

Fellows



Jason S. Heilman
Duke/IFK_Junior Fellow

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Jason S. Heilman

PROJECT TITLE

Militärmusik, Public Spectacle, and Cultural Identity in the Austro-Hungarian Empire

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The late nineteenth century is considered the golden age of Austrian *Militärmusik*, less for the aesthetic merit of the music itself than for its enormous popularity. During that time, all segments of the population would turn out for the numerous parades and public concerts, and accounts of those concerts often merited the same attention from the Viennese press as reviews from the *Musikverein*. The repertoire of the military ensembles ranged from marches to dances, and with contributions from Franz Lehár and the Strauß family, the boundary between *Militärmusik* and popular music was constantly blurred. Echoes of *Militärmusik* even entered the concert hall in the contemporaneous symphonies of Gustav Mahler. But as popular as this music was, it could never be completely divorced from its political underpinnings. Austrian *Militärmusik* remained heavily invested with the nascent Austrian cultural identity emerging during the late nineteenth century and helped to define for many what it meant to be an "Austrian". This project examines the nature, popularity, and influence of Austrian *Militärmusik* during the period from the *Ausgleich* to the First World War along two main avenues of textual and contextual inquiry. The first is a musical-semiotic investigation into the elements that made this music sound "Austrian" to nineteenth-century partisan listeners; the second is an exploration of the implications of these musical representations of cultural identity within the socio-political milieu of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The goal of this study is to relate the significance and popularity of *Militärmusik* to the broader historical and political trends of the late Empire according to the current historiographical discourse on the creation of Austrian state identity during the late nineteenth century, and in so doing, to expand our understanding of the Austrian experience at the turn of the century beyond the Viennese intelligentsia while creating a more nuanced description of supranational cultural identity at the *fin-de-siècle*.

CV

M. Mus., A. M.