine Lieder, zu denen er meistens durch alte Volks-Melodien angeregt wurde, nach beinahe hundert Jahren so viele andere Weisen erwecken würden, auch jenseits des Canals”. Anon. [Schumann?] 1842, 207.

19 “[...]es sind zu viel Noten zu den einfachen Worten. [...] Die Burns’schen Gedichte lehnen vornherein, zum größten Theile wenigstens, jene breitere Form der Behandlung ab, wie sie in der Composition ersichtlich ist; es sind wohl Ergüsse einer wahrhaften Dichterstimmung, aber immer schlicht, kurz und bündig; darum lieben ihn die Componisten auch so sehr, darum fügen sich seine Worte wie von selbst zum Liede, und am natürlichsten in jene Form, wie sie dem wirklichen Volksliede eigen ist.” Anon. 1842, 33.

20 “[...] ein charakteristisches Etwas, eine kräftige edelmännische Gesinnung, wie wir sie an so vielen seiner Landesleute zu finden gewohnt sind. [...] Schluchzen und Weinen ist die Sache unsers Engländer nicht; er giebt märkigere Melodien [*sic*] als man sie gemeinhin in deutschen Liederheften findet, und dies macht ihn uns werth.” Anon. 1842, 33.

Just as Burns effortlessly pours his thoughts straight into our hearts, just as he keeps a distance from verbal braggartism and lofty analogies and instead moves us with true, unadorned feeling, so the composer here also endeavours to free himself from the chains of all that is superficial and artificial. He gives us simple melodies, as free of ornament as are the words they support. Contrapuntal and harmonic artistry and punctiliousness are nowhere to be found. There is even less trace of the texts being spun out into a repulsive torrent of words: we hear the words as the poet gave them, and so it should be, for no-one has the right to distort the intellectual products of another in a manner that runs counter to their meaning.²¹

More interesting from the point of view of the history of Burns's songs in Germany are the comments the reviewer makes regarding the songs actually set:

When I read the poet's name on the title page, I was afraid I was going to encounter old acquaintances [*alte Bekannte*] among the texts, for though Burns left us with a relatively large number of songs, our German composers have bestowed their attentions on only a few of them. I was delighted to find, then, that I had been wrong [...] When it comes to the suitability of the texts for use by a choir, it took quite a long time before I could warm to all of them. As regards the first, "Das Hochlandmädchen", and the third, "Mich zieht es nach dem Dörfchen hin", I still have my doubts: they are to be regarded as the outpourings of an individual soul, and thus, were we to be true to the poetic content, should only ever be set as solo songs. Nevertheless, both these songs will quickly win everyone's heart: the folk-like style that permeates them make them the most compelling and understandable of the whole collection.²²

Schumann's setting of *Die alte gute Zeit* was written on the evening of 4 February 1846.²³ It has been suggested that the strictly homophonic style and the regular alteration to triple time are Schumann's attempts to "historicize" the music:²⁴ the homophony may, however, also be explained by the fact that these songs were written for a choir

21 "Wie Burns seine Gedanken einfach uns in das Herz gießt, wie er fern von aller Prahleriei in Worten und hochtrabenden Gleichnissen uns mit wahren, ungeschminkten Empfindungen rührt, so sucht auch hier der Componist sich von den Fesseln aller äußeren, künstlichen Mittel zu befreien. Er giebt uns einfache Melodien, eben so schmucklos als die Worte, denen sie zur Unterlage dienen. Von contrapunctischen und harmonischen Kunststückchen und Spitzfindigkeiten findet sich nicht die leiseste Ahnung. Noch weniger sind die Texte zu einem widerlich langen Wortschwallen ausgedehnt: wir hören die Worte wie sie der Dichter gab, und so sollte es immer geschehen, denn es steht Niemand das Recht zu, geistige Produkte Anderer auf sinnwidrige Weise zu entstellen." Riccius 1847, 159.

22 "Als ich auf dem Titel den Namen des Dichters las, fürchtete ich, in den Texten alte Bekannte zu finden, denn ob auch Burns eine ziemlich große Anzahl Lieder hinterlassen, so haben doch unsere deutschen Componisten nur wenigen derselben Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt. Ich sah mich jedoch zu meiner großen Befriedigung in dieser Meinung getäuscht [...] Was die Wahl der Texte bezüglich ihrer Anwendung für den Chor betrifft, so bedurfte es längerer Zeit, ehe ich mich mit allen zu befreunden vermochte. Über das erste: 'Das Hochlandmädchen', und das dritte: 'Mich zieht es nach dem Dörfchen hin', hege ich noch meine bescheidenen Zweifel: sie sind als Seelenerguß eines Einzelnen zu betrachten, und so dürfte ihnen, liegt uns daran, poetisch Wahres zu geben, nur der Einzelgesang zu gestatten sein. Aber dennoch wird diese beiden Lieder Jeder recht bald lieb gewinnen: sie sind durch das ächt [*sic*] Volksthümliche, was sie durchweht, die eindringlichsten und faßlichsten der ganzen Sammlung". Riccius 1847, 159.

23 Schumann 1982, 413.

24 Synofzik 2006, 465.

which included amateurs. Gerhard's translation misses out the second verse (in the order of K240), resulting in a four-verse structure, the first three of which deal with reminiscence, while only the last focuses on the actual reunion of the two friends.²⁵ Schumann's setting reflects this: the first three verses and chorus are set identically, aside from a few rhythmic alterations following the textual stress (the setting is mostly syllabic). Each verse is sung by a quartet of four soloists, with the refrain taken up by the whole chorus. According to the reviewer already cited, it is

an amiable, heart-warming poem: the composition fully does it justice. The melancholy that always accompanies the remembrance of things past, grips us and moves us to the brink of tears: but we pull ourselves together: the old days were good, and so they live on in our charged glasses! This song is difficult to perform, due to the frequent changes of tempo (C to 3/2); at the same time, the performance demands the most precise of nuances.²⁶

Perhaps the most striking aspect of Schumann's rendering of *Auld Lang Syne* is its reflective mood. Though the chorus's reference to a Germanic "cup of kindness" is suitably rambunctious, this only serves to contrast with the tone of the rest, and in particular with the verses, each line of which seems to end with what the Germans would call a moment's "Innehalten", or pause for reflection. In this sense, the interpretations of *Auld Lang Syne* that come closest to Schumann's are those from the later twentieth century that will be discussed in Chapter 12.

9.2 Active and Passive Reception

It is highly unlikely that *Auld Lang Syne* or elements thereof was not known in Germany by the later nineteenth century; tracing the extent of knowledge of the song is, however, very difficult. Gerhard termed it "der so beliebt gewordene Sang" ("that now so well-loved song") but this statement could well have been plucked from his Scottish sources rather than reflecting the degree of popularity of the song in Germany at the time.²⁷ Though a later editor and translator, Wilhelmine Prinzhorn, noted that "many of [Burns's] creations are now as at home among us [*heimisch geworden*] as our own folksongs and will be sung and sung again for as long as the German tongue prevails",²⁸ there is very little evidence of *Auld Lang Syne* being among them. It is possible that the tune was known and sung with a different set of words, but I have

25 Gerhard's translation differs from contemporary translations in other ways as well, in not beginning with a more or less direct translation of "Should auld acquaintance be forgot" but asking—if translated very literally—"Who is not inclined to cast a glance into the past?"

26 "[...] ein gemuthliches herzsinniges Gedicht; die Composition ist vollkommen entsprechend. Die Wehmuth, als stete Begleiterin der Erinnerung an Vergangenes, sie erfaßt uns und netzt das Auge mit Thränen, aber wir ermannen uns: Die alte Zeit war gut, darum lebe sie im vollen Becher! Die Ausführung dieses Gesanges ist durch den öfteren Zeitmaßwechsel (C in 3/2) schwierig; nicht minder verlangt der Vortrag die saubersten Schattierungen." Riccius 1847, 159–160.

27 Gerhard 1840, 361.

28 Prinzhorn 1896, v.

found no direct evidence of this and considerable grounds to suggest that the song, even if known, was not used in German-speaking countries to any great extent. Equally, the text may have been sung to different music. The Scottish Reverend W. Macintosh, who lived in Germany for several years and wrote about the reception of Burns there, commented that, before World War I, it was common in German households “to hear one of the songs of Burns sung, it may be with piano accompaniment by the daughter of the house, the music by Mendelssohn or some other German composer”.²⁹ He does not, however, mention *Auld Lang Syne*, and Schumann’s choral setting would preclude it from being used in most domestic contexts.

The comment by L. G. Silbergleit which opened this chapter names two songs which he obviously felt to be the most universal, and universally known, of Burns’s creations: *Auld Lang Syne* and *Is There For Honest Poverty*. The latter is commonly known in Germany through Ferdinand von Freiligrath’s free translation, *Trotz Alledem*, which became one of the key political songs of the ill-fated 1848 revolution. The success of this song may have linked the name of Burns too closely to radical politics. Another Scots song which shared some degree of popularity in later nineteenth-century Germany was *Robin Adair*, which also became linked to the workers’ movement.³⁰ *Robin Adair* is one of the “Scottish” songs included in some later editions of the elaborate *Musikalischer Hausschatz der Deutschen*, which appeared from 1843. Others include *The Bluebells Of Scotland* (described as the “Scottish national song”; the German title is *Auf deinen Höh’n du mein liebes Vaterland*), *The Lass o’ Gowrie*, and one which seems based on an Irish song, *The Rejected Lover*.³¹ Neither does *Auld Lang Syne* appear in Carl and Alfons Kissner’s *Schottische Lieder aus älterer und neuerer Zeit* (*Scottish Songs Old and New*) of 1874, nor in any other publication I have seen. I have found only one source for it in German songbooks from the first half of the twentieth century, a book of shanties and other English-language songs published in 1938.³²

The apparently passive reception of *Auld Lang Syne* at this point is perhaps not so surprising, but certainly interesting when compared with the later twentieth century. Before turning to this, then, it makes sense to reflect again on what conditions lie behind the active adoption of a song by a group, or a larger community. Three mechanisms in particular can be important for the *active* adoption rather than merely the distribution or transmission of a song: through connection to a social movement, conflict, uprising, and so on; through attachment to a particular social practice, tradition, or ritual, including in specific groups and networks rather than wider society; and through being absorbed in childhood. The first of these accounts for the continued success of *Trotz Alledem*. With regards to the second mechanism, there are good grounds for saying that there was

29 Macintosh 1928, 18.

30 I am indebted to Barbara Boock of the *Deutsche Volksliedarchiv* in Freiburg for her informed suggestions on this topic. Lederer 1934 notes that Haydn’s arrangement of *Robin Adair* includes a coda which quotes from the German song *Wenn ich ein Vöglein wär’*, reflecting, suggests Lederer, a certain similarity between the two tunes.

31 Based on the 1901 edition: Fink & Tschirch (eds) 1901.

32 Müller-Iserlohn (ed.) 1938.

no need for *Auld Lang Syne*, since there already were a wealth of songs in Germany which fulfilled many of the functions that would be so important for its establishment in English-speaking countries. Again, we can take German Masonic songbooks as an example: these flout names such as Schubert, Mendelssohn, Beethoven, Haydn, and Mozart, the latter often presumed to be the composer of the music to *Brüder, reicht die Hand zum Bund* (probably erroneously; the music is now used, with a different text, for the Austrian national anthem). *Brüder, reicht die Hand zum Bund* (*Brothers, Join Your Hands In Union*) is among the most frequent to appear, in later Masonic books particularly, in the section containing “Kettenlieder”, i.e. songs specifically relating to the mystic chain or *chaîne d’union*. Another very popular German song, *Wahre Freundschaft soll nicht wanken*, is very similar in sentiment to *Auld Lang Syne*, though the song—which also dates from the eighteenth century—is implicitly a song of parting in the way that *Auld Lang Syne* is not.³³ That *Auld Lang Syne* does not appear in these books is not of itself so significant, given that it rarely appears in nineteenth-century Masonic songbooks published in Britain either. The popular strength of the songs that are included, however, gives some indication of why there was no real need to turn to *Auld Lang Syne*.

The third mechanism—being absorbed in childhood—is of particular relevance in Germany, given its long history of using songs and singing for the moral and personal betterment of children and through them, their communities. Luther’s programme of singing in schools helped cement the message of the Reformation,³⁴ and the educational singing movement of nineteenth-century America which, amongst other things, helped establish the song *America*, was inspired in part by the educational reforms of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi in nineteenth-century Prussia.³⁵ In Chapter 5, above, we also saw how children’s choirs were promoted in the communist youth movement of the 1920s, leading directly to the establishment of the *Propellerlied*. This movement in turn built on youth organizations such as the *Wandervögel*, which promoted singing and music in a context also dedicated, much like the Scouts, to the appreciation of nature and the building of character.

Alongside the pedagogical benefits, these examples also demonstrate a very fine line between education and propaganda. We only tend to perceive something as “propaganda” if we disagree with its message or the intention of those behind it, and the most effective propaganda is that which is subtle enough or targeted enough not to awake these suspicions. The understanding of the social functions of song and singing which pedagogues, reformers, and musicians had developed were certainly exploited

33 The first verse is as follows:

*Wahre Freundschaft soll nicht wanken,
wenn man gleich entfernt ist
lebet fort noch in Gedanken
und der Treue nicht vergisst.*

True friendship should not falter
just because one is far away
it lives on in the thoughts
and loyalty is not forgot.

34 Oettinger 2001.

35 Branham & Hartnett 2002, Chapter 2.

in the extensive and sophisticated state propaganda of the Nationalist Socialist state.³⁶ And when *Auld Lang Syne* does start to appear more consistently in Germany, it does so to fill the vacuum left by songs which, having been used by Nazi propagandists, were for a time at least no longer sung. *Auld Lang Syne* became one of the songs used frequently in the endeavour to promote understanding between nations through the education of the new generation of German citizens. In this process, the three mechanisms just discussed—the link to social crisis and social movements, the attachment to a particular social group or organization, and the link to children and young people—are fulfilled in almost textbook fashion. In addition, we encounter another familiar element as well: the role of fraternal-type organizations, in this case the Scouts.

9.3 The Scout's Song

Brother Scouts, I ask you to make a solemn choice. Differences exist between the peoples of the world in thought and sentiment, just as they do in language and physique. The war has taught us that if one nation tries to impose its particular will upon others, cruel reaction is bound to follow. The Jamboree has taught us that if we exercise mutual forbearance and give and take, then there is sympathy and harmony. If it be your will, let us go forth from here fully determined that we will develop among ourselves and our boys that comradeship, through the world-wide spirit of the Scout Brotherhood, so that we may help to develop peace and happiness in the world and goodwill among men. Brother Scouts answer me. Will you join in this endeavour?³⁷

A series of Jamborees, and other meetings of Scouts from many countries, showed what a firm link the Scout Law is between boys of all colours, nations and creeds. We can camp together, go hiking together, and enjoy all the fun of outdoor life, and so help to forge a chain of friendship and not of bondage.³⁸

The first World Scout Jamboree, held some thirteen years after the movement was founded, took place in London in 1920; represented were Scouts from twenty-one countries. At the end of the meeting, they joined hands and sang *Auld Lang Syne*, to the accompaniment of a Scout band from Denver. Many of the Scouts from other countries would not have been familiar with this tradition. It was quickly adopted, however, and Scouts across the world to this day sing *Auld Lang Syne* at the end of jamborees, camps, and other such events. Through their use of this tradition, their various foreign-language versions of *Auld Lang Syne* have often seeped into the general repertoire of songs in those countries.³⁹

36 See, e.g., Niedhart & Broderick (eds) 1999.

37 Lord Robert Baden-Powell, from the speech given at the end of the first Scout World Jamboree in London, 1920; quoted here from Baden-Powell 1942, 291. I am grateful to Pat Styles of the Scout Association for her speedy response to my bibliographic enquiries.

38 Baden-Powell 1942, 291.

39 M2 is also used for another favourite Scouting song, *We're Here Because We're Here*. This is the full text of the song, simply repeated again, and again, and again. This song was published in 1909, the



Fig. 9.2 Scouts from several nations join hands to sing *Auld Lang Syne* at the first World Jamboree, 1920. Image: The Scouts (UK) Heritage Service, CC BY 4.0.

This is certainly the case for the most well-known French version of the song. The *Choral des Adieux*, or *Ce n'est qu'un au revoir*, was texted by Jacques Sevin, a Catholic priest and one of the founders of French Scouting, around 1920. By the mid 1940s, the French version of the song was common enough outside Scouting to be included in a songbook called *Jeunesse qui chant* (ca. 1946).⁴⁰ It was also the direct model for several German versions of the song, including probably the most well-known German version today, *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder*.

Scouting played a significant role in the international spread of *Auld Lang Syne* in the twentieth century. Seen in the broader context of the transmission of the song through fraternal-type organizations discussed in Chapter 5, this makes perfect sense. Long before Robert Baden-Powell held the first Scout camp in 1907, *Auld Lang Syne* was a standard song for many such organizations, and also for the military. For an organization that adopted much of the symbolism, discipline and camaraderie of regimental life, and possibly also from Freemasonry, it would have been completely natural to adopt the tradition $\Sigma\Omega$.⁴¹ In Germany at least, only those who are wearing the Scout neckerchief—in other words, only those who have taken the Scout's oath—are allowed to cross their arms before joining hands with their neighbours, a symbolic act that reminds us of the ritual of initiation that Scouting

copyright being held by "Sig. Niederberger". Bib. II/1909. It later became popular among British soldiers during World War I: see Chapter 10 for more details.

40 Bib. II/ca. 1946.

41 One of Baden-Powell's close friends and inspirations for Scouting was Rudyard Kipling, who was a Mason, though Baden-Powell does not seem to have been (the United Grand Lodge of England has no records of Baden-Powell being initiated into any of its affiliated Lodges or any other Lodge); information collated on <http://www.pinetreeweb.com/bp-freemason-england.htm>, last accessed October 2007 (link no longer active).

shares with many fraternal-type organizations.⁴² In many countries, the adoption of *Auld Lang Syne* was closely tied to its use in Scouting, and this is reflected in many foreign-language versions of the song.

Figure 9.3 gives the text of Sevin's French version. The text is more a free translation based on the traditions S_{∞} and S_{Ω} rather than being based on Burns's text itself. The version of the song sung by Scouts in Spanish-speaking countries is an almost direct translation of the French version, and the version used by Polish scouts—also given in the example for comparison—echoes similar sentiments.⁴³ Thus, through a process of assimilation into group contexts and transmission through them, a song about the reunion of old friends becomes a song about young people gathering around the campfire, forging new friendships and going their separate ways. (Not surprisingly, the references to a gude-willie-waught or any other kind of drink are gone.) Introduced to the song in their childhood, all the conditions are present for it to be absorbed into their own repertory of songs and thus to migrate into other groups and contexts as well.

Fig. 9.3 Sevin's French version (quoted here from *Jeunesse qui chant*, 1946); variants of the third and fourth verses (quoted from *Passant en Paris*, 1948), are given in brackets; for comparison, the version by Jerzy Litwiniuk sung by Polish scouts.

Faut-il nous quitter sans espoir sans espoir de retour? Faut-il nous quitter sans espoir de nous revoir un jour?	<i>Must we depart without the hope The hope of ever returning? Must we depart without the hope Of seeing each other one day?</i>
Refrain: Ce n'est qu'un au revoir, mes frères ce n'est qu'un au revoir Oui, nous nous reverrons mes frères ce n'est qu'un au revoir.	Refrain: <i>It's only an au revoir, my brothers It's only an au revoir Yes, we will see each other again, my brothers It's only an au revoir.</i>
Formons de nos mains qui s'enlacent Au déclin de ce jour. Formons de nos mains qui s'enlacent Une chaîne d'amour.	<i>Let us form, with clasped hands, At the end of this day Let us form, with clasped hands, A chain of love.</i>

⁴² I am grateful to Sinje Steinmann for this information.

⁴³ My thanks to Alicja Weikop for drawing my attention to this version, and for providing a basic translation. A Greek version of *Auld Lang Syne* similarly comes from a Scouting version: it is one of the songs used for Emeka Ogbob's sound installation *Song of the Union* (2021), which premiered shortly before this book went to press: see <https://www.trg.ed.ac.uk/exhibition/emeka-ogboh-song-union> for more information. The accompanying catalogue includes this along with versions in each of the official languages of EU member states and the nations of the UK (some newly translated for the project, some from existing versions): see Giblin & MacRobert (eds) 2021.

Amis, unis par cette douce chaîne [or:
cette chaîne]

Tous, en ce même lieu [or: Autour du
même feu]

Amis, unis par cette douce chaîne [or:
cette chaîne]

Ne faisons point d'adieux.

Car Dieu qui nous voit tous ensemble
Et qui va nous bénir

Car Dieu qui nous voit tous ensemble
Saura nous réunir

[Alternative fourth verse:

Car l'idéal qui nous rassemble

Vivra dans l'avenir

Car l'idéal qui nous rassemble

Saura nous réunir.]

United by this gentle chain [or: this chain]

All together, in this one place [or: around this
one fire]

United by this gentle chain [or: this chain]

We are not saying goodbye.

For God, that sees us gathered together
And who will bless us

For God, that sees us gathered together
Will reunite us.

[Alternative fourth verse:

For the ideal that brought us together

Will live on in the future

For the ideal that brought us together

Will reunite us.]

**Jerzy Litwiniuk, *Ogniska już dogasa blask*; text and translation provided here by
Alicja Weikop**

Ogniska już dogasa blask,
Braterski splećmy krąg.
W wieczornej ciszy w świetle gwiazd
Ostatni uścisk rąk.

Kto raz przyjaźni poznał moc

Nie będzie trwonіл słów.

Przy innym ogniu w inną noc

Do zobaczenia znów.

Nie zgaśnie tej przyjaźni żar,

Co połączyła nas.

Nie pozwolimy by ją stał

Nieubłagany czas.

Przed nami jasnych ścieżek moc

Za nami tyle dróg.

Przy innym ogniu w inną noc

Do zobaczenia już.

The glow of the fire is dying
Let's join in a ring of brotherhood
In the evening silence, in the starlight,
The last handshake.

Whoever has ever experienced the friendship's
power

Will not waste words

We'll meet together again

At a different fire on a different night.

They will not die, the embers
Of the friendship that connected it
We will not let merciless time
Wipe it out.

So many bright paths in front of us
So many roads behind
We'll come together again
At a different fire, on a different night.

If *Auld Lang Syne* never seems to have been established in Germany until the 1940s and thereafter, then perhaps because there was no specific group context in which

this song, rather than any number of German alternatives, could become established. Even the Freemasons, as we have seen, had enough local Masonic heroes to do without Brother Burns. After World War II, however, things had changed, as this comment from the editor of a songbook published in 1949 makes clear:

The German youth of today want to go rambling again, not marching, they want to see nature, and not the parade ground. They are looking for what is real and true, for a life of their own. They should be able to find this in song, too, and this book, which is the fruit of years of collecting and singing, is intended to help them. It cannot select the same songs as a half century ago, for this is a different time. The same spirit of truth and reality will be sought in it, nonetheless.⁴⁴

The book from which this quotation comes contains a three-verse, trilingual version of *Auld Lang Syne*, and describes its origins as follows: "Tune from a Scottish folksong, French text heard in 1943 from a young French refugee." This is only one of several versions of the song, all based on the French Scouting version, to appear in German songbooks for children and young people in the years immediately after the war. In Germany, this period belonged in many ways to a self-styled "young generation": in the aftermath of the "Third Reich", the young generation of Germans had more cause than most to wish for a clear separation from the deeds of older compatriots, which accounts in many quarters for a sharp historiographical divide in the work and culture of those born from the late 1920s onwards and those born before.⁴⁵

Youth organizations had a long tradition in Germany, and the practices and structure, the symbols, and often the songs and the songmakers associated with them had been transferred wholesale to the Hitler Youth and the *Bund Deutscher Mädel*; the organizations from which these were culled included Scouting, which like other youth movements was first suppressed and then banned outright from the mid-1930s. After the war, the old threads and the old societies were re-established, but the song programme was slightly different: internationalism and friendship between nations was pushed to the fore. A song popular in France, and a Scouting song at that, was an obvious choice. One of the first German post-war sources for *Auld Lang Syne* is a songbook called *Passant par Paris*, a selection of twenty-three French songs also rendered into German.⁴⁶ The last song in this book is the *Choral des Adieux*, described in the notes to the song as "Vieux chant écossais adopté par les scouts du monde entier" ("Old Scots song adopted by

44 "Heute will der deutsche Jugend wieder wandern und nicht mehr marschieren, sie will die Natur sehen und nicht mehr das Aufmarschgelände. Sie sucht nach Echtheit und Wahrheit, nach Eigenleben. Auch im Liede soll sie es finden, und dieses Büchlein, die Frucht jahrzehntelangen Sammelns und Singens, will ihr dabei helfen. Es kann nicht mehr die gleiche Liederwahl sein wie vor einem halben Jahrhundert, denn die Zeit ist eine andere. Aber der gleiche Geist der Wahrheit und Echtheit wird in ihr gesucht." Pollatschek (ed.) 1949, 4.

45 See Grant 2001, Chapter 1.

46 Soutou (ed.) 1948. Another source may have been a songbook produced for the German-speaking Girl Scouts in Switzerland in 1944 (Bib. II/1944). The French text given here is slightly different from other versions.

scouts the world over"). The illustration shows a camp, with the Scouts standing to attention (not, however, joining hands) around the campfire.

The most well-known German version of *Auld Lang Syne* has an even stronger connection to Scouting. *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder* was written by Claus Ludwig Laue, who for many years before the war had been an active Scout. At the war's end, he met Hans Riediger in a British prisoner-of-war camp, and the two began writing songs together while they were still prisoners; their most famous song is probably *Das Lautenlied*. Some of their songs were published in *Die große Fahrt*, the magazine of the Deutsche Pfadfinder Sankt Georg, the Catholic Scouting organization in Germany. Songs, with music, were often published in this magazine, though not as often as we might expect given that the editorial for the April 1950 edition, probably written by Laue, specifically bemoans the state of singing amongst Germany's youth. The songs printed included some new compositions, and some from other sources: the edition for June 1950, for example, includes the words and music of *Loch Lomond*, which remains one of the most common Scottish songs in German publications.

A later edition of *Die große Fahrt* tells us that Laue was a journalist, originally from the Saarland region of south-west Germany; the edition prints a photograph of him, from which he can be presumed to have been then in his forties or thereabouts.⁴⁷ A frequent contributor to *Die große Fahrt*, Laue was its editor for around two years from September 1950, a post he held on a voluntary basis. In November 1950, *Die große Fahrt* published Laue's version of the French *Choral des adieux*, along with the French text; the music is included, and described as an "old Scottish melody", but there are no further references to the origins of the song (including the originator of the French version) or to its precise use.

A few months before *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder* was published, the German Scout Association had finally been accepted as a full member of the international organization; there had, however, been links between the refounded German Scouts and the international movement for several years previously. The then director of the Boy Scouts International Bureau in London, Colonel John S. Wilson, had visited Germany at the start of 1949, carrying the disappointing message that the German Scouts could not at that point become full members of the international organization again, though they were invited to visit the next World Jamboree. The article on Wilson's visit in *Die große Fahrt* makes no secret of how the German Scouts felt at this news: "Please do not disappoint us again—it would break our hearts!" On the occasion of Wilson's visit, the gathering had closed with one of the most well-known German songs, *Kein schöner Land in dieser Zeit*, which proclaims that there is "No land more lovely at this time, as our land here, so far and wide".⁴⁸ The article concludes that the song, sung in this context, was "quite a profession of faith".⁴⁹

47 *Die große Fahrt* III/12 (December 1951).

48 First published in 1840, the song would later become a favourite of the German youth movement in the early twentieth century. See the article on the song in *Liederlexikon* of the Deutsches Volksliedarchiv (http://www.liederlexikon.de/lieder/kein_schoener_land_in_dieser_zeit).

49 *Die große Fahrt*, I/2 (Februar 1949), 18–19.

In the early twentieth century, *Kein schöner Land* had often been used by the *Wandervögel* as an evening song, or a song of parting. Something of its sentiment, and not only its use, reappears in *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder*, the text of which is reproduced along with two other main post-war versions in Figure 9.4. Although Laue's *Abschiedslied / Nehmt Abschied, Brüder* was specifically published as a German version of the French Scouting song, it is not a direct translation of it. Many Scout versions of *Auld Lang Syne* specifically allude to the campfire setting, but Laue's song is much more detailed in its references to the natural surroundings: this is common in songs associated with the German youth movement. Moreover, despite the allusions to the rising moon and the peacefulness of the setting, an underlying darkness of tone resonates through even the song's brighter moments. The Scots version of the song is an insistence on the importance of friendship; in the French version the friends are already looking forward to the next meeting. *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder* strikes on the whole a very different note, emphasizing the uncertainty of the future.⁵⁰ The ambiguity of the text reflects closely the state of mind in post-war Germany.

Nehmt Abschied, Brüder was published again in 1951 in *Laute, schlag an!*, a collection of songs by Riediger and Laue which, though directed at Scouts, became a source for many other songbooks as well; later songbooks generally name this as the copyright source of the song. It was quickly adopted: in November 1951, a brief report in *Die große Fahrt* tells of the visit to Düsseldorf of five English Scouts, who were on a cycling tour through western Europe. Apart from the German scouts, the evening was also spent with some English Cub Scouts from the nearby British military base, and a Scout who came from Indonesia via Holland. As the report concludes,

Lots of singing and games ensured the meeting went as it should, though it was over far too soon. After the evening meal, they all met in the home of one of the boys, and talked over tea. At a late hour, all together sang "Nehmt Abschied Brüder, ungewiß..." Just as it had done at the Jamboree, so too here it united these hearts that were beating for a common idea. Sadly, the guests had to be on their way again. The separation came after about 30 km. The leader of the English brothers was in tears when it came to this farewell, and he asked us to use our deeds to help secure world peace. His boys would have to become soldiers the next year; it would be too horrible if we were to meet each other again as soldiers. Some of the boys accompanied the guests for another good distance; the others had to turn back.⁵¹

50 This is also a feature of the translation published in Bib. II/1948:

Nun laßt uns scheiden ohne Trost
ob wir uns wiedersehn.
Und keiner weiß, ob wir getrost
im neuen Lage stehn!

Now let us part without the consolation
of knowing that we will see each other again.
And no-one knows if we will stand confident
in the new situation!

This is roughly comparable to the first version of the song as published in Pollatschek (ed.) 1949, which, however, also had the Scots version as basis, and in which the opening question is maintained as such.

51 "Viel Gesang und einige Spiele brachten das rechte Verhältnis in die Runde, die aber leider zu schnell vorüber war. Nach dem Abendessen trafen sie sich alle in der Wohnung eines Jungen, wo sie sich

Fig. 9.4 The three most common post-war German versions of *Auld Lang Syne*.**Claus Ludwig Laue, Abschiedslied (Nehmt Abschied, Brüder)**

Nehmt Abschied, Brüder,
 ungewiß ist alle Wiederkehr,
 die Zukunft liegt im Finsternis
 und macht das Herz uns schwer.

*Take leave, brothers,
 Every return is uncertain,
 The future lies in the gloaming
 And makes our hearts heavy.*

Chorus:

Der Himmel wölbt sich übers Land,
 ade, auf Wiedersehn,
 wir ruhen alle in Gottes Hand,
 lebt wohl, auf Wiedersehn!

Chorus:

*The sky curves over the land,
 Adieu, till we meet again,
 We all rest in God's hand,
 Farewell, till we meet again.*

Die Sonne sinkt, es steigt die Nacht,
 vergangen ist der Tag.
 Die Welt schläft ein und leis erwacht
 der Nachtigallen Schlag.

*The sun sinks, the night arises
 The day is done.
 The world falls asleep, and quietly
 The nightingale begins its song.*

Chorus: Der Himmel wölbt sich übers
 Land...

Chorus: The sky curves over the land...

So ist in jedem Anbeginn
 das Ende nicht mehr weit,
 wir kommen her, und gehen hin
 und mit uns geht die Zeit.

*Thus, in every beginning
 The end is already near,
 We come, and we go,
 And as we pass, so does time.*

Chorus: Der Himmel wölbt sich übers
 Land...

Chorus: The sky curves over the land ...

Nehmt Abschied, Brüder, schließt den
 Kreis,
 das Leben ist ein Spiel,
 und wer es recht zu spielen weiß
 gelangt ans große Ziel

*Take leave brothers, close the circle,
 Life is a game,
 And whoever knows how to play it
 Will reach the greater goal.*

Chorus: Der Himmel wölbt sich übers
 Land...

Chorus: The sky curves over the land ...

beim Tee unterhielten. Spät in der Nacht sang man gemeinsam das Lied: 'Nehmt Abschied, Brüder, ungewiß...' Wie auf dem Jamboree, so schloß es auch hier die Herzen zusammen, die dem gleichen Ideal schlugen. Leider mußten die Gäste wieder abfahren. Man trennte sich erst nach ca. 30 km. Dem Führer der englischen Brüder kamen die Tränen, als es zum Abschied kam, und er bat, daß wir durch unsere Tat am Weltfrieden mithelfen sollten. Seine Jungen mußten nächstes Jahr Soldat werden, es wäre trostlos, wenn wir uns später einmal als Soldaten wiederträfen. Einige begleiteten die Gäste noch eine weite Strecken, die anderen mußten leider zurück." "novi" [=Norbert Viezenz?] 1851, 14–15.

Oswald Schanowsky, *Ein schöner Tag zu Ende geht*

Ein schöner Tag zu Ende geht,
die Sterne sind erwacht.
Wir reichen uns die Hände nun
und sagen gute Nacht.

*A lovely day reaches its end,
The stars have awoken.
We offer each other our hands
And say goodnight.*

Chorus:

Von Ort zu Ort, von Land zu Land
ertönt ein Lied darein,
reicht eure Hände fest zum Bund,
wir wollen Freunde sein.

Chorus:

*From place to place, from land to land,
A song can be heard
Reach out and hold each other's hands tight,
We want to be friends.*

Ein neuer Tag bricht bald herein,
der weit uns sehen soll,
zum Abschied reicht euch nun die Hand
und saget Lebewohl.

*A new day will soon break,
Which will see us travel far,
Reach out your hands as we part
And say farewell.*

Chorus:

Von Ort zu Ort...

Chorus:

From place to place...

Ob Nord, ob Süd, ob Ost, ob West,
wo du auch stehst ist gleich,
ein Freundeskreis durchzieht die Welt.
Horch auf, die Zeit ist reif!

*Whether north, south, east or west,
It makes no difference where you stand,
A circle of friendship goes round the world,
Pay attention, it's time!*

Chorus:

Von Ort zu Ort...

Chorus:

From place to place...

Hans Baumann, *Wie könnte Freundschaft je vergehen*

Wie könnte Freundschaft je vergehen
und nicht im Herzen stehen?
Wie könnt, was uns vereint, vergehn,
bis wir uns wiedersehen?

*How could friendship ever dissipate
And not remain in the heart?
How could the things that bind us, ever
dissipate
Until we meet again?*

Wie Hand in Hand sich schließt im Kreis
so sei es alle Zeit,
ob ferne auch, ein jeder weiß
sich an des anderen Seit

*As hand-in-hand the circle is closed
So it is at all times,
Even when far away, one knows
That the other is at one's side*

9.4 Closing the Circle

Von Ort zu Ort, von Land zu Land
ertönt ein Lied darein
reicht eure Hände fest zum Bund
wir wollen Freunde sein.⁵²

The most well-known German version of *Auld Lang Syne* after *Nehmt Abschied Brüder*, and almost exactly contemporary with it, is *Ein schöner Tag zu Ende geht*. The text, by Oswald Schanowsky, is again a very free translation picking up on the traditions of S ∞ and S Ω . It is occasionally referred to as the Austrian version of the song,⁵³ although Austrian Scouts sing another version again, *Nun Brüder dieses Lebewohl*. Widely sung to M2, and with most print sources linking the text back to Burns, Schanowsky's version does however have the added complication of being the basis for a setting by the prolific song composer Robert Götz. Götz, who had dedicated himself to song for young people since around the end of World War I, stated that his version of *Ein schöner Tag zu Ende geht* was composed at a camp close to the town of Hemer in Nordrhein-Westfalen in 1949.⁵⁴ By his own account, it became one of his most well-known songs.⁵⁵

This raises an important question. The other German-language versions discussed so far have all been accepted as versions of *Auld Lang Syne*—that is, they are recognizable as deriving from that song and the traditions surrounding it. There surely comes a time, however, when the threads that tie these versions to each other are stretched almost to breaking point. Schanowsky's very free translation is still obviously related to the original song when sung with M2. When the text is joined to a completely different tune—provided in this case by Götz—then to what extent can the song still be understood as *Auld Lang Syne* at all?

In practice, though, it would seem that however stretched the threads may be, they are as likely to rebound in bungee fashion as they are to break. Though Götz's setting is certainly popular, Schanowsky's version is also still sung to M2, and is occasionally mixed up with other German versions of the song. Before looking at some examples of this, we need to introduce another, later German rendition of *Auld Lang Syne*.

Wie könnte Freundschaft je vergehn is the only post-war version yet discussed that has an explicit textual connection to the Scots song, and in keeping with the common practice in English-speaking countries, there is only one verse and chorus; it is possible

52 "From place to place, from land to land / A song can be heard / Reach out and hold each other's hands tight / We want to be friends." Oswald Schanowsky, *Ein schöner Tag zu Ende geht* (ca. 1940s); full text in Figure 9.4.

53 For example, in Bib. II/1970/1, itself an Austrian publication.

54 According to the song index he provided for Götz 1975, in which the author of the text is given as Robert Bruns [*sic*]. Götz's dates are to be treated with caution—he flatly denied having written anything but localized, dialect songs under National Socialism, but other researchers have cast doubt on this assertion. However, given the other evidence on the spread of *Auld Lang Syne* in Germany, the date for this song seems reliable.

55 See Götz 1975.

that its use is related to greater familiarity with *Auld Lang Syne* itself. This version was written by Hans Baumann, previously the most prolific songwriter of the Nazi regime. He was summoned to Berlin during the “Third Reich” precisely because, in his previous work for the Catholic youth movement, he had proven himself to be a brilliant songwriter. In the 1950s, he attempted to make good by dedicating himself to writing children’s books; he could not write songs for many years.⁵⁶ The exact context of his version of *Auld Lang Syne* is unclear, but it would appear to date from 1968, and was possibly written for the *Liederbuch für Schleswig-Holstein*, to accompany the Scots and French texts of *Auld Lang Syne* given there; the book also contains *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder*. At least two other sources likewise give Baumann’s text and both the French and Scots versions: both appeared soon after the *Liederbuch für Schleswig-Holstein*, one in a book from the same publisher, and one in a privately published booklet printed in memory of a woman who died in late 1969.⁵⁷ Although on the face of it Baumann’s version seems not to be as widely disseminated as the others, several later sources use it as the first verse of a version which then proceeds with elements of either *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder* or *Ein schöner Tag zu Ende geht*.⁵⁸

All the immediately post-war sources discussed here (see Fig. 9.3 for the texts) are in books directed at children and young people. *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder* in particular quickly left the Scout campfire behind and appeared in books published for other youth organizations, many of them with links to churches. Only in the later 1960s do versions begin to appear which are directed at adults—the same adults that may have come to know the song in summer camps and other activities in the 1950s. In the same year that Baumann’s version was published, a version of *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder* for male choir was published by Heinrich Poos.⁵⁹ By 1980, *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder* was one of the songs included in Ernst Klusen’s *Deutsche Lieder* (1980); in 1984, it was deemed to be one of *Die bekanntesten Volkslieder im Odenwald* (*The Best-Known Folksongs in Odenwald*; Slama 1984), based on songs “collected” in the region. During the 1980s, it also appeared in some other songbooks aimed at adults, and in an East-German collection of songs for Christians.⁶⁰ The increasing frequency with which the various versions of the song appear from the early 1980s can in part be explained by the general increase in the number of publications aimed at adults from around this period. On the other hand, there are relatively few recordings of *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder*, and most of these are arrangements for children’s choir. An exception comes in a recording also made in the 1980s, by the German folk duo Zupfgeigenhansel.⁶¹

56 Biedermann 1997.

57 Bib. II/ca. 1969.

58 E.g. Karl/Deutscher Alpenverein (eds) 1974, Bib. II/1997,

59 Poos 1968.

60 Slama (ed.) 1984.

61 Zupfgeigenhansel, on the album *Kein schöner Land* (originally released on the label Musikant in 1983).

One of the surest signs of the informal familiarity with the song is the very fact that the various versions of the text are so often muddled up. This is hardly surprising: the version of the song most often in use in English-speaking countries—first verse and chorus—boasts only a total of about thirty different words and only five different textual phrases: “Should auld acquaintance be forgot”, “And never brought to mind”, “And days of [auld] lang syne”, “For [days of] auld lang syne”, and “We’ll tak a cup of kindness yet”. Of the German versions, however, only Baumann’s text even attempts to replicate this level of simplicity, and even he manages eight different phrases in the eight lines available. In some cases, changes to the most well-known versions seem to have the aim of making the song more appropriate to the context or to the singer’s own world-view (removing the references to God, for example). The version of *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder* recorded by Zupfgeigenhansel, for example, completely changes the refrain and some lines of the verses as well—the refrain in their version is

*Der Abend neigt sich übers Land
Die letzte Schatten ziehen
Und alles was uns wohl bekannt
Geht in das Dunkel hin.*

The evening inclines over the land
The last shadows draw down
And all that we know well
Goes into the darkness.

A version collected from a school class in south-west Germany by R. W. Brednich and Klaus Roth in 1971 shows that only small portions of the text were remembered, and some of these are different from any of the published versions: the first lines are as usual, but the second half of the verse is conflated with the first part of the refrain, and the second line of the refrain bears the text “ade mein Heimatland”, which does not appear in any of the other sources consulted here.⁶² In printed sources, deviations from the three main post-war texts are for the most part not confined to individual words or phrases, or omitted verses, but are instead confluents of the three most popular versions.

Another interesting conflation is that occasionally found between *Ein schöner Tag zu Ende geht* and another song, *Ein schöner Tag ward uns beschert*, which is generally sung to the tune of *Amazing Grace* but occasionally also listed as sung to the tune of *Auld Lang Syne*. These tunes are not infrequently mistaken for each other: for example, a track listed as *Auld Lang Syne* on an LP produced by an Austrian youth big band turns out to be *Amazing Grace*.⁶³ The confusion between these tunes may lie as much in

62 DVA Mag. 278, No. 9564.

63 *Swingtime: Evergreens and Superhits*, performed by the Swing Und Musical Orchestra Graz, 1989: label no. ATP LP 42; British Library Sounds 1LP0027503.

their attribution as “Scottish”, and some structural similarities in the tonality (both are pentatonic) as much as anything else.

Despite these myriad confusions, conjunctions, and constructions, the relationship of the German versions to the Scots and French versions continues to be recognized. Of around forty printed sources consulted which included a German version of the text, twelve also included at least one verse of *Auld Lang Syne* and ten included at least one verse of the French version. Three sources—*Liederbuch der Bergsteiger*, 333 *Lieder*, *Komm und sing*—included the Scots version but not the French,⁶⁴ both *Passant par Paris* and the version published in *Die grosse Fahrt* have only the French and German versions. Another book, *Lieder kennen keine Grenzen* (Fenninger 1982), dedicated to German and French songs from the Alsace region, also includes the French version, without any German equivalent, though it also refers to the melody as Scottish.⁶⁵ None of the sources give the entirety of the text of *Auld Lang Syne*, but instead the one or two-verse variants most commonly used in English-speaking countries. Thirteen sources specifically relate the song to Burns.⁶⁶

There are many other signs of a recognition of the song’s heritage. When a school in Kiel put on their own version of the Last Night of the Proms in 2006, the programme ended with *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder* in place of the Albert Hall’s now traditional *Auld Lang Syne*.⁶⁷ A recording which conflates elements of *Nehmt Abschied, Brüder*, and *Ein schöner Tag zu Ende geht*, called *So nehmt denn Abschied*, by the Düsseldorfer Mädchenchor is subtitled *Auld Long Syne* [*sic*] and begins with an attempt at mimicking Scottish bagpipes using a low string drone and, to mimic the chanter, an oboe—not unlike William Shield’s tactic over two hundred years earlier.⁶⁸ These connections back to the Scots song—manifested either through recognition of its “Scottishness” or its use in English-speaking cultures—are hardly surprising given the song’s global presence, particularly in recorded media. It is also hardly surprising in Germany, a country whose love of Scottish culture does not seem to have abated in recent years. This love affair is, admittedly, normally expressed in more lofty terms than a recent German recording of the song in English, by Die Roten Rosen, a pseudonym of the punk band Die Toten Hosen. This version, which comes on a Christmas album, also starts with an attempt at bagpipes, but proceeds in the band’s more usual style, and with lyrics sung in a thick Scottish accent which relate more closely to certain other aspects of Scottish culture, particularly on Hogmanay:

64 Karl/Deutscher Alpenverein (eds) 1974, Bib. II/1987/1, Bib. II/1991.

65 Fenninger (ed.) 1982.

66 Bib. II/1957, Götz 1960, Bib. II/1965, Bib. II/1966, Bib. II/ca. 1969, Bib. II/1970/2, Bib. II/1970/2, Bib. II/1987/1, Karl/Deutscher Alpenverein (eds) 1974, Bib. II/1983/1, Bib. II/1985/1, Markmiller (ed.) 1985, Brikitsch et al. (eds) 1986.

67 This was organized by the Humboldt Schule in Kiel: the source for this information was the older version of the school’s website, now deleted. The school’s current website, <https://www.humboldt-schule-kiel.de/>, indicates that the tradition of staging a “Last Night” was revived in subsequent years. On this Proms tradition, see Chapter 10, below.

68 From the compilation album *Volk Masters: Gold und Silber*, Carinco 2005.

When it gets to closing time
 And if you still want more
 I know a pub in Inverness
 That never shuts its door.⁶⁹

The German reception of *Auld Lang Syne* thus demonstrates very well the difference between the passive reception of a song and its active use in a local context. The two are interconnected: passive reception leads to familiarity with the song, especially the tune, which can therefore increase the chances of the song's being appreciated and used in a group context (recognition and identification are linked). The active use of a song, and its absorption into a repertoire of group songs, depends more than we might realise on its actual use in a group context. A number of other socio-cultural factors are implicated as well, though, which will always be specific to that context. All the more interesting, then, that the three main German-language versions discussed here introduce elements already familiar from the establishment of the song and its associated social practices in the nineteenth century. Laue, Schanowsky, and Baumann's versions, so different from one another as they are, reflect this in the one reference in the text that they all share: "*schließt den Kreis*" ("close the circle", Laue), "*reicht eure Hände fest zum Bund*" ("reach out and hold each other's hands tight"), "*ein Freundeskreis durchzieht die Welt*" ("a circle of friendship goes round the world", both Schanowsky) and "*Wie Hand in Hand sich schließt im Kreis*" ("as hand-in-hand the circle is closed", Baumann). Thus, though it is $S\Omega$ that defines these songs, it is the practice $S\infty$ that helps explain their impact.

69 Die Rote Rosen, from the album *Wir warten aufs Christkind*, JKP 1998.