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BEETHOVEN @ 250

(RE)HEARING BEETHOVEN FESTIVAL



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(RE)HEARING BEETHOVEN FESTIVAL

Welcome to the **(Re)Hearing Beethoven Festival**, a series of unique concerts presented virtually by Concerts from the Library of Congress. With this series we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the birth of Ludwig van Beethoven, a composer whose life and work have had an immeasurable influence in the world of music. Over the course of our festival you will encounter all nine of Beethoven's symphonies in transcriptions for a variety of forces, from solo piano to wind nonet. Works by Beethoven for which the Library of Congress possesses primary sources are also featured, in addition to other chamber and piano pieces. Beyond the concerts, you will find conversations with the artists, lectures, curator talks and many electronic resources you can access from home.

Our aim in presenting the symphonies in transcription is to offer insights into how we might re-hear familiar works by Beethoven, in light of what the new medium of transmission might illuminate. While issues of interpretation and presentation are still utmost in the minds of our guest artists performing the works, the very fact that the music is heard in a manner different from its initial conception requires us to face it with new ears, considering what is lost and what is gained with each encounter. The arrangements presented possess varying degrees of fidelity to the letter of the score, and we will find that deviations tended to be accommodations that made the arrangement more effective in its new medium. I think of this as faithfulness to the spirit of the work, which is a quality that is essential if the transcription is to be a performable (and listenable) version of a piece. While we won't have room to delve deeply into the complex considerations concerning the ontological status of a work vis-à-vis its derivative cousins, there is comfort for those who may take issue with the decisions of this or that arranger: the original is still there, unmaligned, to experience on its own merits at any time.

There were many motivations prompting the production of transcriptions and reductions, particularly at the end of the 18th and throughout the 19th century: pecuniary considerations, increased dissemination of a piece to people without access to an orchestra, artistic advocacy of a work, or a mixture of these. It was common for reductions to be made for amateurs to gain access to a piece at the keyboard, but by design these were often simplified and not intended for public performance. This changed when composers would craft their own transcriptions, or when a musician of stature like Franz Liszt would create performance transcriptions as an homage to the original composer. The artistry required to make an effective version of a work for another medium is significant, whether the goal is to make it accessible to the amateur or to emulate the world of the orchestra on a single piano, whatever the technical requirements may be.

Because of the myriad topics involved with each of these works, about which so much has been written over the years, the ensuing notes are intended to provide some salient background information about each piece, but not a substantive analysis of the work; there is simply not the scope here to accomplish that in the manner we would like. Rather—in general—elements that are particularly germane to the transcriptions and their performance will be highlighted. Given the constraints of space and time, there will also not be room for a broad overview of certain topics that one may consider essential to the performance of Beethoven's symphonies. This includes the subject of the controversial metronome markings that Beethoven authorized to be published in the December 1817 issue of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* for the first eight symphonies, followed by those for the ninth in 1826 and other works as well; they will be only briefly addressed here.

There were advocates in Beethoven's lifetime, including early biographer Anton Schindler (a notoriously unreliable commentator who is said to have forged material to support his claims—one in particular will be looked at in the discussion of the eighth symphony), who felt that the tempi as indicated by the metronome markings were unrealistic. There was a "Beethoven Metronome Congress" held in Vienna in 1977, where an attempt was made to discuss Beethoven's metronome markings and come to terms with them. The notion that Beethoven's metronome was broken and he just didn't notice it "...can easily be rejected, however: faulty metronomes tick either too quickly—thus producing values that are too low—or with an irregular beat. The latter did indeed occur from time to time; when Beethoven was late sending in his metronome figures to Schott, he defended himself by saying that his metronome was 'sick' and had been sent to a watchmaker to restore its regular pulse."¹ For those of us who have assigned metronome markings in the absence of performers, it is conceivable that the internal sense when imagining music in one's head may have differed from what was advisable in practice, and sometimes those figures need to be adjusted after hearing a tempo in rehearsal. While Jan Caeyers sees the anti-metronome marking faction as having some irregular beats in their thinking, he admits that "[there] is one error of judgment to which Beethoven may have fallen prey. Composers and conductors experienced with the metronome know only too well that tempi 'in the mind' are always slightly faster than tempi in performance—a common psychological pitfall with a potential margin for error of several percentage points."² As a last note on this, there are compelling reasons to use the markings that Beethoven eventually supplied, and recorded examples can increasingly be found. However, as with a pianist who adapts elements of execution like articulation and use of pedal to the needs of the hall and the piano being played in order to find the right

1 Caeyers, Jan, *Beethoven: A Life*, transl. Brent Annable (United States: University of California Press, 2020), 439.

2 *Ibid.*, 440.

solution for the circumstances, the musician's arrival at a workable tempo is one of those considerations that perhaps, to a degree, should be malleable. Beethoven's markings are provided for reference in our program listings.

Thank you for joining us on this extraordinary journey. We invite you to rehear these familiar works anew, to listen afresh to Beethoven's music in general, to think about hearing (re: hearing) the works in different contexts, and to play along with us as we examine what such experiences can add to our appreciation of this extraordinary music.



The Library of Congress
Virtual Event
Friday, November 20, 2020 — 8:00 pm

The Da Capo Fund
in the Library of Congress

TAKÁCS QUARTET

EDWARD DUSINBERRE & HARUMI RHODES, *VIOLIN*
RICHARD O'NEILL, *VIOLA*
ANDRÁS FEJÉR, *CELLO*

VIDEO PRODUCTION: OWEN ZHOU, OPUS ZERO



PROGRAM

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797-1828)

String Quartet in C minor (Quartettsatz), D. 703 (1820)

Allegro assai

BÉLA BARTÓK (1881-1945)

String Quartet no. 1, op.7, BB52, Sz. 40 (1908-9, rev. 1909)

I. *Lento*

II. *poco a poco accelerando al Allegretto—più quieto—Molto quieto—Tempo I—Sostenuto sempre—Molto sostenuto—Tempo I—Agitato sempre—molto più tranquillo—Agitato—Molto sostenuto—Tempo I—Poco sostenuto—a tempo—molto quieto—sempre quieto—Molto sostenuto*

(Introduzione): *Allegro—Meno vivo—Allegro—Meno vivo—Molto Adagio*

III. *Allegro vivace—poco più mosso...—a tempo—a tempo (poco più mosso)—Adagio—Più Adagio—Tempo I—Vivo—Poco meno vivo—a tempo—Meno mosso—pesante—più mosso—Ancora più mosso—Maestoso—a tempo—Tempo I, mosso—Più vivo—Adagio—Più largo—Tempo I—Agitato—sempre Agitato—Tempo I—Più vivo—Molto agitato—Presto—molto sostenuto*

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

String Quartet in A minor, op. 132 (1825)

Assai sostenuto—Allegro—Adagio—Allegro—Adagio—Allegro

Allegro ma non tanto—L'istesso Tempo

Molto adagio (Heiliger Dankgesang eines Genesenen an die Gottheit,

in der lydischen Tonart)—Andante (Neue Kraft fühlend)—

Molto Adagio—Andante—Molto Adagio

Alla Marcia, assai vivace—Più allegro—Presto—Poco adagio

Allegro appassionato—Presto



About the Program

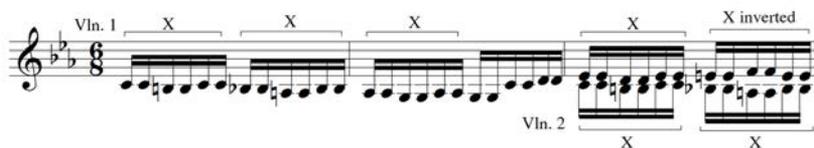
FRANZ SCHUBERT, String Quartet in C minor, D. 703

When Schubert began working on his C-minor string quartet in 1820, it had been four years since his last effort in the medium, and over three years would pass before he would again return to the quartet. The outcome of his 1820 foray consists of a single movement, plus a tantalizing opening to a second movement that was never completed. The finished movement is commonly referred to as Schubert's "Quartettsatz," and it has enjoyed a special status alongside the "Unfinished" Symphony (D. 759) as a piece that can stand on its own in performance.³ It was not published, however, until fifty years after its composition.

The opening of the Quartettsatz features the staggered entrance of a quiet but agitated measured-tremolo figure that carries the germ of the primary theme. This idea is something of an eerie precursor to the figuration that Schubert would use a bit later in the B-minor "Unfinished" symphony, linking the two texturally:

Example 1

a)



Schubert, String Quartet in C minor, D. 703: mm.1-3 simplified

b)



Schubert, Symphony in B minor, D. 759, I: mm.9-10 violins

The tremolos pile up, building to an emphatic arrival on an unexpected

³ Another aspect that has been noted about the work is that the cello part is more actively involved; Martin Chusid had a diplomatic explanation for this: "This reflects, perhaps, the fact that Schubert was no longer living at home and writing for the family quartet. His father, the cellist, appears to have had modest performing skills." Chusid, Martin, "Schubert's chamber music" in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, Christopher Gibbs, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 178.

chord (a first inversion flat-II "Neapolitan" chord⁴—this is important to mention in part due to the melodically and harmonically significant half-step between the roots C and D-flat). We then hear a non-tremolando version of the main theme presented in the first violin. The violin also leads in the beautiful second theme (now in A-flat), with the inner voices continuing the groupings of three that prevailed in the opening theme. The tremolo returns the music to a turbulent transitional space, leading to G major, the final key of this three-key exposition. While the initial material in G outlines a new melody, Schubert effortlessly incorporates the chromatic groups of three notes as part of the accompaniment; in addition, he cleverly includes the Neapolitan of G (an A-flat triad) that outlines the second theme in the cello at the close of the passage—later this technique will give renewed emphasis to the original Neapolitan chord of D-flat just prior to the work's conclusion.

A-flat is emphasized just after the G-major close of the exposition, again bringing to the fore the half-step connections of the material both melodically and harmonically. While the second and third themes are further explored along with the transitional materials, eventually settling into C major, Schubert holds the first theme in reserve. He then repurposes the tremolando introduction as a fierce coda-reprise to close the movement in C minor. It is an elegant and dramatic conclusion to a piece that works successfully on its own, as much as we would have liked for Schubert to have completed the full quartet.



BÉLA BARTÓK, String Quartet no. 1, op. 7

The string quartets of Béla Bartók occupy a treasured place in the twentieth-century canon; a place earned not just due to their inherent quality but also because of the willingness of performers worldwide to take on their challenges. Composed over the course of Bartók's lifetime, the quartets offer a microcosmic overview of his output as a whole. The set of six quartets are not all that Bartók wrote for the medium; he wrote at least three quartets as a teenager (two of which are lost), and he was unable to finish his seventh quartet before his death in 1945. Additionally, there are alternative drafts and ideas that Bartók modified to arrive at the final forms of the quartets we know. Some of these aspects are explored in László Somfai's interesting book on manuscript sources and Bartók's compositional process (*Béla Bartók: Composition, Concepts and*

4 How one assigns flavors to each note in a Neapolitan chord depends on the region, but typically one finds a combination of chocolate, vanilla and strawberry. As with all such things, context matters.

Autograph Sources), which covers issues ranging from revision histories to metronome markings and copyist errors.

Bartók's first string quartet, premiered in 1910 by the Waldbauer-Kerpely Quartet, is the work of a composer coming into his own, and certain aspects of the writing are precursors to calling-card attributes to be found in many of his later works. These include, for instance, the opening material in which Bartók emphasizes intervallic relationships in a pseudo-fugal context. Symmetries, while not exact, tend to come to the fore as the lines of slow music interact with each other. To me the sound world here is akin to that of Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* (of 1899)—a feeling aided by the sense that dissonances are always in the process of being "passed through" instead of "arrived at," that is, the prospect of resolution always seems just a chord or two away.

There may also be a programmatic element in play; without going into too much detail, around the time of the quartet's composition Bartók was hurt by the unwanted end of a relationship. He had written to his romantic interest Stefi Geyer a theme that as a chord formed a minor triad with a major seventh. Bartók told Geyer that this was her "Leitmotiv."⁵ This idea was used in works like the first violin concerto, shown to Geyer just before their breakup, and indeed the composite melody of the opening of the first string quartet outlines an upside-down version of this motive.⁶ Malcolm Gillies describes its presence here as part of a "Tristanesque mood of yearning," with echoes of Strauss and Reger, composers admired by Bartók and Geyer.⁷ The motive is, however, thoroughly integrated into the musical context, and though perhaps referential, the musical development of the material does not offer an obvious programmatic description.⁸

The slightly faster second section contains more whole steps and greater clarity of rhythmic articulation, starting above the open bass strings of the cello. A rising motive plays an important role here, as the music seems to shift into material more influenced by Debussy at measure 44. The cello melody gives way to a hushed, mysterious two-measure passage that beautifully transitions to the opening material, now an octave higher:

5 Cooper, David, *Béla Bartók* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 78.

6 Ibid., 90-91.

7 Gillies, Malcolm, "Bartók, Béla," Grove Music Online (Oxford Music Online: Oxford University Press).

8 Bartók's friend Zoltán Kodály, however, described the musical progression as a "return to life" by the quartet's end. Ibid.

Example 2

The musical score for Example 2 consists of four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature changes from 2/4 to 3/4. The first section is marked 'a tempo' and the second section is marked 'poco rit.'. The Violin I part features a melodic line with a rising figure in the first section and a descending line in the second. The Violin II, Viola, and Cello parts provide accompaniment. The Cello part is marked 'pizz.' (pizzicato) and 'pp' (pianissimo). The Viola part is marked 'pp possibile'. The Violin II part is marked 'pp possibile'. The score is for Bartók's String Quartet no. 1, I, mm. 51-52.

Bartók, String Quartet no. 1, I: mm. 51-52

Example 2 also offers an instance of the type of motivic symmetry, "adapted" to a scale with the members B-flat, C-sharp, D, E, F, G-flat, and A (compare the rising figure in the first violin to the descending lines in the middle voices).

The return of the opening material is abbreviated but intense, and the second movement begins directly after its quiet close. There is a mirrored kinship to the first movement here, as the low instruments play a duet before the violins answer. Tonal implications are greater due to the frequent use of sixths and thirds, but as in the first movement the targets tend to be mobile. When the *Allegretto* starts at measure 21, the violin ostinato cuts against the waltz-feel of the other voices, and elements like this give the movement the feeling of an almost-dance that is never able to launch quite as expected. In addition to the dual role of the ostinato figure (accompanimental and melodic), other figures prominently emerge, such as a small chromatic bump (a half-step up, followed by a half-step down), and a plucked cello rhythm in the bass. The half-step idea develops an increasingly significant melodic role; consider two cases that involve mirrored motion around a third, preceded by a condensed form of the music that shows the expansion from a minor third to a perfect fourth (this kind of expansion would become a common feature of Bartók's music):

Example 3

a)



Interval expansion, condensed

b)



Bartók, String Quartet no. 1, II: mm. 217-218, violin II

c)



Bartók, String Quartet no. 1, II: mm. 269-271, violin I

The half-step provides an easy means of transitioning between the various ideas in the movement, and Bartók takes advantage of this. The long-short rhythm of Example 3b takes on an almost obsessive role as the movement nears its end. In a quiet coda the instruments again work in pairs and together to close. Before the third movement proper begins, however, Bartók includes a highly contrasting "introduction" of 33 measures that largely features the solo cello alternating with forceful statements from the other instruments. It has been suggested that the cello melody in the introduction "parodies the opening of a popular Hungarian song, *Csak egy szép lány* ('Just a Fair Girl') by Elemér Szentirmai,"⁹ reinforcing the possibility of the influence of Bartók's failed relationship.

The third movement manages to occupy a number of different spaces at once—as in the cases of speedy tremolos (focusing at first on one pitch, and then a cluster) against a deliberate transformation of the ostinato figure from the second movement, or in the case of diatonic/modified scales versus highly chromatic material. The music in this movement has a more rhapsodic feel, both in some solo lines and in the episodic push through a variety of materials, ranging from music that seems to

emulate the persistence of a train to loping melodic lines within certain scale sets. In general these episodes tend to become more developed and interrelated as the movement progresses, increasing the sense of unity and imperative. This movement also finds Bartók experimenting more with the interplay between the different voices; at times they are at odds, while at others they work together to articulate a central idea. There are several moments of unexpected open-fifth emphases, such as the E-B arrival at measure 234 and the A-E focus at measure 271. These particular dyads, which happen to be symmetrical fifths above and below the E that starts the movement, are of course not haphazardly arrived at, and in fact serve as the final three pitches presented in three chords at the close of the quartet.

David Plylar
Senior Music Specialist
Library of Congress, Music Division



LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN, String Quartet in A minor, op. 132

Beethoven began writing string quartets as a young man and completed his first set of six, op. 18, by 1800. In this set he demonstrated his mastery of the high classical style and his creative debt to Haydn and Mozart, and established himself as a composer of great skill and taste. He wrote more string quartets (16 total) as he received commissions, extending the genre and challenging performers and audiences of the time. The string quartet no. 15 in A minor, op. 132 (chronologically no. 13, but published later) is the second of Beethoven's late string quartets (which also include opp. 127, 130, 131, 135, and op. 133, known as the *Grosse Fuge*). This work, one of his last string quartets, was among the last compositions he ever wrote. Like his other late works, op. 132 was ground-breaking in structure, content, and character. Audiences of the time found these late works puzzling and difficult. At the first performance of the string quartet no. 12, op. 127, the Schuppanzigh Quartet played the work, and then those assembled for the occasion paused for a meal, fortifying themselves for a second performance of the same work afterwards, in order to better understand what they had heard.

Written in five movements, op. 132 is a monumental and uniquely personal work that stands out even among Beethoven's other late works. The first, third, and fifth movements can be considered the load-bearing walls, and the remarkable third movement, as long as the other movements

combined, is the emotional keystone of the structure. Having searched for ways to unify his musical works, Beethoven created not just individual movements that make sense together, but a series of musical statements that are related to each other by motivic elements and interesting key relationships.

The work opens with a four-note motive (G#-A-F-E; it is unusual that the first note of the work is the leading tone) introduced first by the cello and then taken up in all four parts. This motive references the G-minor fugue in Book I of the *Well-Tempered Klavier* by Bach, which Beethoven studied as a young musician. The two minor-second intervals, separated by a leap of a sixth, are woven into the whole work in varying ways. Some appearances are clear restatements at structural points, such as at the beginning of developmental sections and the second and third times the music reappears. Other times the motive is used subtly in inner voices, sometimes present in whole statements in a single voice, at times split between all four parts. Fragments also appear in many transitional passages. The introductory motive is interrupted by a brief cadenza in the first violin which leads to the statement of the first theme, a furtive, searching melody with a narrow range. The first violin interrupts the first thematic material a second time before it transitions to the second theme, a beautiful melody that, even though closely related to the first theme in terms of range and shape, has a more lyrical and open character. This movement travels through key areas related by thirds, which often occurs in Beethoven's music. Thematic material appears in F major, E minor and C major with a final restatement in the tonic, A minor. The movement ends with a coda even more intense and dramatic than the preceding music. Many music theorists and musicologists have analyzed this movement (and the whole quartet) and most conclude that its composition is in an atypical Classical period sonata form.

The second movement, a minuet and trio, is expectedly light-hearted. Beethoven still emphasizes the interval of the second from the first instant and begins this movement on the leading tone as well. The triple meter produces a dance-like character, which rhythmic displacement then disturbs. The B section features a depiction of folk music as if on bagpipe or fiddle, with both the melody and drone in the first violin part in a high, glassy register which creates a strong color contrast.

During the composition of this quartet, Beethoven had health problems, which in April 1825 developed into a severe, life-threatening illness that it was feared he might not survive. At his doctor's direction, he went to Baden, outside Vienna, to rest. After regaining enough of his health to continue composing, he was able to finish this quartet. In gratitude, he dedicated the third movement with the inscription "Heiliger Dankgesang

eines Genesenen an die Gottheit, in der Lydischen Tonart” (Hymn of thanksgiving to the divinity, from a convalescent, in the Lydian mode). The opening is reminiscent of a solemn hymn, introduced by counterpoint, which rather abruptly changes to a section marked “Neue Kraft fühlend” (feeling new strength). This highly ornamented material is stylistically more similar to music from the Baroque, and the increased tempo, trills, runs, and syncopated rhythmic patterns communicate an air of vigor. The movement as a whole has an ABA'B'A” structure. As each section returns, elements are slightly varied, and the movement becomes more expansive and heartfelt as the hymn-like melody rises in register and intensity. In the final section, marked “mit innigster Empfindung” (with the deepest feeling), a motive taken from the counterpoint woven among the hymn-like material is shaped into a pleading phrase with a continually rising contour that surrounds the final statement of the hymn. Beethoven’s strict use of the F Lydian mode creates a feeling of suspension and distance; the fourth scale degree unique to this mode (B natural) sets it apart from the major and minor modes of our common harmonic language and to our ears emphasizes the dominant and obscures the return to the tonic. The use of the ancient Lydian church mode and an evocative wordless hymn signals music related to feelings of devotion, reverence, even transcendence.

The final two movements, played without a pause, begin with a hearty march, which is interrupted by a sudden turn to the minor mode and a dramatic recitative in the first violin. This music calls to mind the transition to the last movement of Beethoven’s Symphony no. 9, finished just the year before. The passionate, singing melody of this last movement is paired with urgent accompanying material that demonstrates how effectively Beethoven used motivic elements. He had the ability to take a single kernel of music and expand on it, extracting compressed elements from themes and motives, creating cohesive works without relying on the introduction of more melodies or harmonic filler. The quartet ends with a *Presto* that builds to a climax, then suddenly retreats only to build again to the final climax in A major.

This quartet contains some of the greatest music Beethoven wrote, and arguably, some of the most sublime music written in all of Western art music. Since its first performance, this work has been deemed worthy of repeated hearings and intense study, and has proven to be endlessly compelling to musicians, musicologists, and listeners. Like Beethoven’s symphonies, his late quartets represented such an expansion and development of the genre that later composers found it difficult to compose music that was original and fresh in comparison.

It is impossible to overlook the parallels between the circumstances of Beethoven's life as he wrote this quartet and our situation as an audience. I write these program notes as COVID-19 is inflicting pain and suffering all over the world. When an audience is able to gather to hear this quartet post-pandemic, all of us will have become survivors of a potentially life-threatening disease, whether we contracted it or not. I can only imagine that Beethoven's musical expression of gratitude and hope after his health crisis will resonate deeply with listeners who have recently emerged from the ordeal of a pandemic.

*Laura Yust
Senior Cataloguing Specialist
Library of Congress, Music Division*



About the Artists

The **Takács Quartet**, now entering its 46th season, is renowned for the vitality of its interpretations. *The Guardian* recently commented: "What endures about the Takács Quartet, year after year, is how equally the four players carry the music." *BBC Music Magazine* described its recent Dohnányi recording with pianist Marc André Hamelin as "totally compelling, encapsulating a vast array of colours and textures." Based in Boulder at the University of Colorado, Edward Dusingberre, Harumi Rhodes (violins), Richard O'Neill (viola) and András Fejér (cello) perform 80 concerts a year worldwide.

In June 2020 the Takács was featured in the BBC television series *Being Beethoven*. The ensemble also released a CD for Hyperion of piano quintets by Amy Beach and Elgar, a fitting way to celebrate Geri Walther's 15 years as the Takács' violist before her retirement from the group. The members of the quartet welcomed Richard O'Neill as their new violist in June and are looking forward to many exciting projects during their first season together. The group will make two recordings for Hyperion, one featuring the last quartets of Haydn, the other pairing two masterpieces from the first decade of the 20th century: Bartók's Quartet no. 1 and Alban Berg's op. 3. The group continues its role as Associate Artists at London's Wigmore Hall, performing two concerts there in November and two in May, the latter including Schubert's Quintet D. 956 with cellist Adrian Brendel. Other European venues include Vienna, Luxembourg, the Bath

Mozartfest, Newcastle, Manchester and Madrid. In August 2021, the quartet will embark on a month-long tour of Australia and South Korea. The Takács performs extensively throughout North America. Highlights of the 2020-2021 season include performances at New York's White Light Festival, concerts with pianist Jeremy Denk at Stanford, Princeton, Ann Arbor, Boston and Lincoln Center, and performances in Washington DC, Los Angeles, Berkeley, Philadelphia, Montreal, Vancouver, Cleveland, Portland and Seattle.

The Takács Quartet performed Philip Roth's *Everyman* program with Meryl Streep at Princeton in 2014, and again with her at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto in 2015. The program was conceived in close collaboration with Philip Roth. The Quartet is known for such innovative programming. It first performed *Everyman* at Carnegie Hall in 2007 with Philip Seymour Hoffman. It has toured 14 cities with the poet Robert Pinsky, collaborates regularly with the Hungarian Folk group Muzsikás, and in 2010 it collaborated with the Colorado Shakespeare Festival and David Lawrence Morse on a drama project that explored the composition of Beethoven's last quartets. Aspects of the quartet's interests and history are discussed in Edward Dusinberre's book, *Beethoven for a Later Age: The Journey of a String Quartet*, which takes the reader inside the life of a string quartet, melding music history and memoir as it explores the circumstances surrounding the composition of Beethoven's quartets.

The members of the Takács Quartet are Christoffersen Faculty Fellows at the University of Colorado Boulder. The Quartet has helped to develop a string program with a special emphasis on chamber music, where students work in a nurturing environment designed to help them develop their artistry. Through the university, two of the quartet's members benefit from the generous loan of instruments from the Drake Instrument Foundation. The members of the Takács are on the faculty at the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara where they run an intensive summer string quartet seminar and are Visiting Fellows at the Guildhall School of Music in London.

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**MSGT HILARY HARDING
& SSGT REBECCA MCLAUGHLIN, *HORN***

PROGRAM

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827) /

JOHANN NEPOMUK HUMMEL (1778-1837)

Transcription for flute, violin, cello and piano

Symphony no. 3 in E-flat major, op. 55 (1803)

Allegro con brio (♩ = 60)

Marcia funebre: *Adagio assai* (♩ = 80)

Scherzo: *Allegro vivace* (♩ = 116)—Trio—*Alla breve* (♩ = 116)—
Coda

Finale: *Allegro molto* (♩ = 76)—*Poco Andante* (♩ = 108)—
Presto (♩ = 116)

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN / ANONYMOUS

Transcription for wind nonet

Symphony no. 7 in A major, op. 92 (1811-12)

Poco sostenuto (♩ = 69)—*Vivace* (♩ = 104)

Allegretto (♩ = 76)

Presto (♩ = 132)—*Assai meno presto* (♩ = 84)—*Presto*—Coda—
Assai meno presto—*Presto*

Allegro con brio (♩ = 72)



About the Program

**LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN / HUMMEL,
Symphony no. 3 in E-flat major**

“He knows nothing of ugliness in music, even to express ugly thoughts.”¹⁰

Our odyssey through the symphonies of Beethoven starts auspiciously with the monumental Symphony no. 3, the “Eroica.” It is only the second of Beethoven’s instrumental works to receive a descriptive title from the

10 Grove, George, *Beethoven and His Nine Symphonies*, reprint of third edition from 1898 by Novello, Ewer and Company (United States, Dover Publications, 2012), 65.

composer, with the first being the “Sonate pathétique.”¹¹ The significance of the work was clear if not entirely ascertainable from its early reception. As Adolf Bernhard Marx described it, the third symphony is “...not merely a great work, like others; rather it is... decisive for the entire sphere of our art... a work that brought music to a new and higher plane of consciousness.”¹² If that seems hyperbolic, Beethoven was indeed on a route that led to a historical consciousness in contemporaries and future composers, or at least a heightened sensitivity, to the singular accomplishments of symphonic works of ever-increasing scope.

That Beethoven was aware of the expanded scope of the symphony in relation to all other works in the repertory is clear (beyond the fact that he wrote it) from a note printed in the first edition, which included: “Since this symphony has deliberately been written at greater length than is usual, it should... be performed closer to the beginning than to the end [of a concert]...”¹³ Regarding the prodigious length, Grove adds a note from Alexander Wheelock Thayer of a comment reportedly overheard by Czerny at the premiere: “I’d give a kreutzer if it would stop.”¹⁴ One early critique complaining about the length of the symphony particularly irked Beethoven, who responded: “I have heard of the recent lashings given in the *Musikalischer Zeitung* to the symphony that I submitted last year (and which was subsequently returned to me). I have not read the article myself, but if you consider yourself able to thus damage my reputation, you are sorely mistaken—you succeed only in plunging your own journal into disrepute.”¹⁵

A large vessel,¹⁶ however, is unimpressive without worthwhile content. Lewis Lockwood, a scholar who has written extensively about Beethoven and his symphonies in particular, explores this content in detail across the spectrum of Beethoven’s output. For the “Eroica,” it is significant that the piece is big, “[but] what marks the *Eroica* as pathbreaking is not only its epic length. At least equally important is the unity of musical ideas...”¹⁷ Before we turn to the music, however, it is somewhere written

11 Grove, 51.

12 Lockwood, Lewis, *Beethoven’s Symphonies: An Artistic Vision* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2015), 64-5.

13 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 67.

14 As quoted in Grove, 57n.

15 As quoted in Caeyers, Jan, *Beethoven: A Life*, transl. Brent Annable (United States: University of California Press, 2020), 158.

16 The orchestra was also enlarged for the *Eroica*, which included possibly the first use of three horns in a symphony. Grove, 57. With respect to the horn writing, Beethoven drew on the technical expertise of horn virtuoso Giovanni Punto, a contact that benefited his work directly on both the op. 17 horn sonata and the “Eroica.” Caeyers, 151.

17 Lockwood, Lewis, *Beethoven: The Music and the Life*, paperback edition (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2003), 206.

in the bylaws of program annotation that any discussion of the “Eroica” must contend with the legendary status of the cancelled dedication to Napoleon.

It appears that “common knowledge” of the Napoleon connection to the symphony did not come about until 1838, when the anecdote was first published.¹⁸ According to Ferdinand Ries, Beethoven had at first planned to dedicate the symphony to Napoleon but was offered a tidy sum by Prince Joseph Lobkowitz, so he was considering calling the work “Bonaparte” in lieu of a dedication to Napoleon.¹⁹ The title page with the famously scratched out inscription doesn’t quite give the whole story—and one must take plenty of salt and consider the seasoning when reviewing anecdotes that cannot be independently confirmed—but Ries tells us that he was the first to inform Beethoven of Napoleon’s proclamation of himself as emperor, and that this instigated the manuscript mutilation.²⁰ Never mind that the anecdote typically has Beethoven tear the manuscript apart, not scratch off the dedication, a seemingly incongruous detail.²¹ Additionally, not scratched off on this manuscript, and perhaps added at a later time is “geschrieben auf Bonaparte” (written about Bonaparte) at the bottom of the same page.²² While Beethoven may well have had this reaction to the imperial proclamation of Napoleon, it seems that Beethoven had already been dissuaded of Napoleon’s integrity by the implications of the Concordat of 1801.²³ His anger may have been in large part due to the changes necessitated by Napoleon’s actions in preventing Beethoven’s own move to Paris and his planned artistic conquest of the French.²⁴ It is also worth noting the impact of the swing of politics, as the overtly political can at times yield a work that is “less than” what it might have been. In the case of Napoleon there is Beethoven’s later battle piece, *Wellingtons Sieg oder die Schlacht bei Vittoria*, op. 91, a “Battle Symphony” that earned money but wasn’t exactly an artistic manifesto; this piece will come up a bit more in relation to the numbered symphonies dating from the same time (symphonies seven and eight).

18 Steblin, Rita, “Who Died? The Funeral March in Beethoven’s “Eroica” Symphony,” *The Musical Quarterly*, Spring 2006, Vol. 89/1, 63. See also Lockwood, *Beethoven Symphonies*, 53.

19 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 51-2.

20 *Ibid.*, 53.

21 Postdating Napoleon’s announcement of his status as Emperor, Beethoven had told his publisher that the real title of the piece was “Bonaparte.” Yet “[it] is true that on the famous copy of the score with its mutilated title page, the words ‘intitolata Bonaparte’ were so strongly effaced that holes were cut through the page.” *Ibid.*, 54. In Ries’ recollection, after learning of Napoleon’s imperial designs “Beethoven went to the table, grasped the title page at the top, tore it in two, and threw it on the floor.” As quoted in *Ibid.*, 53.

22 *Ibid.*, 54.

23 Caeyers, 218-19.

24 *Ibid.*, 222.

Ultimately when the work was published, the title was given as “Sinfonia eroica,” with “composta per festeggiare il sovvenire di un grand Uomo” appended (“composed to celebrate the remembrance of a great man”).²⁵ It is unclear if the “great man” is referencing Napoleon’s former self, Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia (himself a composer and a friend of the symphony’s eventual dedicatee, Prince Franz Joseph von Lobkowitz), or perhaps a more generic “great person.”²⁶ The work was essentially complete in 1803, but the name of “Sinfonia Eroica” did not appear until the Comptoir publication of 1806.²⁷ Beethoven’s third symphony was premiered publicly on April 7, 1805 at the Theater an der Wien with Beethoven himself at the podium.²⁸ Prior to this, Prince Lobkowitz actually gave Beethoven the invaluable opportunity to workshop the symphony in rehearsal in May and June of 1804, “...in order to establish proof-of-concept and incorporate some final corrections.”²⁹ As a consequence of Beethoven’s dedication of the symphony to Lobkowitz, there occurred during a period of the Prince’s exclusive rights to the piece several private performances of the symphony.³⁰

With respect to the composition of the piece, some ideas were there from the beginning as guiding components for the first movement, including the key of E-flat major, the meter, and the essentially triadic nature of the opening theme.³¹ But as one might expect from a composer with Beethoven’s working habits, his plan for the “Eroica” did not at first contain all components of the “heroic” symphony to come. Yet the work’s finale seemed to act as the symphony’s lodestar, and this is because the music for it was very much on Beethoven’s mind at the time, given that he employed the material in three other works (all in E-flat major)³² before it found its place at the end of Beethoven’s grand symphony.

The earliest instantiation of the theme came with a Contredanse, WoO 14/7,³³ a very brief but clear use of the theme and bass line. Around this

25 Confusing matters is the appearance in London in 1809 of an alternate title, “Sinfonia Eroica composta per celebrare la morte d’un Eroe.” Steblin, 62. That title bears a similarity to the funeral march “sulla morte d’un Eroe” from the op. 26 piano sonata, and suggests that publicly-aired motivations remained in flux for some time.

26 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 54-55.

27 Caeyers, 226.

28 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 63

29 Caeyers, 132.

30 *Ibid.*, 221.

31 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 68-9.

32 *Ibid.*, 42.

33 When I first encountered the abbreviation WoO as a kid, I thought it was some sort of spooky shout out celebrating the piece. That is still my first instinct, but it means “Werke ohne Opuszahl,” or “Work without opus number,” or even easier to remember: “Without Opus.”

time (1800-1801), Beethoven developed a larger setting of the material for the finale of his ballet music, *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus* (*The Creatures of Prometheus*), op. 43. There followed in 1802 the 15 Variations and a Fugue on an Original Theme, op. 35, popularly known now as the “Eroica Variations.” Of course, Beethoven did not refer to them as such at the time, instead referencing them, appropriately enough, as the “Prometheus Variations.”³⁴

In the “Wielhorsky Sketchbook” that contains the material for the op. 35 variations, we find what Lockwood describes as the “Ur-Eroica movement plan for the symphony.”³⁵ Significantly, it predates the conception that included the funeral march; but it can reasonably be assumed that Beethoven was thinking of using the “Prometheus Variations” material for the finale at that time, as the sketchbook only includes some thoughts about what the first three movements of such a symphony might be.³⁶ Presumably Beethoven didn’t need to remind himself that the finale would be developed from the variation content he had already sketched in the very same book.

As we move into a discussion of the music itself, it is with regret that I need to reaffirm that we do not have the scope in these notes for the symphonies to dig into the musical features and considerations of each work beyond a few interesting aspects related to their conception and reception. Books have been written about these things, and I encourage those interested to explore the literature. Our focus, instead, will be on some matters of context and the unique transcription in which we hear the symphonic work, modified for new forces. The performance recorded by “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band for Concerts from the Library of Congress is of Johann Nepomuk Hummel’s arrangement of the “Eroica” for flute and piano trio.

Hummel is under-appreciated today in my view, but was a significant musical force as a pianist and composer in his day. Beethoven’s relationship with him was impaired by an incident—a word of warning, it was reported by the unreliable Anton Schindler—in which Hummel is said to have chuckled at a demeaning comment made by Prince Nikolaus Esterházy, who was displeased with his commissioned Mass in C from Beethoven. Beethoven abruptly left and the relationship cooled for a time.³⁷ There was a degree of reconciliation by the end, however, as Hummel visited Beethoven multiple times as Beethoven neared death.³⁸

In any event, while the pianistic and compositional styles of Hummel and

34 Lockwood *Beethoven Life*, 204.

35 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 59.

36 *Ibid.*, 60-61.

37 Caeyers, 283-4.

38 *Ibid.*, 534.

Beethoven were markedly different, it seems likely that Beethoven would have appreciated the transcription efforts of a musician of Hummel's stature more than the anonymous contributions that often appeared, unauthorized. Hummel, a student of Mozart, had made arrangements for flute, violin, cello and piano of Mozart and Haydn symphonies, and eventually wrote versions of Beethoven's first seven symphonies for the same forces. It is unclear when the arrangements were made, but they may postdate Beethoven's death. In the case of the "Eroica" arrangement, it was published by 1832. While money was likely one motivator, the effort that went into creating this version is significant and thoughtfully done, suggesting that genuine respect and homage were at play. If the arrangement does rely heavily on the pianist, one may attribute that to the fact that Hummel may have seen this as a vehicle for his own playing; and then there is also the fact that the piano can and does wear many hats while standing in for the full orchestra—in arrangements of this sort one has to find a way to differentiate individual instruments and the *tutti* ensemble, and the piano has a natural ability to fill this gap when the pianist is intrepid.

Beethoven's "Eroica" symphony begins with two loud E-flat major chords before launching into the main theme. These chords have both thematic and structural significance throughout the movement, but it is interesting to note that they were initially conceived differently. Gustav Nottebohm pointed out in the sketchbooks that Beethoven had originally considered different chords than the E-flat affirmations he ultimately decided on, perhaps imagining an effect more in line with what he had done in his first symphony.³⁹ Hummel's opening statement of these chords comfortably affirms the richness of the palette with which Hummel will paint, though he does tend to favor the piano as the melodic instrument of choice despite having the violin and flute at his disposal. In Hummel's defense, however, there are artistic reasons for reserving the timbres of the other instruments. There is a danger that they can "stick out" from the more homogenous sound of the piano, so by employing them in varying roles—that is, not always presenting the primary melody—he is able to effectively avoid fatiguing the ear with the same melodic sound profile.⁴⁰ As I am sure to say repeatedly in these notes to the transcriptions of Beethoven symphonies, note-to-note transfers of lines and textures don't always work verbatim; the particular needs of the new medium must be taken into account if the realization of the music is to be effective. Hummel's approach is appropriately liberal in this regard. For instance, the flute will not just take the upper flute line, but might instead trace a

39 Grove, 57-58.

40 I think that because the piano is almost constantly playing, the assignment of melodies to the piano does not have the same orchestrational fatigue effect as it does when instruments of different timbral makeup are employed.

path that accomplishes the outline of what Beethoven intended but more appropriately reinforces the harmony in the absence of its orchestral brethren.⁴¹ Hummel also uses registral displacement as a tool of color. While across the keyboard the piano has a more “uniform” sound, each region has its own characteristic qualities and Hummel exploits them by changing the register of the original utterance when needed to differentiate instrumental colors.

The point of these discussions is not to approve or disapprove of an arranger’s decisions, but rather to describe some of them in a sympathetic way, to attempt to understand what the composers were after. For this reason I offer the proposition that perhaps Hummel missed an opportunity at a notorious point before the recapitulation in the first movement. In the same breath I sense that Hummel intentionally glossed over it as a matter of taste, given how he handles the same theme quite beautifully shortly thereafter. The spot I am referring to is a famous passage where the horn enters in the “wrong key” at the “wrong” time. As Sir George Grove put it, “At that time, all the rules of harmony were against it; it was absolutely wrong—as wrong as stealing or lying—and yet how perfectly right and proper it is in its place!”⁴² When Ferdinand Ries pointed out the “mistake” to Beethoven during a rehearsal, it did not go well. Yet the notion of the passage being in error persisted, implicating a range of conductors. As Grove continues, “If Ries ‘narrowly escaped a box on the ear’ for suggesting that ‘the d___d horn-player had come in wrong,’ what sort of blow or kick would Beethoven have justly administered for such flagrant corrections of his plain notes (here and elsewhere)?”⁴³ That is was not a mistake is borne out by the evidence of the compositional process. Jan Swafford notes that Beethoven “works out this idea through a dozen sketches, all on the same conception: while a string harmony in whispering tremolos prepares the recapitulation on a dissonance, a solo horn enters early on the Hero theme in E-flat, making an outlandish clash of harmonies...”⁴⁴ Without the benefit of a horn in the ensemble, Hummel gives this deceptive entrance to the piano, and follows with the “proper” entrance also in the piano (the cellos have it in the symphony). But within a matter of bars, when the horn returns, he beautifully divides the line between violin and flute to create a new version of the melodic material. So while one arranger might be tempted to emphasize a dramatic trick, others like Hummel might prioritize things differently, offering a new perspective on the original.

41 For instance, closing with a leading tone going to a tonic note on the downbeat instead of floating above on the third scale degree.

42 Grove, 66-7.

43 Ibid., 66n

44 Swafford, Jan, *Beethoven: Anguish and Triumph* (United States: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014), 347.

Sometimes the arranger will offer a detail that involves a degree of license in terms of altering the more “sacrosanct” melodic content. By necessity the accompaniments are frequently altered to fit the needs of the new ensemble, but there are occasions when the arranger may alter things at their discretion, perhaps as a matter of maintaining interest. One example comes to mind that could stand for others in the case of Hummel’s version of the first movement. There is a moment as the movement is winding down at the Coda where the orchestra suddenly plays a D-flat major chord and the first bit of the primary melody, en route to C major from E-flat major. Hummel adds an echo in the flute line (see bracketed material in Example 1b below) that is not present in the original:

Example 1

a)

This musical score shows a piano reduction of the final three measures of the first movement of Beethoven's Symphony no. 3. It consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The music features a primary melody in the treble clef and a complex accompaniment in the bass clef. The melody consists of a half note D-flat, a quarter note E-flat, a quarter note F, and a half note G. The accompaniment includes chords and moving lines in both hands, with some notes beamed together.

Beethoven, Symphony no. 3, I: mm. 557-559, reduction

b)

This musical score is similar to the one in Example 1a, but it includes an additional staff for a flute. The flute part is labeled 'Fl.' and contains a melodic line that mirrors the primary melody of the piano reduction. The piano accompaniment is identical to the one in Example 1a. The flute line consists of a half note D-flat, a quarter note E-flat, a quarter note F, and a half note G, with a bracket above it indicating the melodic phrase.

Beethoven, Symphony no. 3, I: mm. 557-559,
reduction plus Hummel’s added flute line

An active line can be more effective than a static one, and Hummel's deviation from the original text is motivically driven and subtle, yet accomplishes what I imagine his goal was for altering the passage.

If the first movement was a grand essay in the potential of what a symphonic movement could be, swallowing entire earlier multi-movement symphonies whole in the confines of its durational expanse (when the exposition's repeat is taken—it is not in the present recording), the second movement is a spiritual odyssey of similar magnitude. Beethoven's use of the funeral march was new to the symphonic genre; Ferdinand Ries suggested that Fernando Paer's funeral march from the opera *Achille* was an inspiration for Beethoven's movement,⁴⁵ but at any rate Beethoven's creation was singular. He labeled it *Marcia funebre*, and the only predecessor like it in his output comes from the op. 26 piano sonata, the slow movement of which (in the unusual key of A-flat minor—with its requisite seven flats!) is titled "*Marcia funebre sulla morte d'un Eroe*."⁴⁶

Front and center, perhaps, is the question posed bluntly by Rita Steblin: "who died?" Was the funeral march inspired by a particular death? Speculation has run the gamut from the loss of the "Grande Armée" to the death of Prince Louis Ferdinand, who died fighting the French (but in 1806, some three years after Beethoven wrote the funeral march).⁴⁷ Over the years many have been put forward as possible candidates for the honor, including Beethoven himself (who was alive but perhaps projecting?), Horatio Nelson (who was also alive at the time) and other figures of war, and characters from Homeric epics, such as Hector.⁴⁸ Steblin, noting that at that time such works were generally written to commemorate a specific person, suggests that it may have been a work of mourning for the Elector of Cologne, Max Franz, who died just before Beethoven could secure the dedication to him of his first symphony.⁴⁹ Swafford ties the Bonaparte connection not only to traditional interpretations of the funeral march relating to the "hero" or the war dead, but also to French traditions. He writes that "From beginning to end there is a missing element in this funeral service: there is no hymn to God. It is a secular humanist ceremony, as it would have been in revolutionary France."⁵⁰

45 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 63

46 An echo of this title from the 1800-1801 sonata was referenced earlier in these notes with respect to an edition of the "Eroica" from 1809: "Sinfonia Eroica composta per celebrare la morte d'un Eroe."

47 Steblin, 62.

48 Ibid., 64-5.

49 Ibid., 67. Steblin's article is an interesting read on the subject, and brings issues of the financial benefits of dedications and memorials to the fore. At that time it was also imperative that one had the permission to make a dedication known, given its potential financial and reputational repercussions.

50 Swafford, 354.

The breadth of this movement elevated the notion of the funerary march in the concert hall, where there is created "...the large and amply developed ternary form in which the principal theme has the function of a refrain, as in a rondo form."⁵¹ That is a reference to one form of the movement's bones, but Hector Berlioz had another that also exposes the effect this movement had on the burgeoning Romantics: "When these shreds of the lugubrious melody are bare, alone, broken, and have passed one by one to the tonic, the wind instruments cry out as if it was the last farewell of the warriors to their companions in arms."⁵²

Swafford notes that the principal theme of the funeral march is prefigured, appropriately enough, in an oboe melody from the development of the first movement. As Swafford puts it, "The opening phrase of the Funeral March theme is settled from the first sketch, because he bases it on bars 5-7 of the Prometheus bass. The upper voice of the new development theme in the first movement is also based on that figure. So besides being integrative in relation to the first movement, *the upper line of the new development theme foreshadows the Thema of the Funeral March.*"⁵³ These notions of inter-movement connections abound in Beethoven, whether developed consciously or not, and while the ear of the beholder can be as inventive as the composer at times, it certainly helps me to think more holistically about an entire work or body of works when these connections are identified or suggested.

In Hummel's version of this movement, the piano takes the opening melody instead of the violin; the first violins present it first in the symphony. In this recording, the performers have chosen to open the movement (and its analogous recurrence later in the movement) with the violin taking the melody while the piano provides the other string parts; when we get to the E-flat portion of the theme, the piano resumes the melodic line. There are a number of examples of adaptations that Hummel makes to the ornamentation and figuration. Consider for one these side-by-side modifications of the triplet figure that precedes the main beats:

51 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 70.

52 Ibid., as quoted.

53 Swafford, 349.

Example 2

a)

The musical score for Example 2a is a piano and string arrangement of a triplet passage from Beethoven's Symphony no. 3, II. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff for the piano and a bass clef staff for the strings. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is 3/4. The passage is marked with a forte (*sf*) dynamic in the piano part and a piano (*p*) dynamic in the string part. Both parts feature a triplet of eighth notes. The piano part has a triplet of chords, while the string part has a triplet of eighth notes. The piano part starts with a triplet of chords, followed by a single chord, and then another triplet of chords. The string part starts with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a single eighth note, and then another triplet of eighth notes. The piano part ends with a triplet of chords, and the string part ends with a triplet of eighth notes.

Beethoven, Symphony no. 3, II: pickup to mm. 51-3, strings

b)

The musical score for Example 2b is a piano and string arrangement of a triplet passage from Beethoven/Hummel's Symphony no. 3, II. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff for the piano and a bass clef staff for the strings. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is 3/4. The passage is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The piano part has a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a single eighth note, and then another triplet of eighth notes. The string part has a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a single eighth note, and then another triplet of eighth notes. The piano part starts with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a single eighth note, and then another triplet of eighth notes. The string part starts with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a single eighth note, and then another triplet of eighth notes. The piano part ends with a triplet of eighth notes, and the string part ends with a triplet of eighth notes.

Beethoven/Hummel, Symphony no. 3, II: pickup to mm. 51-3, piano

The piano part is isolated for clarity in Example 2b, but atop this the triplets are still given in the strings. By making these changes Hummel accomplishes a few things without significantly impacting the spirit of the original: they provide some variety in the sound, they enrich it, and they may ease the technical execution of the figures, which may be less effective without the support of the full string section or other members of the orchestra. There are many passages in the Beethoven symphonies that test the arranger's skill in making it work for the new medium, such as exposed passages with held chords and the like. Hummel manages them ably with the resources he has chosen.

As one final note on the funeral march, the ending demands our attention. Where we expect a simple restatement of the main theme, we instead get a barren, out-of-step version of the melody atop a simplified bass line; the melody tries to catch up, but failing that, becomes resigned in its final trudge to the close in C minor. It is allowed one final gasp before collapsing under the weight of the movement.

The scherzo is a tour de force for our fearless quartet in Hummel's arrangement.⁵⁴ It is large, around twice the lengths of the first and second symphony scherzo/minuets. In Beethoven's original sketches this movement was labeled with an "M," suggesting that Beethoven was thinking of a minuet, but that changed as the material developed. From the beginning he intended the inclusion of "a strange voice" (eine fremde Stimme) in the Coda, drawn from the chromatic material of the principal theme from the first movement.⁵⁵ This chromaticism is also baked into the opening scherzo material as well. In the trio, Hummel smartly gives the "hunting horn" music to the piano alone, which can more evenly approximate the sound and resonance that leaps from the orchestra during those passages.

When we have reached the finale, we have returned to the "Eroica's" origins. Some characteristics of the theme always make me think of the finale to Mozart's Jupiter symphony (K.551) but Beethoven's aspirations for his material are different. Lockwood sees the Finale as a connected *fantasia* in the line of Beethoven's Choral Fantasy and the finale of the ninth symphony, related to the variation tradition but with the freedom to explore. The contents of the *Prometheus* finale and the op. 35 variations were never meant to be transferred exactly, but rather elevated to a new status in the symphonic context. Beethoven seemed to have this material in mind as his starting point, and though there persists a perception among some of the movement possessing less "weight" than might be expected to close out such a gigantic symphony.⁵⁶ This may be evidence more of a commentator's need to tread down an expected path, though; at the risk of missing the joyful walk down the road provided.

The related works from which the finale emerged were referenced above, but it is worth a look at another layer of the contra dance, and the implications of the choice of the *anglaise* or *englische* as the dance for the finale of *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus*. Salvatore Viganò developed and choreographed *Prometheus* as the ballet master of the Viennese court.⁵⁷ The egalitarian overtones of the popular dance may have kept the idea percolating in Beethoven's head for a few years after initially writing it, and strange as it may seem, the *englische* may be a connection to the French turn of Beethoven's thoughts at the time. As Swafford explains,

"Dances usually have symbolic dimensions that are part of their image and popularity. The *englische* contra dance had uniquely progressive implications. The constant change of

54 The performers took the liberty of adding the original violin part to the opening of the scherzo, which in Hummel's version is for piano alone.

55 Swafford, 355.

56 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 73-5.

57 Swafford, 264.

partners as one danced down the line produced a literal mingling of classes; a nobleman might end up hand in hand with a merchant's daughter. This was not a small thing. It was something new in public social life, even radically new. In the *englische* each participant was, for the duration of the music at least, an equal *citoyen* of the dance, and for that reason the *englische* acquired a frisson of democracy.⁵⁸

For Swafford, the experience and relationship to the dance of Beethoven's theme provided an overt rationale for the symphony's composition in the first place. "From its beginning, *the goal of the symphony is the englische*. Which is to say, this dance and the ideal society for which it is a symbol are going to be exalted. The idea of an apotheosis in dance was implicit from the beginning. The Hero theme of the first movement was not a martial figure but a dance on the order of a waltz, and its half-and-quarter trochaic rhythm foreshadowed the dotted-quarter-and-eighth trochees of the *englische*. At the same time, the first three notes of the Hero theme are the same as the beginning of the *englische*: E-flat—G—E-flat."⁵⁹ This point about the "waltz" characteristics of the opening movement's "Hero" theme offers some compelling considerations; if the "Eroica" is an "apotheosis in dance" of sorts, it offers a different shade to Wagner's famous pronouncement about the seventh symphony as the "apotheosis of the dance." We'll discuss that further shortly.

It is worth noting that the culmination point, the heart of the movement, is not the huge climax one might have expected from such an imposing structure. Rather, it is the chorale-like *poco Andante* transformation of the tune presented in the winds alone, and in Hummel's version by the piano alone (a decision that allows for easier control across the tonal spectrum). As Beethoven pushes toward the symphony's close we do find further peaks to climb, or perhaps more appropriately dance to—ranging from a thematically emphatic variation to the *Presto* return of the essential dance character of the movement, with a wonderful valley of mysterious passages in between.



LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN / ANONYMOUS, Symphony no. 7 in A Major

Beethoven's Symphony no. 7 in A major, op. 92 was composed during a period of great productivity for the composer. In the time that had passed

58 Ibid., 267-8.

59 Ibid., 360.

since the premiere of his fifth and sixth symphonies, Beethoven had composed the fifth piano concerto, multiple quartets and piano sonatas, and the “Archduke” trio, among other works. When he again turned to symphonic writing in 1811, he composed the seventh and eighth symphonies in rapid succession—he even contemplated writing a ninth at this time. Like the *Eroica*, Beethoven thought highly of the seventh, and let it be known on several occasions, which was unusual for him.⁶⁰

Without delving too far afield, it should be mentioned that 1812 was the year of the “...most serious love affair of his life...”⁶¹ It was the year of the famous letter to his “Immortal Beloved,” which Lockwood identifies, “[along] with the Heiligenstadt Testament and his diary of 1812-18... is the most revealing document by him that we possess.”⁶² As is well known, Beethoven’s affairs of the heart were never met with success in the long term, and undoubtedly this affected him intensely. However, with a few exceptions, when one tries to match the speculated psychological state of Beethoven’s mind to his contemporaneous output, there does not seem to be a strong correlation. The second symphony was composed at the time of Beethoven’s deep despair as evidenced in his Heiligenstadt will of 1802, and with the seventh symphony we have an unfailingly energetic work the likes of which had not yet been imagined by the composer. The brooding intensity of the seventh’s *Allegretto* is perhaps the other side of the coin, but at the same time musical exuberance is perceived as more so when emerging from contrast.

Beethoven’s A-major symphony was premiered alongside the notorious *Wellingtons Sieg oder ie Schlacht bei Vittoria* (op. 91), “Wellington’s Victory,” in December of 1813 at the University of Vienna⁶³ This “battle symphony” was a huge success with the audience and roundly panned artistically.⁶⁴ It is humorous to consider the heavyweight musicians who were manning or leading the cannon-fire drums at the premiere: Johann Nepomuk Hummel, Antonio Salieri, and even the young Giacomo Meyerbeer.⁶⁵ Beethoven apparently complained that Meyerbeer always struck the drum late, providing another priceless image.⁶⁶ In the string section were Schuppanzigh, Romberg, Spohr, Mayseder and Dragonetti⁶⁷—not a bad group of ringers. Beethoven conducted the premiere of the seventh symphony in his idiosyncratic manner, and by accounts it was one of the

60 Grove, 270.

61 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 148.

62 Ibid.

63 Caeyers, 353.

64 Beethoven would famously respond to a critic of the piece that “...my shit is better than anything you’ve ever thought.” As quoted in Swafford, 616.

65 Lockwood *Beethoven Life*, 339.

66 Grove, 234-5.

67 Ibid., 234.

most successful of his premieres, with Spohr describing the performance of the seventh symphony as “quite masterly;” Beethoven even published a letter of thanks to his colleagues after the positive experience—a far cry from what had happened at the premiere of the fifth and sixth symphonies.⁶⁸

The seventh symphony was published in 1816 along with the eighth, and issued in at least seven authorized versions, important to note for our purposes here: “Full Score; Orchestral Parts; Arrangement for a wind band of nine instruments; for string quintet; for piano, violin and cello; for piano, four hands; for piano solo.”⁶⁹ It is unknown if Beethoven participated in the review of these particular transcriptions, or to what degree he approved of them specifically—certainly he knew the value of issuing the works in several versions, both in terms of income and dissemination. However, it appears that this edition by Steiner and Co. was not at the level Beethoven had expected, and he upbraided them roundly for the inaccuracy of its components.⁷⁰ The arrangements were anonymous, and offer an insight into the prevalent kind of arrangements that were made at the time of orchestral works for different forces—forces more likely to be available to amateurs or regional players without access to an orchestra. We will hear two of these versions as part of our (Re)Hearing Beethoven Festival: the (almost) complete version of the symphony for wind nonet, as performed by “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band, and the Allegretto movement in the version for string quintet, as performed by the Borromeo Quartet with Nicholas Cords.⁷¹ For those who have never played a wind instrument, it is important that you understand how physically demanding it is to play non-stop for such a long period of time. Beyond the technical considerations of the players, there is a fundamental difference between making sound with a wind instrument versus a string instrument: the wind player needs to breathe in order to produce a sound! So often this is forgotten by arrangers and composers; you can tell that someone has met the business end of a bassoon at some point if their writing for winds properly takes breathing into account.⁷²

Beethoven made several attempts at starting a symphony after completing the sixth before arriving at what would become the A-major seventh;

68 Ibid., 236.

69 Ibid., 237n.

70 Ibid., 267-8.

71 The particulars of this arrangement will be briefly addressed in the notes for the Borromeo Quartet’s program.

72 Even masterful orchestrators like Richard Strauss seem tempted to treat the winds as strings; look no further than his Oboe Concerto for an example where either circular breathing or bionic augmentation is required to play as written.

there is evidence that he was contemplating ideas in G major, G minor and A minor, though the latter doesn't have extant musical material, unfortunately.⁷³ The pervasive and inventively deployed rhythms of the seventh symphony have always been seen as a defining characteristic. As Jan Caeyers puts it, "[with] the seventh, he seems to have reached the bottom of the symphonic barrel, for with precious few exceptions (the slow introduction and the middle sections of the Allegretto and the Scherzo), the Seventh Symphony is essentially a nonmelodic, nonharmonic, and nontonal symphony, being dominated instead by its rhythmic elements."⁷⁴ Caeyers does not mean that in a disparaging sense (at least I think not; for many this is their favorite of the Beethoven symphonies), but rather that it marked an end to what he could seemingly accomplish with the traditions he inherited.

The seventh symphony contains no program given by Beethoven or clear extramusical associations (at least so identified by the composer), but an interesting theory came via Anton Reicha and Carl Czerny and then through Maynard Solomon that suggests that the symphony's "...rhythmic formulas might have sprung from an interest on Beethoven's part in evoking the meters of ancient Greek poetry, some of which correspond to the metrical figures that dominate each movement."⁷⁵ We know that Beethoven particularly admired Homer, but there is no direct evidence that this was a component of his thinking in this case.⁷⁶

Wagner described the seventh symphony as "the apotheosis of the dance,"⁷⁷ an assessment where more may be at play than meets the eye. Caeyers refers to the political side of Wagner's comment, which had less to do with a celebration of dance than the notion that "...the symphonic genre—which had its origins in the suite and dance forms—had reached a point of perfection. An apotheosis is both a culmination and a climax, and Wagner believed that the time of the dance-based symphony was over."⁷⁸ Such an assessment would, of course, help to explain Beethoven's inclusion of voices in the ninth symphony and ultimately validate the "evolutionary" move from purely instrumental music to the music drama, and by-the-by support Wagner's claim as an (or *the*) heir of Beethoven's mantle.

As it happens, Beethoven had been working (with relish) on a series of arrangements of Scottish, Irish and Welsh folk songs, and there was some contemporaneous conjecture as reported by Berlioz that Beethoven was

73 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 149-50.

74 Caeyers, 349.

75 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 152.

76 *Ibid.*, 153.

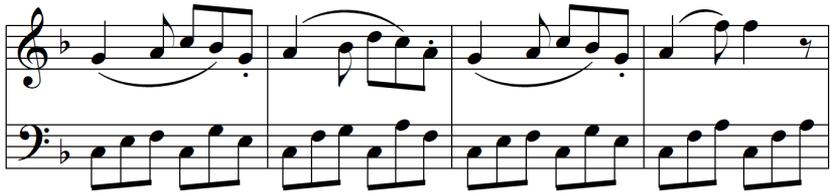
77 As quoted in Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 151.

78 Caeyers, 351.

drawing on folk traditions in the symphony, or at least writing music reminiscent of them.⁷⁹ There is one “direct melodic correspondence” between the postlude to his arrangement of “Save me from the grave and wise,” itself based on the melody “Nora Creina,” and the finale of the seventh symphony.⁸⁰

Example 3

a)



Beethoven, arrangement of “Save me from the Grave and Wise” based on “Nora Creina,” WoO 154/8: mm. 35-38, piano

b)



Beethoven, Symphony no. 7, IV: mm. 5-8, violin I

In the course of my research I came across an article from 1935 in which the author, James Travis, argues that “Celtic” elements pervade the entire symphony, and he offers a speculative but compelling bill of receipts.⁸¹ As an aside, the wealth of commentary that has emerged from the nearly 250 years of its existence in relation to Beethoven⁸² shows the value of looking back at how attitudes shift over time, and their usual lack of uniformity—a pleasant aspect, actually, as it shows that people care about the art they discuss. It is also fascinating to read what earlier commentators thought of other illustrious writers. Grove had a particular distaste for Berlioz’ speculative proposals about things like the dance origins of the seventh symphony. Humorously, he gives backhanded credit where it is due when looking at Berlioz’ Moore quotation in reference to the Allegretto:

79 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 166-7.

80 *Ibid.*, 167.

81 See Travis, James, “Celtic Elements in Beethoven’s Seventh Symphony,” *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (July, 1935), 255-265.

82 Beethoven, though precocious, was unlikely to have sparked contemporary speculation about the rhythm or pitch of his first cries, or perhaps whether there was a scowl on his face. So naturally the commentary began later.

“One fatal remembrance, one sorrow that throws
Its black shade alike o’er our joys and our woes”

Grove offers in a note that “[the] passage shows how finely Berlioz can appreciate, when he can prevent his imagination from running riot.”⁸³

With respect to Berlioz’ comments about the influence of dance on the seventh symphony, Grove was called out for his statements by the aforementioned James Travis:

“Berlioz early caught a glimmer of truth: he suggested that the *Allegro vivace* of the Seventh be considered a *Ronde des Paysans*. Grove, however, in his standard commentaries on the Symphonies, roundly berated the Frenchman, branding his suggestion an ‘outrageous proposal.’ Ironically enough, in analyzing the *Finale* of the same symphony, Grove noticed that Beethoven derived the main subject from an accompaniment he had written to the Irish folk-song ‘Nora Creina,’ a circumstance to which the composer C.V. Stanford first drew Grove’s attention. Possessed of this clue, and aware, moreover, that Beethoven’s work on Irish material probably antedated work on the Symphony, it seems odd that Grove did not investigate carefully all of Beethoven’s arrangements of Irish music. If he had done so, he would perhaps have been led to greater respect for the intuition of Berlioz, and also to discoveries that would have enabled him to write more specifically of the nature of the Symphony.”⁸⁴

The arguments of Travis are intriguing albeit inconclusive, and one comes away with an appreciation for the academic “zinger;” the passive-aggressive tone has long been a feature, not a bug, of this kind of writing.

The symphony opens with a large introduction; Lockwood sees it as occupying “slow movement” status for the symphony.⁸⁵ The 6/8 *Vivace* that follows the introduction was unusual for Beethoven to use in a first movement position.⁸⁶ Swafford describes the *Vivace* as “...a titanic gigue.”⁸⁷ The rhythmic profile of the *Vivace* theme is given in the upper winds before it is melodically presented, an unusual and effective transitional device. The key of this movement has been transposed by the arranger to G major, down a full step from the original key of A, in part because of the range constraints of the instrumentation employed: two oboes, two clarinets, two horns, two bassoons and a contrabassoon—note the missing

83 Grove, 254 and 254n.

84 Travis, 255-256.

85 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 154.

86 *Ibid.*

87 Swafford, 618.

flutes. Nevertheless, one encounters some stratospheric oboe playing in the arrangement, impressively dispatched by the musicians.

On the organizational side of the symphony's composition, there is a fascinating anecdote from publisher Johann André that came via Ferdinand Hiller. When André visited Beethoven while he was working on the composition, there were blank pages between sections, with the implication that Beethoven planned to fill in the missing sections later.⁸⁸ This is indicative of an approach to the large-scale planning of the piece. An earlier incarnation of this anecdote focuses on André's telling of the story to Hiller and Mendelssohn on the occasion of a visit they made to him, where it was ostensibly expressed "What continuity or connection *could* there be in music so composed? Mendelssohn's only answer was to keep on playing movements and bits of movements from the Symphony, till André was forced to stop for sheer delight."⁸⁹ This was a practice that Beethoven would sometimes employ so as not to become structurally unmoored from the bigger picture. Caeyers sees the evidence of Beethoven "...literally [notating] core ideas in their proper place on an empty page; the surrounding blank measures served as a spatial reminder, allowing him to check whether the work's proportions still made musical sense."⁹⁰

The coda contains a passage that Schindler "evidently falsely attributed to Carl Maria von Weber" that suggested Beethoven "was ripe for the madhouse."⁹¹ There is always a danger in perpetuating these kinds of anecdotes, especially when potentially spurious, but they do offer a window into what people may have considered acceptable or outrageous at the time. It is interesting to consider the passage that now seems innocuous to our "modern" ears, the two bars of which are repeated ten times, here in the formulation provided by Grove:

Example 4

The image shows a musical score for two staves, treble and bass clef, in the key of D major (two sharps). The music consists of two measures, each repeated ten times. The first measure features a treble staff with a half note D5, a quarter note E5, and a quarter note F#5, followed by a half note G5. The bass staff has a half note D4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note F#4, followed by a half note G4. The second measure features a treble staff with a half note A5, a quarter note B5, and a quarter note C#6, followed by a half note D6. The bass staff has a half note A3, a quarter note B3, and a quarter note C#4, followed by a half note D4. Phrasing slurs are present over the first and second measures of both staves.

Beethoven, *Symphony no. 7, I*: mm.401-4, adapted from Grove's reduction⁹²

88 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 157.

89 Grove, 238. Drawing from Hiller's *Mendelssohn*.

90 Caeyers, 188.

91 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 158.

92 Grove, 251.

The anonymous arranger had to make some important decisions to arrive at an effective transcription for winds. These include things like judiciously chosen registral shifts, such as having the oboe play a flute melody an octave lower before the clarinet comes in at the upper octave. In the original the flute might have been interacting with the violins in the same registral space without ill effect, but sometimes with two wind instruments it is helpful for them not to compete in the same register if the lines are intended to be differentiated. The experience of the symphony is quite different with this assortment of instruments in the wind nonet, given the bass weight provided by the bassoons, contrabassoon and horns—in the orchestra the bass can be tricky to adequately support, and to a degree the opposite is true in this arrangement without the benefit of flutes and violins in the treble parts. Playing a similar role as they do in the orchestra, the tutti passages where horn calls are enabled to emerge in force enhance the ensemble sound tremendously.

The *Allegretto* is one of Beethoven's most popular creations, and when the symphony was premiered this second movement was a hit from the beginning; it was even immediately encored.⁹³ The initial idea for the piece is to be found among the sketches from 1806 of the third Razumovsky quartet (op. 59/3), but as we know Beethoven went in a different direction.⁹⁴ The *Allegretto* has been transposed from its original key of A minor down a step to G minor in this arrangement. The main body of the first section was originally for the strings alone, so the orchestrational challenges in terms of creating an interesting, varied setting of the music were significant. Added to this is the omnipresent rhythm, even through the contrasting “break in the clouds” sections, the articulation of which is central to the relentless march we undertake in the movement. The fugato variation cannot break its rhythmic chains, both feature and fortress of the movement.

Analytical stances toward the *Allegretto* generally view it as a “freely developing set of variations” or a “freely handled rondo that has some affinities with the form of the *Eroica* Funeral March.”⁹⁵ It is interesting to note that later in the 19th century the discrepancies between articulations in the manuscript and Haslinger edition versus the complete edition by Breitkopf were noticed; in the Breitkopf version the articulations were altered in a significant way. “Surely this should not have been done without a note to call attention to the change.”⁹⁶ The resulting suppression of this original, more complete information shows the value of efforts like that of Nicholas Kitchen to rehabilitate awareness of such markings and their possible meanings in contemporary practice.

93 Swafford, 621.

94 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 159.

95 *Ibid.*, 160.

96 Grove, 252.

The arranger of the nonet version of the *Allegretto* made numerous interesting orchestrational decisions to overcome the challenges the work presents. These include the thoughtful use of instrumental *tessitura*, such as the high bassoon for melodic presentation. Another effective use of resources involves deploying the rich power of the horns to fill out the sound in lieu of upper-register winds. If one allows oneself to forget the original, the arranger's solution is quite effective and offers a new way to consider the music. I think that another aspect of the piece that affects the listener in whatever version one experiences it, is the psychological impact of ending with the same chord that began the movement. The implied circularity of this decision, as well as the unimpeded rhythmic pulse of the movement, gives the impression that this music could actually go on forever unless something were to break the cycle.

The vitality of the scherzo is exactly what was needed to liberate the listener from the beautifully oppressive realm of the *Alle-grotto*. The orchestral version of this movement is in five parts, and was the largest scherzo movement that Beethoven had yet written. Incidentally, there is some evidence that Beethoven may have initially intended some of the scherzo material for the first movement.⁹⁷ In the present wind nonet version, the original key of F major is retained and the five-part scherzo has essentially been truncated to three parts, with the removal of the second appearances of the *Assai meno presto* and primary *Presto* material. The rationale for so doing is clear if you are a wind player—playing a symphony of this size is already a massive feat of endurance, and given the relentless nature of the scherzo, the indefatigable musicians can only remain so if some accommodations like this are made.⁹⁸ We still get to hear all aspects of the movement, including the remarkable wind playing present in the sustained upper-register tones during the trio⁹⁹—a part originally handled with ease by the violins. Clever accommodations are also made to give the players periodic rests in the distribution of material.

With the last movement the arranger returns the nonet version to G major instead of the original A major, as might have been expected. Somehow Beethoven manages to ramp up the already extreme energy of the scherzo for this raucous romp of a finale. This was apparently not Beethoven's original intention, however, as he initially sketched ideas for the movement that would not have been in keeping with the rhythmic

97 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 163.

98 Even so, in this recording the first repeat is taken in the first appearance of the primary material and in the trio.

99 Grove offers that, via Thayer and on the authority of Abbé Stadler, this trio of the scherzo is based on an Austrian pilgrims' hymn—an "instance of Beethoven's indifference to the sources of his materials when they were what he wanted, and would submit to his treatment." Grove, 257-8.

drive of the symphony as a whole.¹⁰⁰ In this movement we find the first use by Beethoven of the dynamic marking *fff* in a symphony at the end.¹⁰¹ The vibrant explosion of sound at the beginning launches the music into a sonata-form¹⁰² dance party where the feet are ever flying.

David Plylar
Senior Music Specialist
Library of Congress, Music Division



About the Artists

Established by an Act of Congress in 1798, the **United States Marine Band** is America's oldest continuously active professional musical organization. Its mission is unique—to provide music for the President of the United States and the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

President John Adams invited the Marine Band to make its White House debut on New Year's Day, 1801, in the then-unfinished Executive Mansion. In March of that year, the band performed for Thomas Jefferson's inauguration and it is believed that it has performed for every presidential inaugural since. In Jefferson, the band found its most visionary advocate. An accomplished musician himself, Jefferson recognized the unique relationship between the band and the Chief Executive and he is credited with giving the Marine Band its title, "The President's Own."

Whether performing for State Dinners or South Lawn arrivals, events of national significance, or receptions, Marine Band musicians appear at the White House an average of 200 times each year. These performances range from small ensembles such as a jazz combo or brass quintet to a country band, dance band or full concert band. The diversity of music often presented at the Executive Mansion makes versatility an important requirement for Marine Band members. Musicians are selected at auditions much like those of major symphony orchestras, and they enlist in the U.S. Marine Corps for permanent duty with the Marine Band. Most

100 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 165-6.

101 *Ibid.*, 165.

102 Well, at least in the original version this is the case. In the nonet version, the development is skipped, and 16 measures are dropped during the bass oscillation buildup late in the movement. Those who know the symphony well will notice, while the omissions may not be missed for those listening with fresh ears.

of today's members are graduates of the nation's finest music schools, and more than 60 percent hold advanced degrees in music.

Each fall, the Marine Band travels throughout a portion of the continental United States during its concert tour, a tradition initiated in 1891 by "The March King" John Philip Sousa, who was the band's legendary 17th Director. As Director from 1880–92, Sousa brought "The President's Own" to an unprecedented level of excellence and shaped the band into a world-famous musical organization. Since Sousa's time, the band's musical reach has extended beyond America's borders on several occasions with performances in England, Norway, Ireland, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Singapore, and the former Soviet Union. During Sousa's tenure, the Marine Band was one of the first musical ensembles to make sound recordings. By 1892, more than 200 different titles were available for sale, placing Sousa's marches among the first and most popular pieces ever recorded.

Given its status among American musical organizations, "The President's Own" continues to attract prominent guest conductors from major orchestras around the globe, including Osmo Vänskä, Leonard Slatkin, José Serebrier and Gerard Schwarz. On July 12, 2003, the Marine Band celebrated its 205th anniversary in a concert at the Kennedy Center featuring guest conductor John Williams, renowned composer of American film and concert works and laureate conductor of the Boston Pops Orchestra. Williams returned to the podium in 2008 to conduct the final concert of the *Living History* concert series celebrating the Marine Band's 210th anniversary. In honor of the Marine Band's 215th birthday, John Williams composed and dedicated an original work to the Marine Band aptly titled "For 'The President's Own.'"

The Marine Band's integral role in the national culture and in the government's official life has affirmed the importance of the arts as a bridge between people. Since 1798, the Marine Band's mission has been to provide music for the President of the United States and the Commandant of the Marine Corps. As the only musical organization with that mission, the Marine Band looks to the future, viewing its history and tradition as the foundation upon which to build its third century of bringing music to the White House and to the American people.



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BORROMEO
STRING QUARTET
WITH NICHOLAS CORDS, VIOLA

NICHOLAS KITCHEN & KRISTOPHER TONG, *VIOLIN*
MAI MOTBUCHI, *VIOLA*
YEESUN KIM, *CELLO*

PROGRAM

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827) / ANONYMOUS / NICHOLAS KITCHEN

Transcription for string quintet

Symphony no. 7 in A major, op. 92 (1811-12)

Allegretto (♩ = 76)

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN / ANONYMOUS / NICHOLAS KITCHEN

Transcription for string quintet

Symphony no. 8 in F major, op. 93 (1812)

Allegro vivace e con brio (♩ = 69)

Allegretto scherzando (♩ = 88)

Tempo di Menuetto (♩ = 126)

Allegro vivace (♩ = 84)

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

String Quartet in B-flat major, op. 130,

with original ending, the *Grosse Fuge*, op. 133 (1825)

Adagio ma non troppo—Allegro—Tempo primo—Allegro...

Presto

Poco scherzoso: *Andante con moto ma non troppo*

Alla danza tedesca: *Allegro assai*

Cavatina: *Adagio molto espressivo*

Grosse Fuge: Overtura: Allegro—Meno mosso e moderato—

Allegro—Fuga: Allegro—Meno mosso e moderato—Allegro molto e

con brio—meno mosso e moderato—Allegro molto e con brio—

Allegro—meno mosso e moderato—Allegro molto e con brio



About the Program

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN / ANONYMOUS / KITCHEN Symphony no. 7 in A Major, *Allegretto*

For a broader discussion of Beethoven's Symphony no. 7, please see the notes earlier in this booklet¹⁰³ related to the performance of the full symphony by "The President's Own" United States Marine Band. The abbreviated notes below will discuss a few elements pertaining to the string quintet version of the *Allegretto*.

The seventh symphony was published in 1816 along with the eighth, and issued in at least seven authorized versions, important to note for our purposes here: "Full Score; Orchestral Parts; Arrangement for a wind band of nine instruments; for string quintet; for piano, violin and cello; for piano, four hands; for piano solo."¹⁰⁴ It is unknown if Beethoven participated in the review of these particular transcriptions, or to what degree he approved of them specifically—certainly he knew the value of issuing the works in several versions, both in terms of income and dissemination. However, it appears that this edition by Steiner and Co. was not at the level Beethoven had expected, and he upbraided them roundly for the inaccuracy of its components.¹⁰⁵ The arrangements were anonymous, and offer an insight into the prevalent kind of arrangements that were made at the time of orchestral works for different forces—forces more likely to be available to amateurs or regional players without access to an orchestra. We will hear two of these versions as part of our (Re)Hearing Beethoven Festival: the (almost) complete version of the symphony for wind nonet, as performed by "The President's Own" United States Marine Band (examined a bit earlier in these notes), and the *Allegretto* movement in the version for string quintet, as performed by the Borromeo Quartet with Nicholas Cords.

Before exploring the quintet version a bit further, it must be noted that the anonymous arrangement has actually been further adapted by the first violinist of the Borromeo Quartet, Nicholas Kitchen. As you can discover in Kitchen's companion lecture to this performance, intensive study of Beethoven's manuscripts has led him to more precisely delineate levels of dynamics and articulation when performing Beethoven's music. These markings are clearly present in Beethoven's manuscripts, and consistently so, but have not been transmitted with care via published editions. Kitchen's intervention in both the quintet versions of the seventh and eighth symphonies included adapting the arrangement's markings to

103 Notes for the seventh symphony start on page 28 of this booklet.

104 Grove., 237n.

105 Ibid., 267-8.

better reflect the details of the primary sources.

In a sense, the arranger of the *Allegretto* for string quintet had it a bit easier than whoever did the wind nonet, at least at the start, because after the initial chord in the winds, Beethoven scores the music for strings alone. However, even when scored for string quintet in the original, it is not a simple transfer of notes. Consider this chart of the string instrumentation side by side, and you'll see that the arranger has a bass-ic problem to overcome:

<u>Orchestral</u>	<u>String Quintet</u>
Violin I	Violin I
Violin II	Violin II
Viola	Viola I
-----	Viola II
Cello I	Cello
Cello II	-----
Contrabass	-----

If one were hoping to do a one-to-one transfer of the notes, and ignoring the fact that the contrabass sounds an octave lower, the first problem would occur at measure 4 when two notes are below the viola's lowest pitch (without altering the tuning). If all the pitches are to sound—and in this case they are harmonically significant—the cello must play a double stop (playing two pitches at once), which it does, but bear in mind that not all combinations of double-stops are possible, so the arranger has to be careful. Additionally, the violins are not usable because the music is too low in register until measure 27, when they at least come in and add their resources to the transcriber's toolbox.

The arranger manages the reintroduction of winds in an interesting and effective way, given the limited number of notes and lines that can be played at once with five instruments. The quintet version is given below with the oboe and bassoon entrances from the orchestral version shown where they would occur in the orchestral version; note how the second viola plays loud triple stops (bracketed in Example 5) on beat 2 to create a texture change that is timed to coincide with where the winds would enter. The pitches are represented, but not always in the same register as they are in the winds:

Example 5

Oboes
cresc.

Bassoons
cresc.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc.

il forte *più* *forte*

Beethoven, Symphony no. 7, II: mm. 65-70, quintet version
plus winds from orchestral version

And then when the full orchestra enters a short while later, a strong orchestrational decision to present the omnipresent rhythm in octaves in one of the violas contributes to the intensity of the passage:

Example 6

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. I

Vla. II

Vc.

ffmo

ffmo

ffmo

ffmo

ffmo

3

3

3

3

3

3

Beethoven, Symphony no. 7, II: mm. 75-78, quintet version

While we may lose some of the melodic clarity in the contrasting A-major sections, a balance is struck with the instruments at hand to offer a full and rich accounting of the material, and we hear the accompanimental material elevated to a higher profile, offering an interesting take on the music. The last note I will mention here is that the arranger wisely utilized Beethoven's indications of *pizzicato* in the strings. This is such a powerful device in the orchestral version, not only for the value-in-itself of the textural changes, but also for the striking effect it has as the movement nears its close and the winds offer snippets of the rhythm/theme in progressively lower registers, until the moment when the austere plucked notes of the strings close out the phrases. This technique still works beautifully in the quintet version, given the sonic distinction between bowed and plucked strings.



LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN / ANONYMOUS / KITCHEN Symphony no. 8 in F Major

“It may be said of it, as has been said of Beethoven himself, who was shorter in stature than most men, that ‘within that limited space is concentrated the pluck of twenty battalions.’”¹⁰⁶

Beethoven's Symphony no. 8 in F major, op. 93 suffered the fate of the fourth symphony, emerging as it did in the shadow of another epoch-rhymal work of immense stature. But it is a mistake to let its seemingly diminutive proportions allow you to dismiss it as a throwback, a pastiche. “Usually described as a creature of wit and charm, somewhat in the manner of Haydn, its surface appropriation of classical-period dimensions masks its subtleties and forward-looking features.”¹⁰⁷ When Czerny informed Beethoven that the reception of the eighth was less positive than the seventh,¹⁰⁸ Beethoven's reported response was “That's because it's so much better!” Swafford summed it up with “[Beethoven's] audience was apt to be disappointed now when they found Beethoven not being ‘Beethovenian’ enough.”¹⁰⁹

Many authors see in the humor of the symphony a character study of Beethoven himself, as perhaps he was more routinely distinct from the

106 Grove, 276.

107 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 169.

108 People were “swiping left” without getting to know it, to bring in a modern parallel that is sure to be obsolete within a few years.

109 Swafford, 626.

surly image many hold of the composer. The symphony is grand in tone and memory if not in proportions, and it is in a sense a reminiscence; the return to the minuet in place of the scherzo certainly tells part of that story.¹¹⁰ Even Grove perceived it this way: "...but in No. 8, if we must label this immortal work, it is sufficient to say that, perhaps more than any other of the nine, it is a portrait of the author in daily life, in his habit as he lived..."¹¹¹

It appears that the symphony was written closely on the heels of the seventh, in the space of four months and in different circumstances than Beethoven's usual practice of sketching the symphonies during the summer and orchestrating/polishing them during the winter.¹¹² The turbulence in Beethoven's life does not always seem to bear a direct correspondence to what we hear in his output—consider the second symphony in light of the outpouring of emotion in the Heiligenstadt Testament, for instance—but the humor and affect of the eighth symphony is not inconsistent with Beethoven's ability to simultaneously be refined and brusque. It was during this symphony's period of composition that Beethoven is said to have embarrassed Goethe shortly after meeting him with his disrespectful behavior toward the Austrian royal family,¹¹³ Beethoven may have made a show of not bowing to royalty, but he at least gives a nod to courtly tradition in his symphony.

The eighth symphony was premiered about a year after the seventh, on Feb. 27, 1814 at the Great Redoutensaal in Vienna, along with performances of the seventh, a reprise of the "Battle of Victoria" and "Tremate, empi tremate"¹¹⁴ for vocal trio and orchestra (op. 116).¹¹⁵ The symphony was published again by Steiner a year after the seventh in 1817, and unusually for such a major work, it was published without a dedication.¹¹⁶

Exceptionally among Beethoven's symphonies, the eighth was not initially conceived purely as a symphony.¹¹⁷ There are extensive sketches for the eighth symphony, but not all are available to scholars. From the first movement sketches, however, it is evident that Beethoven initially intended the work to be a piano concerto, and dedicated a fair amount of space to exploring that idea.¹¹⁸ From the evidence available in the sketchbooks, the eighth was the only symphony to have sketch material

110 Ibid., 625.

111 Grove, 282.

112 Ibid., 271-2.

113 Ibid., 273.

114 Ibid., 279.

115 This rarity is a nice piece, and worth checking out in my opinion.

116 Lockwood *Beethoven Life*, 196.

117 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 148.

118 Ibid., 172-3.

not associated with the symphonic form its initial conception.¹¹⁹

As we turn to the music and its anonymous transcription for string quintet, it must be mentioned that as with the quintet version of the seventh, Nicholas Kitchen has modified the arrangement to better fit the dynamics and articulations indicated in the primary sources. These stylistic aspects are perhaps more critical in such a refined piece. “If its return to late eighteenth-century symphonic proportions is a defining feature, so is the idiosyncratic character of each movement, in which surprise and paradox stand out more sharply than in any other Beethoven symphony.”¹²⁰

For a “light” work, the first movement manages to economically ratchet the tension up over its course in a manner that shades the sunny disposition presented at the outset. With its pervasive string tremolos—a feature retained naturally enough in the quintet version—we simultaneously bask in the music’s warmth as we are propelled through it. There are several approaches the arranger could have taken with respect to orchestrating this movement, and the choices made are largely effective in differentiating the instrumental groupings.

One moment that is particularly interesting to hear in the quintet version occurs at the recapitulation. Jan Caeyers sees the obfuscation of the return of the principal theme, given its relegation to the basses, cellos and bassoons only, not as an orchestrational error, but rather “it is a clear and unmistakable artistic statement.”¹²¹ The issue at hand may be in determining where the recapitulation actually begins,¹²² but the relative clarity with which the cello presents the bass melody in the quintet’s version of the tutti context offers a new window into the passage. Beethoven closes the movement with the return of the opening gesture—a technique winked at some 70 years later in another F-major symphony: Brahms’ third.¹²³

The *Allegretto scherzando* is Beethoven’s shortest symphonic movement, a fact bemoaned by all who are taken in by its charms. Hector Berlioz remarked that the movement appeared to have “fallen from heaven and to

119 Ibid., 173.

120 Ibid., 171.

121 Caeyers, 350.

122 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 179-80.

123 As an aside, it is worth mentioning that it appears that Beethoven may have lengthened the coda of the first movement by some 34 measures after the first performance, based on a pre-publication surviving part. Grove, 291. It goes to show that works we may perceive as “perfectly proportioned” may at different points in the process be deemed acceptable by their creator. Nothing is truly inevitable; in general I have no doubt that a talented composer can manage to work with the same material in any number of ways that would be seen in isolation as “the only way it could have been written.”

have immediately entered the composer’s mind.”¹²⁴ Grove gives the lie to the notion that the movement was written at a sitting as Berlioz suggests, given the copious sketch material that exists for the *Allegretto scherzando*. Things that sound simple are often the most difficult to get right: “Here, as so often elsewhere, in both literature and art, what appears most spontaneous has been the most laboured.”¹²⁵

This movement, for all of its brevity, is not without some juicy controversy. First, however, we must make a laconic observation: “The opening woodwind chords, with their steadily repeated staccato sixteenths, evoke the opening of the *Andante* of Haydn’s ‘Clock’ Symphony [HI:101], as listeners have noted time out of mind and which Beethoven probably knew better than anyone.”¹²⁶ If the clock reference strikes a chord, it may have inspired a misleading forgery in an attempt to bolster a theory about Beethoven’s practice of assigning metronome markings. Anton Schindler is at the center of a persistent anecdote that Beethoven wrote a “Ta ta ta” canon (WoO 162, for which, importantly, no autograph exists) about Maelzel the metronome maker; allegedly this canon was the source material for the *Allegretto scherzando* of the symphony. Caeyers lists a host of reasons as to why Schindler’s story doesn’t add up. A key component here is that the metronome markings between the canon and symphony are not the same, suggesting that there is significant flexibility in Beethoven’s metronomic prescriptions. “The canon is no more than a bastardization of the Allegretto theme, conceived by Schindler in his ardor to promote slower Beethoven tempi.”¹²⁷

Consider the first line of the canon against the opening melody in the symphony:

Example 7

a)

ta ta, lie - ber, lie - ber Mäl - zel,

Beethoven/Schindler, “Ta ta ta” Canon, WoO 162, first line

124 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 180.

125 Grove, 294.

126 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 181. It is always interesting to see how different commentators handle staple comparisons or anecdotes; sometimes there is a resignation that yes, indeed this comparison must be made even though everyone else makes it too.

127 Caeyers, 440-1.

b)

(♩ = 88)
Allegretto scherzando

Vln. I
pp

Vln. II
pizz.

Vla. I
pp
sempre staccato

Vla. II
pp
sempre staccato

Vc.
pp

Beethoven, Symphony no. 8, II: mm. 1-4, quintet version

“This association has given rise to the erroneous presumption that the Eighth Symphony is humorous in nature,¹²⁸ and also fuels the deep-seated conviction that Beethoven’s metronome markings were incorrect. Unlike the symphony’s *Allegretto scherzando*, to be played at [eighth note = 88], the canon’s prescribed tempo is drastically slower at only [eighth note = 72]. If Beethoven thus allocated two fundamentally different values to the same piece of music, then they—and by extension all others—should be treated with caution...”¹²⁹ If the canon was indeed a forgery by Schindler, then it was a bit of an on-the-nose plan to draw attention to Beethoven’s metronome markings.

The third movement is also brief and attractive. As Lockwood writes, “[Beethoven’s] portfolio of dance compositions serves as the backdrop to the Eighth Symphony’s ‘Tempo di Menuetto,’ a movement that is not so much an imitation of Haydn and Mozart as a modernistic reflection upon the masterly third movements that abound in their symphonies and string quartets.”¹³⁰ For the opening melody, Grove notes that “[the] sketch-book shows that, contrary to his usual fortune, Beethoven found this melody almost at once.”¹³¹ The hunting horns of the trio are given to the violas—perhaps a clear choice, but nonetheless the right one.

128 This may be lost in the translation of Caeyers’ work, as there are clearly humorous aspects to this symphony that seem intentional. Perhaps it is meant that the piece is not a throwaway work done for a laugh, which of course it is not.

129 Caeyers, 440.

130 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 182.

131 Grove, 295.

Occasionally transcriptions can have a practical effect on performance of the original. The eighth offers an interesting case of this; there was a disputed rhythmic change that came into play in a newer edition that altered a horn part's rhythm without comment. Conductor (and formidable pianist) Hans von Bülow reverted to the original version based on purportedly holographic corrections by Beethoven that existed in a four-hands version of the symphony owned by Brahms.¹³² These are living documents, and the last word is not always the last word.

The ebullient energy of the first movement returns in the closing movement of the eighth symphony. The relative ease with which the strings can play this music renders the quintet version absolutely effective in performance. Grove sees the principal theme as possibly inspired by the last movement theme of Haydn's G-major "Letter V" symphony (HI:88). Consider the two themes side by side and the relationship is clear:

Example 8

a)



Haydn, Symphony no. 88 in G major, IV: extracted melody¹³³

b)



Beethoven, Symphony no. 8, IV: mm. 1-5, extracted melody

Evidently Beethoven knew the piece because he used the *Largo* theme from the same symphony at least five times in other works.¹³⁴

Before finishing with some thoughts on the quintet orchestration, the infamous C-sharp should be mentioned.¹³⁵ "The story of the intrusive C-sharp and its influence on the movement has been told many times, and there are some observers for whom it is not a master-stroke but a trick in questionable taste."¹³⁶ Swafford sees the sudden appearances of

132 Ibid., 296-7.

133 As given in Grove, 299.

134 Grove, 299n.

135 You know: remember when you would get tucked into bed as a child and you would beg your parents to tell you about the C-sharp in Beethoven's eighth symphony? Just one more time?

136 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 185.

the C-sharp as a joke with no consequences at first, coming from the first movement.¹³⁷ It gains traction when “[the] errant flat returns as D-flat, wrenching the music into the key of D-flat; then again as C-sharp, turning the music to C-sharp minor; then again as the dominant of F-sharp minor, forcing the music into a potentially catastrophic clash—because the brasses, still tuned to F major, are picking up their instruments. Just as a horrendous tonal pileup looms, the music simply slips down from F-sharp minor to F-major with the entry of the brass... Here in a comic context is another example of the way Beethoven invests a single element, this time a simple tonic chord, with a significance that resonates with everything that came before.”¹³⁸ My view is that, while humorous, the note is not in poor taste or a joke without consequences; rather, it projects both the harmonic and melodic moves that will develop in the movement. For instance, the A-flat major theme directly follows G-major, and the melody itself contains the motion, thus developing the maneuver early in the movement.

There are many places in the finale where the arranger makes some very effective decisions that contribute to the dramatic impact of the performance. For instance, just before the music reaches a crucial reset point we hear an alternation of quiet music in the upper register followed by, in the orchestral version, an interruptive motive in the bass. To reinforce that gesture, the arranger first presents the interrupting gesture in a viola/cello combination at the same octave, and then broadens it with the gesture in octaves:

Example 9

The musical score for Example 9 consists of five staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola I, Viola II, and Cello. The music is in 3/4 time and one flat. The first measure shows a melodic phrase in the violins and violas. The second measure features a triplet of eighth notes in the violins and violas, marked *pp*. The third measure continues the melodic phrase. The fourth measure shows a triplet of eighth notes in the violins and violas, marked *pp*, and a melodic phrase in the cello, marked *f*. The fifth measure continues the melodic phrase in the violins and violas, marked *pp*, and the cello, marked *f*.

Beethoven, Symphony no. 8, IV: mm. 279-81, quintet version (simplified dynamics)

137 Swafford, 625.
 138 Ibid., 625-6.

Another passage worth mentioning here occurs near the end of the piece, when a quiet bed of *tremolandi* in the strings is subtly punctuated by rising and falling held dyads in the winds. The arranger’s solution works very well—continue the *tremolandi* from before for continuity, and have the strings keep the rapid repeated notes going while outlining the wind dyads. The *misterioso* effect works beautifully:

Example 10

The musical score for Example 10 consists of five staves: Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla. I, Vla. II, and Vc. The key signature is B-flat major and the time signature is 3/4. The string parts (Vln. I, Vln. II, and Vc.) play a continuous tremolo of eighth notes, marked 'p' and '3 sim.'. The wind parts (Vla. I and Vla. II) play held dyads, marked 'ppp' and '3 sim.'. Arrows indicate the continuation of the tremolandi from the previous section.

Beethoven, Symphony no. 8, IV: mm. 463-467, quintet version, arrows added

One is struck by the “unlabored” unity of the work as whole, the little correspondences between the movements; and the string quartet setting enhances the feeling of a united spirit throughout, presented with the intimacy of a chamber ensemble.



LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN, String Quartet in B-flat major & the *Grosse Fuge*

“tantôt libre, tantôt recherchée”¹³⁹

Beethoven composed a series of three quartets at the request of Prince Nikolaus Galitzin (these included op. 127, op. 132, and lastly, op. 130, completed in 1825). It is clear from the conversation books and knowledge

¹³⁹ “Partly free, partly studied,” inscribed on the title page of the *Grosse Fuge* by Beethoven; as quoted in Caeyers, 522.

of Beethoven's interactions with the publishers involved that he intended the *Grosse Fuge* ("grand fugue") to be the concluding movement of the B-flat quartet and had reasons to want the three quartets published together, although they were not. Though he was active in the process of revision, and acceded to the request to provide an alternative finale to op. 130, Beethoven did not live to see the publication of the quartet plus the *Grosse Fuge*, and in fact was not fully paid by Galitzin either (the estates of both men settled only in 1852).¹⁴⁰ The whole process of the finale's substitution is an interesting one that artists continue to debate, and ultimately they advocate one way or another with each performance.¹⁴¹

There are worthwhile traits in each version of the op. 130 quartet (with the fugal finale or the replacement), but given the way in which the *Cavatina* moves harmonically into each version of the finale, it makes the most sense to just pick one or the other in performance, unless one is presenting the fugue as a separate work. It took a long time for the *Grosse Fuge* to gain acceptance as a viable piece, but Beethoven clearly saw its worth well enough to insist on producing a four-hands version of it, designated as his op. 134.¹⁴² In any case the fugue seemed to be on Beethoven's mind from the very beginning of the project: "He wanted a weighty and portentous introduction to his first movement; although he also tried out a number of short ideas for possible finale themes, he foresaw that the work should end with a fugal finale."¹⁴³ Lockwood describes the form of the whole quartet as less integrated than some of the others: "The whole is... much more nearly a string of pearls of different colors and facets of light than any of the other late quartets..."¹⁴⁴

The opening movement of op. 130 is a study in contrasts. A seemingly docile unison opening line crescendos to a C-minor chord (the first vertical harmonization) before resolving to F major. This *Adagio ma non troppo* material continues, expanding its scope to include rising chromatic lines, a repeated-note figure and ornamented descending lines (these ornaments are melodically and motivically significant). This music is suddenly interrupted by music in a much faster tempo (*Allegro*). The material here features spry sixteenth notes in the top voice in an ordered descent that mirrors the earlier descending lines, while a repeated-note melodic gesture is presented in the second line. Both the *Adagio* and *Allegro* music feature a sudden change back to a piano dynamic after a single measure. It is worth looking at the music of these two opening

140 Cadenbach, Rainer, Preface to *Beethoven, Streichquartett opus 130, Grosse Fuge opus 133* (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 2007), V-VIII.

141 See Lockwood *Beethoven Life*, 459-61 for an overview of the timeline and attendant issues.

142 Lockwood *Beethoven Life*, 461.

143 *Ibid.*, 458.

144 *Ibid.*

tempos side-by-side:

Example 11

a)



Beethoven, String Quartet in B-flat, op. 130, I: mm. 1-2, condensed

b)

Beethoven, String Quartet in B-flat, op. 130, I: mm. 14-16, condensed

These tempi alternate for a bit before Beethoven "settles" into the *Allegro* for the bulk of the movement's exposition. These back-and-forth juxtapositions continue into the development, but there is a noticeable smoothing out of their relationship to one another, as the *Allegro* material accretes more lyrical elements. While relationships remain, as they always do in Beethoven's music, the music develops unexpected characteristics in the central section. The return of the exposition's cadential material, now in B-flat instead of G-flat, leads to a reprise of the tempo alternation scheme for the final page of the movement. One of the accomplishments here is that despite the accelerated alternation between the two music types, the coda as a whole feels like a homecoming; that is, the listener now finds familiarity in the juxtaposition of contrasting ideas.

The Library of Congress possesses the holograph manuscript of the brief *Presto* movement of op. 130 in its collection. This scherzo movement is one of the great character pieces in Beethoven's quartet output, and his use of "loud" silences is particularly effective. There is a striking transitional passage back to the opening material and B-flat minor, where Beethoven

changes the texture to a single voice in a descending line that terminates in sudden forte hammer-blows on F and G-flat:

Example 12

The musical score for Example 12 is presented in two systems. The first system shows a single melodic line in the treble clef, starting with a half note G4, followed by a dotted half note F4, and then a descending eighth-note line: E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3. The second system shows the continuation of this line, ending with a forte hammer-blow on F3 and G-flat3. The bass clef part is mostly silent, with some accompaniment in the second system. The tempo marking 'primo tempo' is above the first measure.

Beethoven, String Quartet in B-flat, op. 130, II: mm. 54-57, condensed

It happens again before leading back to the main material, where the violin's melodic shape of F to G-flat makes belated sense of the gesture. These "surprise" gestures give Beethoven a compelling way to punctuate structure and drama, as we found earlier in the program with the C-sharp from the finale of the eighth symphony.

The third movement is another dual-purpose construct; this time not differentiated by tempo, but rather by "seriousness" of character. Beethoven's indication of *poco scherzoso* is absent in the first two measures, but clearly emerges by the third. There is a lightness to the music of this movement as opposed to any overt jocularity, and at times there is a magical blending of the light and the serious, as when a beautiful and unexpected melody emerges atop the texture at points of structural significance:

Example 13

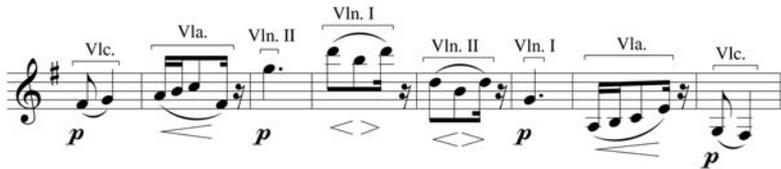
The musical score for Example 13 is presented in two systems. The first system shows a melodic line in the treble clef, starting with a half note G4, followed by a dotted half note F4, and then a descending eighth-note line: E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3. The second system shows the continuation of this line, ending with a forte hammer-blow on F3 and G-flat3. The bass clef part is mostly silent, with some accompaniment in the second system. The tempo marking 'cantabile' is above the first measure, and the dynamic marking 'p' is below the first measure.

Beethoven, String Quartet in B-flat, op. 130, III: mm. 26-27, condensed

This lyrical vein continues into the lovely fourth movement, the Danza alla tedesca. This waltz was "lifted from an early plan for Opus 132."¹⁴⁵ Its simplicity is misleading; there are so many details of dynamic control and orchestration that I can imagine it might be restrictive to players at
145 Ibid., 459.

first. Much of the brief movement is spent in varied presentations of the opening theme, but the second section also features a transformation of a prominent theme from the first movement, namely the one found in the second violin part above in Example 11b. While the variations chart a trajectory of increasingly florid variation, there is a remarkable passage near the close of the movement where Beethoven deconstructs the melody into its simplest components, dispersed across the multiple instruments and registers. Consider a reduction of this passage showing the composite melody but notating the changes in instrumentation with brackets:

Example 14



Beethoven, String Quartet in B-flat, op. 130, IV: mm. 129-136, condensed

The fifth movement is the celebrated *Cavatina*, yet another in the line of exquisite lyrical slow movements that permeate Beethoven's output. The piece is perhaps the most-transcribed of Beethoven's quartet movements, so has enjoyed a life outside of the context of op. 130. The contrasting section with triplet accompaniment and a beat-defying melody is reminiscent of a technique used in another great slow movement, the *Adagio sostenuto* from the "Hammerklavier" sonata, op. 106.¹⁴⁶ It is said that "Beethoven himself considered the Cavatina to be the work's crowning glory."¹⁴⁷

The Borromeo Quartet will perform Beethoven's original finale to op. 130, the *Grosse Fuge*, later published separately as op. 133. For Igor Stravinsky, the *Grosse Fuge* was an "...absolutely contemporary piece of music that will be contemporary forever... it is pure interval music, this fugue, and I love it beyond any other."¹⁴⁸

The movement is complicated, representing a summit of Beethoven's contrapuntal technique. It pushed the concept of what a fugue could be at the time, and there is still disagreement about elements of its structure and interpretation. Thematic material is introduced via an introductory "overture," replete with the interpretively intriguing tied eighths at the

146 The "Hammerklavier," also in B-flat, shares other traits in common with the later quartet, especially when considering the *Grosse Fuge* as the finale. We will explore that monumental work as part of the (Re)Hearing Beethoven Festival.

147 Caeyers, 440-1.

148 As quoted in Caeyers, 522.

beginning of the Allegro (a feature carried into the four-hands version, incidentally). Beethoven explores the thematic material of the overture in the main body of the fugue through intricately developed double fugues on several themes, contrasting developmental episodes, variant textures and the exploration of different key areas. Jan Caeyers describes it as "... in fact only 40 percent fugue; the rest is a virtuosic blend of sonata and variation form."¹⁴⁹ Lockwood offers a great overview of the work from three different perspectives:

- 1) Considered in ten sections: "Overtura," Double fugue, Double fugato, "March" episode, Double fugue, "Fantasy," Double fugato with transition, March," Coda 1 and Coda 2;
- 2) Considered as a sonata form;
- 3) Considered as akin to a multi-movement work.¹⁵⁰

Space does not allow a proper analysis of this monument of the literature, but the enjoyment of the work does not rely on a demanding intellectual assessment of the material. The richness of the music allows for an instinctive appreciation of the work's narrative. This, combined with tactics like brief thematic reminiscences, allows one to follow the piece's dramatic arc. In thinking of the fugue as the conclusion to the full quartet, it can be helpful to consider the continued role of contrasting tempos and figurations that occur in the fugue, sometimes in juxtaposition and sometimes simultaneously. Such musical decisions were not without risk, and that they proved so successful in the end is thanks to the intersection of Beethoven's compositional skills with the intrepid quartets who have mastered the music.

David Pylar
Senior Music Specialist
Library of Congress, Music Division



149 Ibid., 522.

150 Lockwood *Beethoven Life*, 464-5.

About the Artists

Each visionary performance of the award-winning **Borromeo String Quartet** strengthens and deepens its reputation as one of the most important ensembles of our time. Admired and sought after for both its fresh interpretations of the classical music canon and its championing of works by 20th- and 21st-century composers, the ensemble has been hailed for its “edge-of-the-seat performances” by the Boston Globe, which called it “simply the best.”

Inspiring audiences for more than 25 years, the Borromeo continues to be a pioneer in its use of technology, and has the trailblazing distinction of being the first string quartet to utilize laptop computers on the concert stage. Reading music this way helps push artistic boundaries, allowing the artists to perform solely from 4-part scores and composers’ manuscripts, a revealing and metamorphic experience which these dedicated musicians now teach to students around the world. As the New York Times noted, “The digital tide washing over society is lapping at the shores of classical music. The Borromeo players have embraced it in their daily musical lives like no other major chamber music group.” Moreover, the Quartet often leads discussions enhanced by projections of handwritten manuscripts, investigating with the audience the creative process of the composer. And in 2003 the Borromeo became the first classical ensemble to make its own live concert recordings and videos, distributing them for many years to audiences through its Living Archive, a music learning web portal for which a new version will soon be released.

Passionate educators, the Borromeos encourage audiences of all ages to explore and listen to both traditional and contemporary repertoire in new ways. The ensemble uses multi-media tools such as video projection to share the often surprising creative process behind some works, or to show graphically the elaborate architecture behind others. This produces delightfully refreshing viewpoints and has been a springboard for its acclaimed young people’s programs. One such program is MATHEMUSICA which delves into the numerical relationships that underpin the sounds of music and shows how musical syntax mirrors natural forms. CLASSIC VIDEO uses one movement of a quartet as the platform from which to teach computer drawing, video editing, animation, musical form and production processes to create a meaningful joining of music and visual art.

The BSQ has been ensemble-in-residence at the New England Conservatory and Taos School of Music, both for 25 years, and has, for over two decades, enjoyed a long-term relationship with the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum where it continues to regularly appear. It is quartet-in-residence at the Heifetz International Music Institute, where

first violinist Nicholas Kitchen is Artistic Director. The quartet was also in residence at, and has worked extensively as performers and educators with the Library of Congress (highlighting both its manuscripts and instrument collections) and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. The ensemble joined the Emerson Quartet as the Hittman Ensembles in Residence at the Peabody Institute in Baltimore, and was recently was in residence at Kansas University, the San Francisco Conservatory, and Colorado State University, where it regularly appears.

Especially noteworthy in the BSQ repertory are its dramatic discoveries within the manuscripts of the Beethoven Quartets, and its performances of the COMPLETE CYCLE; the BEETHOVEN DECATHLON (four concerts of Beethoven's last ten quartets, all with pre-concert lectures exploring his manuscripts); and single BEETHOVEN TRYPHTICH concerts (one concert including three quartets). Its expansive repertoire also includes the Shostakovich cycle and those of Mendelssohn, Dvořák, Brahms, Schumann, Schoenberg, Janáček, Lera Auerbach, Tchaikovsky, and Gunther Schuller.

The Quartet has collaborated with some of this generation's most important composers, including Gunther Schuller, John Cage, György Ligeti, Steve Reich, Aaron Jay Kernis, Osvaldo Golijov, Jennifer Higdon, Steve Mackey, John Harbison, Sebastian Currier, and Leon Kirchner, among many others; and has performed on major concert stages across the globe, including appearances at Carnegie Hall, the Berlin Philharmonie, Wigmore Hall, Suntory Hall (Tokyo), the Concertgebouw, Seoul Arts Center, Shanghai Oriental Arts Center, the Incontri in Terra di Siena Chamber Music Festival in Tuscany, Kammermusik Basel (Switzerland), the Prague Spring Festival, and the Haydn Festival in Eisenstadt.

“Nothing less than masterful” (*Cleveland.com*), the Borromeo Quartet has received numerous awards throughout its illustrious career, including Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Career Grant and Martin E. Segal Award, and Chamber Music America's Cleveland Quartet Award. It was also a recipient of the Young Concert Artists International Auditions and a prize-winner at the International String Quartet Competition in Evian, France.



For more than two decades, omnivorous violist **Nicholas Cords** has been on the front line of a growing constellation of projects as performer, educator, and cultural advocate. Cords formerly served as Programming Chair and Co-Artistic Director of the internationally renowned musical collective Silkroad, and continues to play viola with the Silkroad Ensemble. Founded by Yo-Yo Ma in 2000 with the belief that listening across cultures leads to a more hopeful world, Silkroad's mission is explored world-wide

through countless learning initiatives and a deep commitment to the exploration of new music and partnerships. Recent highlights include the Grammy Award-winning album *Sing Me Home* (Best World Music Album 2017), the Oscar-nominated documentary on Silkroad by Morgan Neville, *The Music of Strangers*, and music created for Ken Burns' recent series *The Vietnam War*.

Another key aspect of Cords' busy musical life is as founding member of Brooklyn Rider, an intrepid group which NPR credits with "recreating the 300-year-old form of the string quartet as a vital and creative 21st-century ensemble." Brooklyn Rider's singular mission and gripping performance style have resulted in an indelible contribution to the world of the string quartet that has brought in legions of fans across the spectrum. Recent collaborators include Irish fiddler Martin Hayes, Swedish mezzo soprano Anne Sofie von Otter, jazz saxophonist Joshua Redman, Persian kamancheh virtuoso Kayhan Kalhor, banjo legend Béla Fleck, and Mexican jazz singer Magos Herrera. Their most recent recording and commissioning project, *Healing Modes*, pairs Beethoven's Opus 132 string quartet with five new commissions based on the idea of healing.

A committed teacher, Cords joined the viola and chamber music faculty at New England Conservatory in the fall of 2018 after teaching at Stony Brook University for the previous seven years. His new solo album, *Touch Harmonious*, was released on November 6 on In A Circle Records.



The Library of Congress
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KEISUKE NAKAGOSHI, *PIANO DUET*



PROGRAM

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827) /

XAVER SCHARWENKA (1850-1924)

Transcription for piano, four hands

Symphony no. 4 in B-flat major, op. 60 (1806)

Adagio (♩ = 66)—*Allegro vivace* (♩ = 80)

Adagio (♩ = 84)

Allegro vivace (♩ = 100)—Trio: *Un poco meno Allegro* (♩ = 88)—

Tempo I—*Un poco meno Allegro*—Tempo I

Allegro ma non troppo (♩ = 80)

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827) /

CARL CZERNY (1791-1857)

Transcription for piano, four hands

Symphony no. 6 in F major, "Pastoral," op. 68 (1808)

Erwachen heiterer Empfindungen bei der Ankunft auf dem Lande (Awakening of cheerful feelings on reaching the countryside)

Allegro ma non troppo (♩ = 66)

Scene am Bach (Scene by the brook)

Andante molto moto (♩. = 50)

Lustiges Zusammensein der Landleute (Joyous gathering of the country folk)

Allegro (♩. = 108)—*a Tempo Allegro* (♩ = 132)—*Tempo I—Presto*
Gewitter. Sturm. (Thunderstorm)

Allegro (♩ = 80)

Hirtengesang. Frohe und dankbare Gefühle nach dem Sturm.
(Shepherd's Song. Happy and thankful feelings after the storm)

Allegretto (♩ = 60)



About the Program

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN / SCHARWENKA,

Symphony no. 4 in B-flat major

“In the Eroica some have complained of the Funeral March as too long, some of the *Scherzo* as inappropriate, or of the *Finale* as trivial; but on the No. 4 no such criticisms are possible; the movements fit to their places like the limbs and features of a lovely statue; and, full of fire and invention as they are, all is subordinated to conciseness, grace, and beauty.”¹⁵¹

151 Grove, George, *Beethoven and His Nine Symphonies*, reprint of third edition from 1898 by Novello, Ewer and Company (United States, Dover Publications, 2012), 99. There is a tradition of “slenderizing” the fourth symphony in commentary that was perhaps made more prevalent by Robert Schumann, whose gendered quotations to which Lewis Lockwood and others refer include descriptions of the fourth symphony as “the Greek-like slender one...” and “...a slender Greek maiden between two Norse giants.” As quoted in Lockwood, Lewis, *Beethoven's Symphonies: An Artistic Vision* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2015), 79.

Situated as it is between the giant “Eroica” and the fifth symphony—one of the most well-known pieces in existence—the fourth symphony was bound to not get as much credit as it deserved. But to minimize it is perhaps to show one’s lack of familiarity with it, and renewed acquaintance brings with it an awareness of what may be lost with the common tropes of critique that have developed over the years, such as an assessment of a Beethoven work in relation only to the “period” of his development from which it emerged. Another such trope is the hierarchization of the music’s dramatic characteristics—such as the notion that the odd-numbered symphonies are more “Beethovenian” than the even-numbered. Carl Maria von Weber, described by Sir George Grove as “then in his hot youth,”¹⁵² tore the piece apart in what might charitably be called a misapprehension of the work’s merits.¹⁵³

The fourth symphony has a unique identity, to be sure. Its instrumentation is trimmed down significantly from what was required for the “Eroica.” Lewis Lockwood notes the absence of fugal writing as a key difference between the fourth symphony and the third, and indeed sees the even/odd dichotomy as emerging at this stage, given the differing contrapuntal approaches between the odd and even symphonies from the third symphony on: “[the] aesthetic dualism of the even- and odd-numbered symphonies starts here.”¹⁵⁴

In his new book assessing the Beethovenian biographical tradition, Lockwood addresses J.W.N. Sullivan’s *Beethoven: His Spiritual Development*, a widely influential work. An interesting element that Lockwood highlights is the notion that a seemingly “lighter” work naturally takes less time to accomplish than a “serious” work, a generalization that might seem reasonable to the non-creator. With respect to the fourth symphony, Lockwood states that “Perhaps most telling for Sullivan’s approach is his exclusion from ‘the main line of Beethoven’s spiritual development’ of all those works that do not conform to his thesis(:).”¹⁵⁵

152 Grove, 101.

153 Weber would be credited—correctly or not—with other critical assessments of Beethoven’s work.

154 Lockwood, Lewis, *Beethoven: The Music and the Life*, paperback edition (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2003), 215. There is a difference between mapping the trajectories traveled from work to work—these observations can be compelling—and making a qualitative assessment of a work’s value based on compositional approach.

155 Lockwood, Lewis, *Beethoven’s Lives: The Biographical Tradition* (Great Britain: The Boydell Press: 2020), 98.

“Such works as the fourth, sixth, and eighth symphonies depict states of mind that require no such intensity of realization. It is significant that they were all written comparatively quickly and that each of them accompanies, as it were, one of his greater works.”¹⁵⁶

Lockwood comments further on this: “On their having been composed quickly Sullivan is out of his depth, since sketchbook evidence shows that at least the realization of the Sixth and Eighth symphonies took as long as did the evolution of the Fifth and Seventh. For the Fourth, completed in 1807 we are less sure, owing to the loss of sketches in 1806, but there is no basis beyond an act of faith for the claim that Beethoven’s experience in composing the Fourth, Sixth, and Eighth symphonies was of a significantly lower order of importance to him—and to us—than the writing of the [others].”¹⁵⁷

The fourth symphony was commissioned by Count Franz von Oppersdorf, who actually had commissioned two symphonies but only ever received the one (and Beethoven seems to have kept the advance on the other that never materialized).¹⁵⁸ Beethoven was likely working on the symphony when he had a famous breach with his erstwhile patron Prince Lichnowsky, after the latter insisted that Beethoven improvise as entertainment at a gathering, and Beethoven refused to do so. “It was in connection with this incident that Beethoven is said to have written a letter to Lichnowsky with the remark, ‘Prince, what you are you are through the accident of birth; what I am, I am through myself.’”¹⁵⁹

The piece seems to have been written swiftly (though the evidence is unclear, as referenced above), and first performed in March, 1807 at the Lobkowitz residence, where the program included all four symphonies in addition to the *Coriolan* overture, a piano concerto and excerpts from *Leonore*. The work, following on the heels of the *Eroica*, “...showed that less could be as much, perhaps more.”¹⁶⁰ Yet it was probably not composed directly on those heels; sketches are missing but there is evidence that Beethoven was sketching material for the fifth symphony before getting to the fourth, and he likely took up the composition of his op. 60 in earnest after completing *Leonore* and the quartets of op. 59.¹⁶¹

Sketches from 1804 suggest that Beethoven may have started with

156 J.W.N. Sullivan, as quoted in Lockwood *Biographical Tradition*, 98.

157 Lockwood *Biographical Tradition*, 98.

158 Caeyers, Jan, *Beethoven: A Life*, transl. Brent Annable (United States: University of California Press, 2020), 276-7.

159 As quoted in Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 84.

160 Lockwood *Beethoven Life*, 214.

161 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 81-3.

material for the finale, but a critical sketchbook from the time is missing so not too much is known about how the piece came to be. Lockwood thinks it likely that Beethoven "...probably held off full concentration on the symphony until he had finished his labor on the opera [*Leonore* at that time] from autumn 1805 to the middle of 1806."¹⁶² At any rate, the concentration expended on the symphony must have been considerable, even if potentially compacted. Grove notes the detail of Beethoven's instructions:¹⁶³ "...[one] of the remarkable features in Beethoven's autograph scores is the minute exactness with which the marks of expression... and other dynamic indications are put in; and the way in which they are repeated in the MS. up and down the page, so that there may be no misunderstanding of his precise intention as to every instrument in the band."¹⁶⁴

Before we take a closer look at the four-hand piano duet version of the fourth symphony performed by ZOFO, a few words should be said about the tradition of "quatre mains" arrangements of orchestral music. During the 19th century and earlier, "there were far fewer opportunities to experience live music, and one did not acquire knowledge of classical music by listening to it so much as by playing it. A musical education almost necessarily proceeded by way of arrangements for the piano."¹⁶⁵ Given the limited access to orchestral performance, being able to experience the music at home was critical for amateurs and professionals alike. An advantage of four-hand piano duets over solo piano music is that the difficulties could be distributed between two players, and it offered a chance to socialize as well. While many arrangements were pro forma, others were serious musical accomplishments in themselves.¹⁶⁶ The transcription for today's performance was prepared by pianist and composer Xaver Scharwenka. This represents the "latest" symphony transcription in our (Re)Hearing Beethoven Festival series, and it was published in 1905. It is hard to quantify it, but as the 20th

162 Lockwood *Beethoven Life*, 217.

163 This is further addressed by Nicholas Kitchen in his explorations of Beethoven's markings in manuscript.

164 Grove, 111.

165 Daub, Adrian, *Four-Handed Monsters* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 60-61.

166 The Library of Congress holds a number of four-hand manuscripts by one of the 19th century's most prolific arrangers of his own work, at least for a major composer: Johannes Brahms. These are fascinating documents and show that there are multiple ways to approach writing for four-hands. It appears that "...in letters to his various publishers, [Brahms] makes clear that he cares more 'about the pianistic, about playability than about whether the integrity of each part has been maintained.'" Daub, 113. Of course, the notion of what is pianistic depends on the composer, and Brahms' writing was idiosyncratic. Certain issues arise with respect to the choreography of the players that composers managed in different ways, such as whether a given player should continue a line into the "play zone" of their partner or pass it off, and so on.

century progressed and recording technology developed, demand for these transcriptions decreased and what was once a common scene has become less so. However, I recall fondly the late evenings I would spend with friends while in school reading through many orchestral arrangements, and I suspect that there are more of us out there who still engage in this kind of activity regardless of the need to do so in order to access the music. Being able to participate in the music-making as a non-orchestral musician offers tremendous insight into a work that is not accessible when encountered in a passive way such as listening on the couch to a recording.

The introduction to the symphony foreshadows the introduction to Mahler's first symphony—the similarity in tone and gesture is too similar to be coincidental:¹⁶⁷

Example 1

a)

The image shows a musical score for Example 1a. It consists of two systems of staves. The top system has a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The top staff is marked 'Adagio' and 'pp' (pianissimo). The bottom staff is also marked 'pp'. The music is in B-flat major and common time (C). The top staff features a series of eighth-note chords, while the bottom staff has a more melodic line with some rests.

Beethoven/Scharwenka, Symphony no. 4 in B-flat, op. 60, I: mm. 1-5

b)

The image shows a musical score for Example 1b. It consists of two systems of staves. The top system has a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The top staff is marked 'Langsam, Schleppend. (Wie ein Naturlaut.)' and 'sempre pp'. The bottom staff is also marked 'sempre pp'. The music is in D major and 4/4 time. The top staff features a series of chords, while the bottom staff has a more melodic line with some rests. The bottom staff is marked '(streng gebunden)'.

Mahler/Walter, Symphony no. 1 in D major, I: mm. 1-8

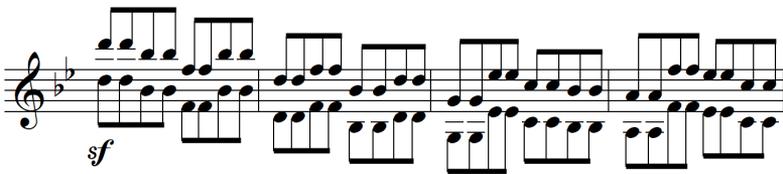
167 Mahler also knew Beethoven's works intimately, to be certain.

Beethoven similarly delays the arrival of the home key and “planted exotic figures and motions to unusual keys... that will bear fruit later in the Allegro.”¹⁶⁸ Scharwenka’s solution to the held notes at the beginning as seen in Example 1a is to sustain via tremolo. Bruno Walter, by comparison, just gives an initial attack of the held ‘A’s and lets the sound decay, he rearticulates the held pitch in the strings every three measures as one sees in Example 1b, and sensibly so, as the sound would be entirely gone if the long notes were held as long as they are in the strings in Mahler’s original. Walter feels sufficiently concerned about this deviation to make a note of the fact that it is a deviation in the score. Each of these approaches has its merits, and it goes to show that even something simple like a held tone can become a problem the arranger needs to solve in order to recreate in some sense what is happening in the original version.

Much of the transcription for the remainder of the movement proceeds as one might expect, covering the energetic passagework that typifies the music of the Allegro vivace. To offer a couple of standard techniques that Scharwenka uses to handle tricky passages, consider these repeated notes in octaves in the violins below, and how the primo pianist handles them divided between the hands.

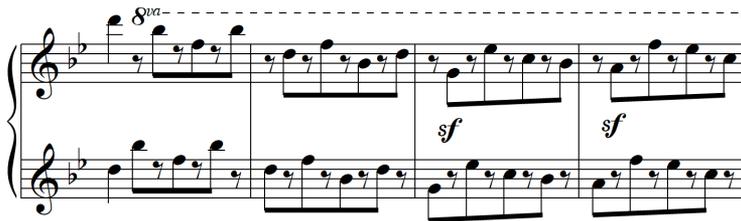
Example 2

a)



Beethoven, Symphony no. 4 in B-flat, op. 60, I: mm. 85-88, violins

b)



Beethoven/Scharwenka, Symphony no. 4 in B-flat, op. 60, I: mm. 85-88, primo

The result is an extremely articulate and effective presentation of the fast material that is not too tricky to play. Another smart solution to

Example 4

The musical score for Example 4 consists of two systems. The first system has a treble clef staff with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *cantabile* marking, and a bass clef staff. The second system has a treble clef staff with a *pp* dynamic and a *legato* marking, and a bass clef staff. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and articulation marks like *mf* and *pp*.

Beethoven/Scharwenka, Symphony no. 4 in B-flat, op. 60, II: mm. 26-8

The third movement is a five-part scherzo (essentially alternating scherzo/trio sections) with a three-bar coda, about which, "...as Schumann says, 'the horns have just one more question to put.'"¹⁷² One technique that an arranger may bring to bear in music that draws on instrumental contrast is that of registral displacement or augmentation in order to better differentiate the material. Near the beginning of the movement, for instance, there is an alternation between a clarinet/bassoon combo and the string section. Note especially the extremes of the registers in the corresponding "string" response in Scharwenka's setting:

Example 5

a)

The musical score for Example 5, labeled 'a)', shows two staves. The top staff is labeled 'winds' and the bottom staff is labeled 'strings'. Both staves have a piano (*p*) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs and articulation marks.

Beethoven, Symphony no. 4 in B-flat, op. 60, III: pickup to mm. 5-9, compressed

transcriber.

172 Grove, 121.

b)

A musical score for piano, consisting of four staves. The top two staves are the right hand (treble clef) and the bottom two are the left hand (bass clef). The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The music features a series of long, flowing lines with slurs, indicating a continuous melodic line. The dynamic marking *p* (piano) is present in the first two staves. The score shows a shift in register, with the melody moving from a higher octave to a lower one, illustrating a four-octave spread response.

Beethoven/Scharwenka, Symphony no. 4 in B-flat, op. 60, III: pickup to mm. 5-9

Scharwenka's setting accomplishes several things. First, the shift into a four-octave spread response where the strings would have played distinguishes the line from the wind passage that preceded it. And then, in a sense, Scharwenka's solution better encapsulates what Beethoven probably would have done had he not had the range considerations of the second violins and contrabasses! This is because the strings line is allowed to continue down from the upper octave without any discontinuous octave leaps that were necessary due to range restrictions in the strings.

Sometimes, however, the balance of these choices of melodic clarity versus the overall flow considerations may result in the need for omissions. Often when I hear the *Un poco meno Allegro* trio in performance, the end of the violin phrase's response to the winds gets lost beneath the winds. Because of this, it took a moment to realize that in Scharwenka's version, the end of the violin phrase was left out of the mix.

Example 6

a)

A musical score for oboe and violin, consisting of two staves. The top staff is for the oboe (treble clef) and the bottom staff is for the violin (treble clef). The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The tempo is marked *Un poco meno Allegro*. The oboe part starts with a *p* (piano) dynamic and features a long, flowing line with slurs. The violin part enters later, also with a *p* dynamic, and then moves to a *sf* (sforzando) dynamic. The score shows a response to the winds, with the violin phrase being left out of the mix.

Beethoven, Symphony no. 4 in B-flat, op. 60, III: pickup to mm. 91-5, oboe and violin

b)

Un poco meno Allegro

p dolce *sf* *p*

Beethoven/Scharwenka, Symphony no. 4 in B-flat, op. 60, III: pickup to mm. 91-5

You can see that the bracketed violin line is incomplete in the Scharwenka, because were he to finish the line it would impede the beginning of the wind line that follows. While he could have altered the registral makeup of the entire passage, that would have interrupted the quiet repose of the new section. Later in the trio Scharwenka does include the concluding tag, but in a texture that makes it easier to accommodate without forcing the issue.

The symphony closes with a perpetuum mobile-style finale, one of the most ebullient of Beethoven's symphonic movements. There is some wonderful material that occurs near the end of the exposition that shows the composer at his most playful:

Example 7

ff sf sf sf sf p
ff sf sf sf p
ff sf sf sf p
ff sf sf sf p

Beethoven/Scharwenka, Symphony no. 4 in B-flat, op. 60, IV: mm 74-83

It is as if Beethoven is making a caricature of a toddler; things are terrible, until suddenly they are not!

Beethoven's orchestral pieces have been arranged many times over throughout the years, and although we have been selective in our choices of which to present as part of the (Re)Hearing Beethoven Festival, there are others that could have been substituted and provided other experiences worth having. One of our goals in sharing these with you is to encourage further exploration of these and other pieces that may be of interest to you. While a performance at ZOFO's level may be out of reach, if you and a family member¹⁷³ can pick out a tune at the piano, you may enjoy playing through four-hand arrangements of the music you love.



LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN / CZERNY, Symphony no. 6 in F Major

“...it is impossible not to feel deep gratitude to this great composer for the complete and unalloyed pleasure which he here puts within our reach.”¹⁷⁴

“To hear one of his great compositions is like contemplating, not a work of art, or man's device, but a mountain, or forest, or other immense product of Nature—at once so complex and so simple; the whole so great

¹⁷³ Unfortunately for our current moment, one cannot really play piano duets while socially distanced.

¹⁷⁴ Grove, 227.

and overpowering; the parts so minute, so lovely, and so consistent; and the effect so inspiring, so beneficial, and so elevating.”¹⁷⁵

Sir George Grove, evidently, was a fan of the sixth symphony. Long an audience favorite, Beethoven’s “Pastoral” symphony will conclude the ZOFO concert, and one might consider Czerny’s duet version of the piece a “quatre mains-tay” of this kind of arrangement. Pianist and composer Carl Czerny, who was also an exceptionally prolific arranger, is perhaps best known for his technical studies that remain in use today. He was also the piano teacher of Franz Liszt, whose Beethoven transcriptions will be featured later in the (Re)Hearing Beethoven Festival. Czerny’s relationship with Beethoven was a special one, and it is intriguing in light of today’s concert. In his book *Four-Handed Monsters*, author Adrian Daub recounts Czerny’s recollections of his first meeting with Beethoven, during which Beethoven sat beside him while Czerny played a Mozart piano concerto and added the orchestral melody with his left hand. “The friendship between these two musicians, which would last until the older man’s death, was thus formed over a kind of four-hand flirt.”¹⁷⁶

Before we dabble in the duet, we should babble about the brook. Despite the relatively unusual (for Beethoven) programmatic components of the work, it comes from a “pastoral” tradition. There were predecessors in this genre by composers obscure and renowned, and Beethoven probably knew at least some of these; musicologist Richard Will listed some 27 examples composed in the quarter-century before 1797.¹⁷⁷

When first published the symphony had the title of *Sinfonie pastorale*, but Beethoven’s original subtitle did not appear to remain beyond a letter to his publisher, the original manuscript, the original premiere program and a printed violin part:¹⁷⁸ “Recollections of Country Life: More the Expression of Feeling than Tone-Painting.”¹⁷⁹ While the first part was gold, the second didn’t exactly roll off the tongue. In terms of asserting a stance with respect to programmatic components of his work, however, this was a telling statement. Lockwood references a list of thoughts Beethoven had on the subject that reflect mixed feelings about “characteristic” music that bears programmatic elements. In this list Beethoven suggests that people should be able to figure out the references without it being spelled out for them in titles, and that the general presentation of feeling is more important than specific references, which “...if pushed too far in instrumental music, loses its force.”¹⁸⁰

175 Ibid.

176 Daub, 135.

177 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 130.

178 Grove, 189-91.

179 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 128-9.

180 Ibid., 132.

Some commentators diminished the role of programmatic thought in the construction of the sixth symphony, while others heralded it as “justification” for the works of Berlioz, Liszt and beyond. Foregoing the notion that artistic expression needs to be justified at all, it is worth acknowledging that it is absolute-ly¹⁸¹ possible to reconcile formal considerations with programmatic content. One might point to Beethoven’s “Pastoral” symphony as an example of it. Lockwood, for one, sees Beethoven capitalizing on the pastoral tradition in a way that would be referentially meaningful for audiences, while at the same time maintaining the “formal cogency” that typified his recent symphonic works. “The two dimensions differ in importance and audibility from one movement to another, but the duality runs through the whole work.”¹⁸² Additionally Lockwood “[construes] this work... as not merely a programmatic representation of the experience of being in nature, but also that it is something of Beethoven’s ‘dream-time,’ a vision of the healing experience of Nature.”¹⁸³ Given Beethoven’s work habits, and Grove’s observation at the head of these notes, in a very real sense “nature” was part and parcel to composition for Beethoven. Like many artists who must venture out in order to venture within, how much of Beethoven’s music was conceived in essence while away from his desk?

While Beethoven may have wanted to avoid being prescriptive with the programmatic elements of his sixth symphony, Jan Swafford captures the spirit of the composer having it both ways with the “Pastoral” symphony: “No pictures! Except for some pictures.”¹⁸⁴

While Beethoven did the bulk of his work on the sixth symphony in 1807-8 after the fifth was completed, there is evidence that he was sketching ideas for it as early as 1803 in the “Eroica” sketchbook; included therein were references to the scherzo trio, the finale, and a relative of the “Scene by the Brook” labeled “Murmeln der Bäche.”¹⁸⁵ He completed work on the symphony in 1808 in Heiligenstadt.¹⁸⁶ The premiere of the “Pastoral” took place on a legendary, or perhaps infamous, date in Beethoven lore: December 22, 1808. Anyone who has ever organized a concert knows how hard it can be to get everything in place, and one wants to make the most of the opportunity. On this occasion Beethoven may have gone overboard; in addition to the “Pastoral” symphony (labeled no. 5 for this performance), multiple significant works were also premiered on the same concert: the

181 This is what I call “purely programmatic” humor.

182 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 135.

183 *Ibid.*, 125.

184 Swafford, Jan, *Beethoven: Anguish and Triumph* (United States: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014), 511.

185 “Murmurs of the Brook.” Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 126-7.

186 Swafford, 476.

C-minor symphony (labeled the sixth symphony on this program),¹⁸⁷ the fourth piano concerto, a concert aria (*Ah! Perfido*), an improvisation that may have been a precursor to the op. 77 Fantasia, several movements from the Mass in C (*Gloria* and *Sanctus*) and the *Choral Fantasy*, op. 80.¹⁸⁸ This concert was famous for its cold weather as well as its immense length, and the audience did not handle the chilly four hours of intense music well, especially given a debacle in the performance of the *Choral Fantasy* that required a re-start.¹⁸⁹ Elements of these works connect in interesting ways, from the structural impact of fantasia-inspired transitions to more literal motivic connections; Jan Swafford notes that in the “Eroica sketchbook” Beethoven had not only written some material destined for “fate knocking” fame in the fifth symphony, but he had also struck on the opening of the fourth piano concerto at the same time, sketched on the opposite page;¹⁹⁰ when considered next to each other one can see how the wealth of an idea has the potential to be distributed in a transformative fashion.

The “Pastoral” symphony opened the program, and despite the differences in tone and goals it is something of a spiritual pair with the fifth symphony. As Jan Caeyers compares them, “[the] structural similarities are striking: both opening movements are relatively short; each commences with a four-bar motif, or ‘motto,’ that ends with a fermata; and each motto constitutes a germinal figure that undergoes development but never truly takes on any clear thematic contours. The final movements, by contrast, are relatively long and hymnlike, representing the carefully prepared culmination of each work and emerging organically from the previous movements.”¹⁹¹ While the premiere may have had a few forces working against it, it boggles the mind to imagine what it must have been like to be the first to hear such a huge range of pieces that would remain vital centuries later. The dedication for the fifth and sixth symphonies was shared by Prince Lobkowitz and Count Razumovsky, despite Beethoven having initially promised at least the fifth symphony to Count Oppersdorf. But Beethoven decided to go with the bigger names for a better payout, leaving Oppersdorf with the dedication of the fourth symphony.¹⁹²

Beethoven was aware of the dangers of a bad transcription. At one point he was compelled to publicly warn against a particularly bad mutilation of his music: “I take it as my duty to alert the musical public against a four-hand piano transcription of my recent overture, which misses the

187 Grove, 148.
188 Lockwood *Biographical Tradition*, 155.
189 Caeyers, 290.
190 Swafford, 489-90.
191 Caeyers, 291-2.
192 Lockwood *Beethoven Life*, 195.

mark entirely and departs completely from the original score.”¹⁹³ He instead plugs the upcoming appearance of Czerny’s “absolutely faithful” version.¹⁹⁴ Czerny was not above criticism, however; his student Louis Köhler felt that he “overburdened all four hands, leaving the players little room to put their own spin on the music,” and A.B. Marx rather felt the same way.¹⁹⁵ While opinions can certainly differ about how to make the best use of the resources one has, Czerny’s solutions are credible and worthy of consideration—knowledge of the instrument and how it might be used to emulate orchestral textures took his work far.

Beethoven starts with the “awakening of cheerful feelings upon reaching the countryside.” The movement is driven almost entirely by major-mode harmonies, and the music is hypnotically minimalist in conception. The large number of repeated patterns are given shape by dynamic features such as large-scale swells and clever orchestrational details, such as the reinforcement of a repeated idea in the strings an octave lower by a pair of bassoons for a single iteration, which is also accounted for in Czerny’s piano duet version:

Example 8

The image shows a musical score for a piano duet, consisting of four staves. The top two staves are for the right hand (treble clef), and the bottom two are for the left hand (bass clef). The music is in F major (one flat) and 3/4 time. The right hand part features a repeating eighth-note pattern with a dynamic marking of *cresc.* in the first measure and *dim.* in the third. The left hand part features a repeating eighth-note pattern with a dynamic marking of *cresc.* in the first measure and *dim.* in the third. A double bar line with a repeat sign is present at the end of the first measure of the left hand part, with a small asterisk below it.

Beethoven/Czerny, Symphony no. 6 in F major, op. 68, I: mm. 18-22

It should also be noted that Czerny reserves the use of the sustain pedal for that central moment to effect a blossoming color change. An issue that Czerny had to confront in a piece where the ideas and orchestration are so “transparent” is the competition that can arise between important voices in the same registral space. One spot where he threads this needle is at one of the grander moments of the movement, where the strings and winds are both contributing to the fabric of the whole at a loud dynamic:

193 As quoted in Daub, 114.
 194 Ibid., 114-115.
 195 Ibid., 116.

Example 9

The image displays a musical score for Example 9, consisting of piano and violin parts. The piano part is written in two staves (treble and bass clefs), and the violin part is in a single staff (treble clef). The score is divided into two sections by a dashed line. The first section shows the piano part with triplets in both hands and the violin part with a triplet. The second section, marked with a dashed line at the top, features a piano part with triplets and a violin part with triplets, all marked with *sf* (sforzando). The piano part also includes a bracketed section at the top of the first staff in the second section, indicating a specific melodic line.

Beethoven/Czerny, Symphony no. 6 in F major, op. 68, I: mm. 446-451

In the orchestral score the strings and the horns play the triplet material, and the winds continue the A-F motion that you see bracketed on the top two lines, but at four octaves. Czerny reduces that line to a single internal voice, and launches the violin triplets up an octave to prioritize that sound. This is a case where one could argue that Czerny might have done more for the oscillating material, but at the same time one senses it in the realization—in its exclusive register—and can still focus on the triplet material in listening.

With the second movement, the “Scene by the Brook,” we arrive at some of the work’s primary encounters with literal extramusical associations. As Beethoven stated, “The greater the brook, the deeper the tone.”¹⁹⁶ This statement is worth unpacking a bit, because it associates, as parallel phenomena, the notion of depth/height and register. Our language about music embodies this almost without our being aware of it; we will say things like “the melody floats above the accompaniment” or “the music cascades into the deepest register of the piano.” But for a composer writing music “about” a stream, they may capitalize on these unconscious associations and use register and “flowing” material to turn a rivulet into a river.

There is a difference, perhaps, between a metaphorical nod and an attempt at direct representation in music. I came across an interesting comment, stated with conviction by Grove: “It will be observed that in the *Andante* Beethoven has changed the key of the figure representing the

196 As quoted in Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 140.

noise of the water from what it was when he actually observed it. And this no doubt he has done to avoid anything like actual imitation.”¹⁹⁷ Without a doubt? Could it simply have not been in the key in which he ultimately needed it to be? There are many reasons why the initial conception of an idea might need to change, and while perhaps “obscuring the source” may be one of them, that presupposes that an audience would know and recognize the prevalent pitch(es) of a specific stream at a particular rate of flow, and then call out the composer for the brazen audacity with which the natural phenomenon was emulated.

Beyond the running water of the brook, there are excellent examples of explicit sonic references near the end of the movement, where specific bird calls are identified in the score: 1) nightingale/flute, 2) quail/oboe and 3) cuckoos/clarinets. Caeyers adds an aside: “The fact that Beethoven’s cuckoo sings a major third, while real cuckoos prefer a minor third, is an endearing blemish on the composer’s oeuvre that serves to underscore the symbolic character of the reference.”¹⁹⁸ Perhaps it is not a blemish; I prefer to think of Beethoven’s cuckoos as striving for a half-step more than your run-of-the-mill cuckoo.¹⁹⁹

It may be difficult to think back to the first time one heard the “Pastoral” symphony, but the experience is different when what comes next is unknown. There is a retroactive didactic effect of sorts that comes from Beethoven’s reservation of the explicit references until the end of the second movement—one realizes they were always there in the music in different ways before being isolated and labeled as bird calls. Beethoven further capitalizes on the registral metaphor in his use of register to show physical distance between the birds and the brook.²⁰⁰

Czerny’s setting of the birdcalls is fascinating—both practical and performative, and perhaps a little risqué. The secondo player takes the nightingale trill in the right hand while the primo player plays the quail

197 Grove, 202.

198 Caeyers, 292.

199 On the subject of birdcalls in Beethoven, the undependable Anton Schindler related a story about the yellow-hammer bird call making its way into the symphony as a G-major arpeggio, a proposition supposedly related by the composer. Grove pointed out that Schindler himself had suggested that Beethoven had used the yellow-hammer call as the basis for the fate motive of the fifth symphony, and that in that instance, it more accurately reflects the repeated-note nature of the call at least, regardless of whether the claim has veracity. Grove goes on to suggest that Schindler’s recollections may have been correct, but that Beethoven had perhaps been playing a joke on him. Grove, 211-212. Sometimes, however, it appears that Schindler forged his material, such as a canon “which Schindler ascribed to Beethoven but evidently wrote himself and proposed as a precursor to the slow movement of the Eighth Symphony, with its repeated notes at the beginning.” Lockwood *Biographical Tradition*, 28.

200 Lockwood *Beethoven Life*, 228.

above, and crosses below to play the cuckoo as well. In the second iteration of the calls the primo and secondo players alternate the presentation of the cuckoo in a coordinated conversation.²⁰¹ This theatrical gesture is a liberty on Czerny's part, as the cuckoo sound in the orchestra is played by a pair of unison clarinets. The arrows in Example 10 show this alternation of parts and cross-hands playing:

Example 10

The image shows a musical score for Example 10, featuring bird calls. It consists of four staves. The top staff is for the Quail call, marked '8^{va}' and 'gr^{te}', with notes in high register. The second staff is for the Cuckoo call, with notes in a middle register. The third staff is for the Nightingale call, marked 'cresc.', with a dense, tremolo-like texture. The bottom staff is for the Cuckoo call, marked '2^{da}', with notes in a lower register. Arrows indicate the alternation of parts between the two Cuckoo staves, showing cross-hands playing. A double asterisk (**) is at the end of the bottom staff.

Beethoven/Czerny, Symphony no. 6 in F major, op. 68, II: mm. 133-6

The result is both effective in execution and charming to watch.

The final three movements are through-conceived, leading one into the next. The “Joyous gathering of the country folk” is a five-part scherzo that lives up to its name; the dance that bursts forth in the trio especially exudes communal merriment. Czerny cleverly utilizes registral shifts to re-orchestrate some of the passages, honoring the differentiation that Beethoven achieved via different instruments by distinguishing the lines in more extreme registers or using octave doublings. But anyone who has planned an outdoor wedding or birthday party knows, that is one of the best ways to ensure the approach of ominous clouds.

Beethoven abruptly leaves the happy key of “Folk major” with an aching knee “storms-a-comin’” tremolo on D-flat. Here is where Beethoven reaps the harvest he has sown by reserving any significant use of the minor mode until this moment, when the storm erupts and scatters the revelers. Berlioz, always with a keen eye for orchestrational detail, noticed that Beethoven included a remarkable rapidly-repeated baseline of five against four to create a blur in the thunderous sound,²⁰² Czerny retains this

201 Additionally, Czerny sets the quail call in high-register octaves, differentiating it from the previous call, represented by a solo oboe in the orchestral version.

202 Grove, 219.

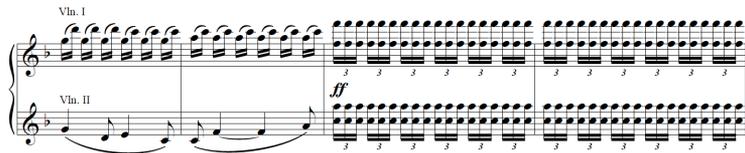
figuration in the bass of the piano, where it is also effective in producing a powerful rumble. While a storm is a frequent consequence of natural forces, the approximation of one in music requires careful planning, and this was a feat that Beethoven managed cumulo-nimbly.

The darkness of the storm dissipates, and ultimately resolves into the final movement via a chorale-like passage that Beethoven labeled in a sketch “Herr, wir danken Dir” (Lord, we thank you).²⁰³ The “Shepherd’s Song. Happy and thankful feelings after the storm” movement that concludes the symphony has been compared to works by Haydn, such as “The cheerful shepherd now gathers his joyous flock” from *The Seasons*.²⁰⁴ The clarinet and horn material that opens the *Allegretto* is reminiscent of the Alpenhorn *Ranz des vaches* tradition that Beethoven would have known.²⁰⁵

Czerny’s approach to handling some of the bigger sonic constructions in the movement is quite convincing. Consider how Czerny adapts the repeated triplet figures in the violins of Example 11a below into something more pianistic and harmonically resonant in the piano, as shown in Example 11b:

Example 11

a)



Beethoven, Symphony no. 6 in F major, op. 68, V: mm. 23-6, violins

b)



Beethoven/Czerny, Symphony no. 6 in F major, op. 68, V: mm. 23-6

Occasionally the need to alter the register for the sake of melodic clarity

203 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 142.

204 Ibid.

205 Ibid.

has consequences that require the alteration of the primary material. As an example, Czerny knew that he wanted to continue a line of running sixteenth notes as written in measure 117 (see the third measure in Example 12a and b below). However, in the previous two measures there was a problematic overlap in register between the first violins and the first horn—it would be extremely difficult to play each line clearly if they were transferred to the piano as written (see Example 12a). Czerny decided to place the bracketed violin line up an octave, but that still did not fully solve the problem, since the line would still have interfered with the horn *Ranz des vaches* melody. He also would have emerged from the passage an octave too high in order to continue as planned in measure 117. So Czerny re-wrote the violin line, maintaining the harmony and types of melodic line that were included in the violin line, but altering the contour so as to make the line crest in the middle of measure 116 and return down to the original register by the start of measure 117, as we see in Example 12b below:

Example 12

a)

Example 12a shows a musical score for Violin I (Vln. I) and Horn. The Violin I part features a bracketed section in measure 116 where the line is placed an octave higher than the original. The Horn part plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The score is in F major and 3/4 time.

Beethoven, Symphony no. 6 in F major, op. 68, V: mm. 115-117, violin I and horn 1

b)

Example 12b shows the rewritten Violin I part. The Violin I part is rewritten to crest in the middle of measure 116 and return to the original register by the start of measure 117. The Horn part remains the same as in 12a. The score is in F major and 3/4 time.

Beethoven/Czerny, Symphony no. 6 in F major, op. 68, V: mm. 115-117, primo

The rewrite is so deftly done that few would notice it, and the resultant gains made in the clarity of the horn line seem to render the gambit worthwhile. Such changes, where the logic is understandable, are evidence of the transcriber's ability to respectfully modify for the benefit of the music. Such modifications of contour and line, while the arranger tries to avoid them, are sometimes necessary in service of the music. Such

things are better I think than the unauthorized “correction” of a composer in a new edition. This final movement of the “Pastoral” contains a few prominent uses of ‘la Chimère,’ in which Beethoven uses as a pedal notes from the tonic and dominant chords at the same time (in this case, F, C and G in stacked fifths). Fétis took it upon himself to “correct” it, despite its clearly intentional use by Beethoven.²⁰⁶

While it is a joy to play any of these works in a four-hands context, there is something fitting about playing the “Pastoral” symphony with a fellow traveler, experiencing Beethoven’s “expressions of feeling” about nature along with the communities who celebrate it.

David Plylar
Senior Music Specialist
Library of Congress, Music Division



About the Artists

Since joining forces as a professional duo in 2009, internationally acclaimed solo pianists Eva-Maria Zimmermann and Keisuke Nakagoshi –**ZOFO**– have electrified audiences from Carnegie Hall to Tokyo with their dazzling artistry and outside-the-box thematic programming for piano-four-hands. This GRAMMY-nominated, prize-winning Steinway Artist Ensemble –one of only a handful of duos worldwide devoted exclusively to piano duets –is blazing a bold new path for piano-four-hands groups by focusing on 20th- and 21st-century repertoire and by commissioning new works from noted composers each year. ZOFO, which is shorthand for 20-finger orchestra (ZO=20 and FO=finger orchestra), also performs heart-pumping duet arrangements of famous orchestral pieces such as Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring*, exploring the realms in which many composers first experienced their symphonic visions. ZOFO believes that the piano duet is the most intimate form of chamber music, with two musicians playing individual parts on one instrument in a complex, often beautiful choreography of four hands.

206 Grove, 220-221.

Keisuke Nakagoshi began his piano studies at the age of ten, arriving in the United States from Japan at the age of 18. He earned his Bachelor's Degree in Composition and Master's Degree in Chamber Music from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Graduating as the recipient of multiple top awards, Nakagoshi was selected to represent the SFCM in the Kennedy Center's Conservatory Project, a program featuring the most promising young musicians from major conservatories across the United States.

Nakagoshi has performed to acclaim as soloist on prestigious concert stages across the United States, including the Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, the Hollywood Bowl, and Davies Symphony Hall in San Francisco. He has received training from some of the most celebrated musicians of our time: Emanuel Ax, Gilbert Kalish, Menahem Pressler, Robert Mann, Paul Hersh and David Zinman. Nakagoshi is Pianist-in-Residence at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

Dynamic Swiss pianist **Eva-Maria Zimmermann** has appeared as a soloist in Europe and the United States, offering performances that are "breathtakingly intense" (*Der Bund*) and "passionate and deeply expressive" (*Berner Oberlander*). Her solo appearances involve recitals as well as concerto performances with symphonies including the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Berner Symphonieorchester and the Berner Kammerorchester.

Winner of the prestigious Rotary International Ambassadorial Scholarship, Zimmermann has appeared at international festivals worldwide, including the Festival Piano en Saintonge, Sommerfestspiele Murten, and San Francisco's Other Minds Festival of New Music. A graduate with highest honors from the Conservatory of Geneva, Zimmermann has studied with many distinguished musicians: Leon Fleisher, György Sebök, Leonard Hokanson and Dominique Merlet, among others.

As an educator, Zimmermann has been a faculty member of the University of San Francisco and currently teaches in the music program at the Nueva School in Hillsborough, CA, founded by Sir Yehudi Menuhin.



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HAMMERKLAVIER: TWO VISIONS

VERONA QUARTET

JONATHAN ONG & DOROTHY RO, *VIOLIN*
ABIGAIL ROJANSKI, *VIOLA*
ANNIE JACOBS-PERKINS, *GUEST CELLO*



ADAM GOLKA

PIANO

PROGRAM

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827) / DAVID PLYLAR

Transcription for string quartet, transposed to C major

Sonata in B-flat major, "Hammerklavier," op. 106 (1817-18)

Allegro (♩ = 138)

Scherzo: *Assai vivace* (♩. = 80)—*Presto*—*Prestissimo*—*Tempo I*—*Presto*—*Tempo I*

Adagio sostenuto (♩ = 92)

Largo (♩ = 76)—*Un poco più vivace*—*Tempo I*—*Allegro*—*Tempo I*—*Prestissimo*—*Allegro risoluto* (♩ = 144)—*Poco adagio*—*Tempo I*

Verona Quartet

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Original version for solo piano

Sonata in B-flat major, "Hammerklavier," op. 106 (1817-18)

Allegro (♩ = 138)

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Adam Golka



About the Program

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

**Piano Sonata in B-flat major, op. 106, "Hammerklavier,"
in the original piano version and a version transcribed
for string quartet by David Plylar**

“A new Oedipus, Liszt, has solved it, solved it in such a way that had the composer himself returned from the grave, a paroxysm of joy and pride would have swept over him. Not a note was left out, not one added...no inflection was effaced, no change of tempo permitted. Liszt, in thus making comprehensible a work not yet comprehended, has proved that he is the pianist of the future.”²⁰⁷

~ Hector Berlioz, on witnessing the public premiere by Liszt of Beethoven’s “Hammerklavier” sonata.

Beethoven’s Piano Sonata in B-flat major, op. 106, reverently known as the “Hammerklavier,” is a work that has long held musicians and audiences in thrall. Considered unplayable until Franz Liszt conquered it in public in 1836, the “Hammerklavier’s” manifold difficulties and beauties continue to inspire new generations to explore its depths; from the majestic opening movement, the comic/cosmic scherzo, one of the most expressive of Beethoven’s slow movements, and finally a fugal finale of grand ambition—not to wax hyperbolic, but the piece is a veritable explosion of Beethoven’s artistry in full force.

These notes will not have the scope to do much more than introduce some aspects of the piece and discuss it in terms of its adaptation for string quartet. The work has been transcribed in the past: Felix Weingartner made an orchestral transcription of the piece in 1930, and apparently Liszt even made a transcription of the *Adagio sostenuto* for strings—something I only just learned about and to which I eagerly desire access.²⁰⁸ In the spirit of our (Re)Hearing Beethoven Festival we will address some of the recurring and unique issues that arise with adapting Beethoven’s work for other forces further below, but first we should offer a bit of background information about the piece.

For instance: why is the sonata called the “Hammerklavier?” It is a mix of chance, assumptions and the legendary status of the work that led to this state of affairs. Three of Beethoven’s piano sonatas ended up with

207 As quoted in Walker, Alan, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, rev. ed. (United States: Cornell University Press, 1988), 236.

208 Morante, Basilio Fernández and Charles Davis, “A Panoramic Survey of Beethoven’s “Hammerklavier” Sonata, op. 106: Composition and Performance,” in *Notes*, Music Library Association, Vol. 71, No. 2 (December 2014), 253.

“Hammerklavier” referenced in the manuscript: opp. 101, 106 and 109.²⁰⁹ In 1817, Beethoven declared to a publisher that “Henceforth all our works on which the title is in German shall, instead of ‘pianoforte,’ carry the name ‘Hammerklavier.’”²¹⁰ This move toward German started earlier; as Basilio Morante lists them (in the translation of Charles Davis), in 1809 “Beethoven had begun to introduce German terms²¹¹ in his Six Lieder, op. 75, and in the Piano Sonata no. 26, op. 81a. The traditional tempo markings in Italian at the beginning of each movement are replaced in Sonata no. 27, op. 90, by expressions in German on the character of the movement, and in opus 101 (1816) this is extended to the actual title of a piano sonata: ‘Sonate / Für das piano-forte / oder - - Hämmer-Klawier.’”²¹² Morante sees this trend developing for two reasons: “This assertion of linguistic identity on Beethoven’s part is due above all to the patriotic and anti-Napoleonic feeling aroused by the recent Congress of Vienna and the composer’s increasing expressive needs.”²¹³

But there has also been a line of thought that assumes the “Hammerklavier” description for op. 106 in particular was due to the new piano that entered Beethoven’s life in 1818; the notion is that the “Hammerklavier” was written specifically for the Broadwood piano he received as a gift. However, there are several issues with this assumption, including the fact that the composition of op. 101 and most of op. 106 predates his acquisition of the instrument. I learned more about these issues when in the course of my research I came across a documentary film by Steven Maes, produced by the Orpheus Institute in Ghent, called *Inside the Hearing Machine*. This documentary describes the commission of a replica of the type of Broadwood piano owned by Beethoven, as well as the speculative construction of a *Gehörmaschine* (“hearing machine”) to assist Beethoven in hearing while playing at the piano.²¹⁴

In that film and the accompanying CD realization of a performance of Beethoven’s last three sonatas using the *Gehörmaschine*, pianist Tom Beghin offers a compelling account of how Beethoven may have used his final keyboard instruments when composing. Beghin both dispels the myth about the Broadwood and embraces it as, even so, the likely

209 The Library of Congress holds the holograph manuscript of Beethoven’s op. 109 piano sonata in E major in the Gertrude Clarke Whittall Foundation Collection.

210 As quoted in Lockwood *Beethoven Life*, 377.

211 The “Pastoral” symphony also had German descriptions for each movement.

212 Morante/Davis, 237.

213 Ibid., 238.

214 Accessed on <https://orpheusinstituut.be/en/projects/inside-the-hearing-machine>. The documentary is fascinating, with numerous insights into particular compositional details that may have been influenced by Beethoven’s interaction with a hearing augmentation device attached to his Broadwood piano.

instrument that Beethoven used when composing his piano works. “Longtime ignorance of any historical pianos had led to the peculiar association of the big “Hammerklavier” Sonata, Opus 106, with ‘the Beethoven Broadwood’ as somehow representative of a more modern, forward-looking piano—but the irony is that only its last movement can be played on it because the first three movements include high notes that do not exist on the Broadwood’s keyboard.”²¹⁵ Beghin argues that Beethoven wrote the first three movements for a Viennese piano with the six-octave range of FF to f4,²¹⁶ and then adapted the range of the finale after receipt of the Broadwood to include lower notes that fit the Broadwood’s range, CC to c4.²¹⁷ Beghin further cites the research of Tilman Skowronek that indicates that following the composition of the first three movements of op. 106, there are only two cases where Beethoven wrote any pitches outside of the range of his Broadwood.²¹⁸ Further in his notes Beghin describes how to address these issues in performance. In op. 109 Beethoven asks for a C-sharp outside of the Broadwood range at the end of the sonata, and the solution may have been scordatura, or the tuning of that top C up to C-sharp, since the C itself is not used in the sonata.²¹⁹ These are all fascinating considerations, given the great difference in sound between Beethoven’s Graf and his Broadwood. Part of the goal of Maes’ documentary is to explore, speculatively but guided by contemporary accounts, what the sound might have been like for Beethoven at his level of deafness with the addition of a sound amplifier on his Broadwood piano.²²⁰

No autograph manuscript of the “Hammerklavier” is extant, nor is there a unified sketch book, but a number of leaves are distributed around the world.²²¹ The Library of Congress owns five leaves of sketches for the sonata; the first batch amounting to seven pages was purchased in 1941 through the Gertrude Clarke Whittall Foundation, and an additional leaf with two pages related to the third movement was purchased in 2018. That means that you can see roughly 10% of the known sketch leaves for the “Hammerklavier” sonata at the Library of Congress!

215 CD booklet for Tom Beghin, *Inside the Hearing Machine: Beethoven on His Broadwood – Sonatas Opus 109, 110 and 111* (Evil Penguin Records Classic, EPRC 0025, 2017), 30.

216 Ibid., 26.

217 Ibid., 26 and 30.

218 Ibid., 31.

219 Ibid., 45-47.

220 Incidentally, Liszt was the last private owner of Beethoven’s Broadwood, and that instrument, now residing at the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest, is one of just a few surviving “Beethoven pianos.”

221 Nicholas Marston offers a fascinating discussion of the situation in Marston, Nicholas, “Approaching the Sketches for Beethoven’s “Hammerklavier” Sonata,” in *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (Autumn, 1991), 404-450.

It was either serendipitous or inevitable in a Beethoven anniversary year that Beethoven's pianos should reach the public consciousness. Recently, Patricia Morrisroe published an article in *The New York Times* entitled "The Woman Who Built Beethoven's Pianos,"²²² about piano maker and friend of Beethoven, Nannette Streicher. In that article Morrisroe references sketch material held at The Morgan Library inscribed by publisher Vincent Novello, who says the leaf was given to him by "Mrs. Streiker...one of Beethoven's oldest and most sincere friends."²²³ Streicher had started with her father's Stein company, eventually settling in Vienna with her brother to run the company. She eventually branched off with her own Streicher née Stein firm that produced a large number of pianos annually, and Beethoven had been a longtime friend.²²⁴ According to Jan Caeyers, after Beethoven's nephew Karl moved in with Beethoven in early 1818, "Nannette Streicher helped him make the necessary alterations to household and personnel, including the appointment of a new private tutor."²²⁵ Beyond this critical household help, and given the timing of her stay, coincident as it was with the arrival of the Broadwood competitor and Beethoven's completion of the "Hammerklavier," one wonders what Streicher's role may have been in discussing the piano's capabilities with the composer. This name of Nannette Streicher also resonated with me, because for years I have jokingly referred to my string quartet version of the piece as the "Hammer-Streicher," and here was someone directly connected to the work with that name.

The "Hammerklavier" sonata was dedicated to Archduke Rudolph—an early sketch of the opening idea of the sonata even includes the inscription "Vivat Rodolphus."²²⁶ Some doubt the sincerity of the dedication, but Beethoven had a practical streak when it came to these things.²²⁷ However, and rather intriguingly, in one English edition the dedication is to "Mademoiselle Maxemiliana Brentano" (the earliest English editions had no dedicatee). Sylvia Bowden offers a careful consideration of Maximiliane Brentano as Beethoven's "distant beloved" in a discussion that considers relationships between the Lied *Resignation*, the cycle *An die ferne Geliebte* and the "Hammerklavier" alongside written evidence.²²⁸

222 Morrisroe, Patricia, "The Woman Who Built Beethoven's Pianos," *The New York Times* (online), 11/6/2020.

223 You can view this manuscript online at <https://www.themorgan.org/music/manuscript/114204>.

224 Morrisroe. Beethoven and Streicher first met in Augsburg when Beethoven met her father, piano maker Johann Andreas Stein. See Jan Caeyers' discussion of Beethoven's assessment of the pianos, Caeyers, 246-8.

225 Caeyers, 395.

226 Lockwood *Beethoven Life*, 381.

227 Caeyers, 431-2.

228 Bowden, Sylvia, "Mademoiselle Maxemiliana Brentano' and the English edition of Beethoven's op. 106," *The Musical Times*, Autumn 2012, vol. 153, no. 1920, pp. 27-52.

For such an incredibly rich and complex work, Beethoven's attitude toward its publication was remarkably cavalier. When the composer gave the sonata to Ferdinand Ries to pursue publication in London, he said that Ries could "publish it in one of three ways: (1) 'you could...omit the Largo and begin straight away with the Fugue;' (2) 'you could use the first movement and then the Adagio, and then for the third movement the Scherzo;' or (3) 'you could take just the first movement and the Scherzo and let them form the whole sonata.'"²²⁹ The reason was likely financial—he needed to publish in multiple countries and receive fees before pirated versions appeared, and so he was willing to make compromises to accomplish this end. In the case of the British edition, it was initially published in two parts: one with movements one through three, with the order of the second and third movements switched, and a second installment with just the final movement (including its introduction). Lockwood notes that a similar degree of flexibility would accompany another of Beethoven's complicated children in B-flat, the op. 130 quartet/op.133 *Grosse Fuge*,²³⁰ performed by the Borromeo String Quartet earlier in our (Re)Hearing Beethoven Festival. One additional concern of Beethoven's was that while he could live with alternative orderings of the movements, he didn't want the tempi to be disregarded. Caeyers states that "The London publication was therefore what prompted Beethoven to add metronome markings to the *Hammerklavier* Sonata. Though they ought to have earned definitive authority, there is not a single pianist—not even today—who regards them as feasible in practice."²³¹

We have seen from the concurrent publication of string quintet versions of his seventh and eighth symphonies that Beethoven was open to the idea of string transcriptions, but how did he feel about the idea of presenting a piano work in an arrangement for strings? At one point, Beethoven responded to a scheme suggested by his brother (with whom he would come to blows over a publication dispute regarding the op. 31 piano sonatas in 1802)²³² for capitalizing on "authorized" arrangements of Beethoven's works. Writing to publisher Härtel, Beethoven had this to say: "Concerning the arrangements of the pieces, I am heartily glad that you rejected them. The unnatural rage now prevalent to transplant even pianoforte pieces to stringed instruments, instruments so utterly opposite to each other in all respects, ought to come to an end. I insist stoutly that only Mozart could arrange his pianoforte pieces for other instruments, and also Haydn."²³³ Of course, Beethoven did actually participate in such

229 Letter from March 19, 1819; as quoted in Lockwood *Beethoven Life*, 383.

230 Lockwood *Beethoven Life*, 384.

231 Caeyers, 435. The final marking in particular is considered to be prohibitively fast. For reference, we have included these markings in the program listing.

232 Swafford, 292-3.

233 As quoted in Swafford, 292.

arrangements himself, and approved those of others. As Ferdinand Ries explained, “...works were arranged by me, revised by Beethoven, and then sold as Beethoven’s by his brother.”²³⁴ Beethoven’s opprobrium was directed at those arrangements that sought to make a quick buck without concern for the artistic merits of the transcription.

As we move into a discussion of the music, and in particular how the original piano work relates to the transcription for string quartet that I completed at the beginning of 2014, a few words should be shared about my motivations for creating the arrangement. Any transcription project on which I embark stems from a profound interest in getting to know a piece intimately and participate performatively as a composer. Since I do not play a section orchestral instrument and am not much of a conductor, transcribing orchestral works for solo piano or other forces provides a way for me to engage intimately with a work I admire. Likewise, if a work like the “Hammerklavier” is beyond my capabilities as a pianist, I can still learn from it via the act of reimagining the music in a different medium. With all of my transcriptions, the goal is to create not a “reduction” or “port” of the original, but rather to conceive of a performance version that effectively and imaginatively utilizes the resources of the new medium to convey the music as best I am able. Fidelity to the spirit of the work comes before fidelity to the letter, as it does with many wonderful arrangers whose work I admire. One should not make a fundamental change without careful consideration, but it does no one a service to inelegantly transfer something that is fundamentally out of sorts with its new environment. For instance, a string tremolo may sound ridiculous if literally adapted to repeated notes on the piano, or high notes on the piano might be too intense for a violin passage; copying such things verbatim from one medium to another is precisely the kind of hackery that Beethoven must have despised.

We start, then, with a fundamental adaptation that affects the entire work—namely the decision to change the key from B-flat major to C major. Taking this step (literally) was the key (again, literally) to unlocking the piece in a version for string quartet. The reasoning for this should be apparent from a quick look at the very opening of the sonata, as well as the knowledge that C is the lowest string on both the cello and the viola:

234 Ibid.

Example 13

a)

Beethoven, “Hammerklavier” Sonata, op. 106, I: opening

b)

Beethoven/Plylar, “Hammerklavier” Sonata, op. 106, I: opening

If one were to keep the key of B-flat, several problems immediately arise: the lowest fundamental tone of B-flat would be an octave higher than what Beethoven had written, which immediately cuts off the lowest octave of the cello for the opening (and with no support from the viola), and the string would be stopped. By moving to C major, the open C and G strings of the viola and cello could be allowed to vibrate (simulating a held pedal), and the sound would immediately be more lush, befitting the grand opening gesture. It was felt that these kinds of benefits generally held through the entire work, so each movement is transposed up a whole step so these advantages could be capitalized on throughout the piece.

Pedal emulation is a definite concern that can be addressed in various ways, perhaps most easily when one has open strings as a resource. But

every decision to hold a tone obligates that string, so one must be strategic about it. At other times the piano part may be in the upper register of the keyboard, which when played ordinarily by a violin may be too aggressive a timbre; so sometimes the octave is changed and lines shifted to adapt, or harmonics can be employed. Each of those decisions has its own pitfalls, however, so the context of where in the piece those accommodations are made is very important. That is, what works for a given passage may not be effective in the same way at a later occurrence.

One pianistic effect that Beethoven employs throughout the first movement involves staggering the attacks so that the hands alternate with one another. This is easy to do for the pianist. If you are asked to play on the offbeat, however, it is much more difficult to remain together as an ensemble if continued for prolonged periods of time, so in practice the effect can be emulated in various ways. Here are just a couple of solutions found for managing this issue in a way that is simple for the strings to execute; Example 14a is paired with 14b, and 14c with 14d:

Example 14

a)

Musical score for Example 14a. It consists of two staves: a piano part on the bottom and a violin part on the top. The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents, marked with dynamics *f*, *sf*, *sf*, and *sf*. The violin part plays a sustained chordal texture, with an *8va* marking above the first measure. The key signature has one flat, and the time signature is 3/4.

Beethoven, “Hammerklavier” Sonata, op. 106, I: mm. 26-28

b)

Musical score for Example 14b, showing a string quartet. The staves are labeled Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., and Vc. The Vln. I part has an *8va* marking. The Vln. II part has a melodic line. The Vla. part has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The Vc. part has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. Dynamics *f* and *sf* are indicated. An arrow labeled "offbeats" points to the first measure. The key signature has one flat, and the time signature is 3/4.

Beethoven/Plylar, “Hammerklavier” Sonata, op. 106, I: mm. 26-28

c)

A musical score for piano, showing a four-measure phrase. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The first measure is marked *f* and contains a complex chord with a tremolo effect. The second measure is marked *p* and contains a similar chord. The third measure is marked *f* and contains a complex chord with a tremolo effect. The fourth measure is marked *p* and contains a similar chord. The score is written in a grand staff with treble and bass clefs.

Beethoven, “Hammerklavier” Sonata, op. 106, I: mm. 249-252

d)

A musical score for string quartet, showing four staves: Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., and Vc. The key signature has two flats. The first measure is marked *f* and the second *p*. The third measure is marked *f* and the fourth *p*. The score is written in a grand staff with treble and bass clefs.

Beethoven/Plylar, “Hammerklavier” Sonata, op. 106, I: mm. 249-252

Another option for articulation that the string instruments can offer—though there is the danger of overplaying one’s hand—is the use of pizzicato. For instance, quiet plucked chords in combination with *sul tasto* bowing can delicately articulate the transitional moments between phrases:

Example 15

Musical score for Example 15, showing four staves: Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 3/4. The score is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The Violin I part features a tremolo pattern of eighth notes, with a *pizz.* (pizzicato) instruction in the second measure and a *(s.t.) arco* instruction in the third measure. The Violin II part also features a tremolo pattern, with a *pizz.* instruction in the second measure and a *(s.t.) arco* instruction in the fourth measure. The Viola part has a *pizz.* instruction in the second measure. The Violoncello part has a *pizz.* instruction in the second measure. The score is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic throughout.

Beethoven/Plylar, “Hammerklavier” Sonata, op. 106, I: mm. 49-52

Sometimes the situation is such that Beethoven fills the entire keyboard with notes held by the pedal, and it would be difficult to actually play all of the notes or to fill the sound in all registers by just selecting some of the notes. One solution, rarely employed because of the significant change in the sound, is the alternating-note tremolo. In Example 16b below the upper voices maintain the tremolo except to articulate the final eighth note of each bar, while the lower voices descend with a similar tremolando/ articulation pattern to what is seen in the violins and sounded in the left hand chords of the piano part:

Example 16

a)

Musical score for Example 16a, showing the piano part. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 3/4. The score is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The upper voice (treble clef) features a tremolo pattern of eighth notes, with a *8va* instruction above the staff. The lower voice (bass clef) features a descending tremolo pattern of eighth notes, with a *sc.* (scordatura) instruction below the staff. The score is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic throughout.

Beethoven, “Hammerklavier” Sonata, op. 106, I: mm. 193-194

b)

The image shows a musical score for the first movement of Beethoven's Hammerklavier Sonata, op. 106, measures 193-194. The score is for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The passage is characterized by a series of chords and a final note that has been the subject of controversy: whether it should be an A-sharp or an A-natural.

Beethoven/Plylar, “Hammerklavier” Sonata, op. 106, I: mm. 193-194

As a final note on the first movement, I should mention the effect that questions of authenticity and accuracy can have on the performer and arranger. For the “Hammerklavier,” there is one particular note (or rather series of notes with the same pitch class) that has been fought over for generations. I am speaking of the infamous A-sharp that occurs in the passage building up to the recapitulation. Artur Schnabel, in his edition of the sonatas, had this to say about the matter: “The question of whether a# or a is correct as the last quaver of this bar (and during the next two bars) has been the cause of violent controversy...In the editor’s opinion all available arguments in favour of a (even the references to the rules of harmony) are too weak, in view of the superior manifestation of genius inherent in the a#.”²³⁵

The question of the A-sharp remains controversial, and Morante notes that “[both] positions have had distinguished advocates: [A-natural] (Alfred Brendel, Paul Badura-Skoda) as well as [A-sharp] (Edwin Fischer, Daniel Barenboim, András Schiff). Similarly, the various editions of the work are divided [on the matter]: some give the [A-sharp] (Liszt, almost all the urtexts, Bülow, Schnabel), others indicate [A-natural] (Casella, Kohler Ruthardt, Schenker, Cooper)...”²³⁶ Paul Badura-Skoda argued with conviction but not conclusively that performers should play an A-natural instead of an A-sharp²³⁷ in the passage. I love that these things still cause such intense feeling in commentators—it is much preferable to apathy. I must admit that while I have heard it both ways, and think that both have their merits sonically without consideration for their musicological justification, I find the A-sharp more compelling and am therefore perhaps

235 Schnabel, Artur, *Beethoven: Complete Piano Sonatas in Two Volumes*, Volume II, ed. Artur Schnabel, Alfred Masterwork Edition, 306.

236 Morante/Davis, 251.

237 Badura-Skoda, Paul, “Should we play A-natural or A-sharp in Beethoven’s “Hammerklavier” Sonata, opus 106?” in *Notes*, Music Library Association, Vol. 68, No. 4 (June 2012).

biased in its favor. Should a group desire to play a B-natural instead of C-natural in the string quartet version, they would be welcome to do so; just not both at the same time, and they must write a paragraph about the ordeal as I have here.

We next move to the shortest movement of the sonata, the scherzo. Beethoven wrote into a draft of the scherzo: “A small house here, so small there is barely room for one. Only a few days in this divine Brühle! Longing or yearning, liberation or fulfilment.”²³⁸ The music is witty and at times acerbic. It also has a number of tricky passages given the low bass lines in particular; the alterations made in the transcription were intended to feel as natural as possible without the extra range. The trio was particularly challenging to adapt due to the technical aspects of the original as well as the low range. To lighten the texture pizzicato was used carefully, especially in the second violin, as well as modified figuration particularly in the cello part. Example 17 shows a glimpse of both of these aspects:

Example 17
a)

Beethoven, “Hammerklavier” Sonata, op. 106, II: mm. 52-57

b)

Beethoven/Plylar, “Hammerklavier” Sonata, op. 106, II: mm. 52-57

238 As quoted in Morante/Davis, 244. In a footnote, the authors clarify that Brühl is a river near Mödling where Beethoven worked on the “Hammerklavier” sonata.

The scherzo closes with a passage I still find stunning despite having heard it so many times, with an alternation between the home B-flats (in the piano version) and B-natural pulses. But the music gets stuck and the B-naturals become more emphatic and rapidly articulated, only yielding to B-flat at the last moment before one last gasp of the theme.

The great pianist and conductor Hans von Bülow, erstwhile son-in-law of Franz Liszt, "...proposed that [the third] movement was where pianism ended, and 'inspired declamation' began. According to Bülow, those incapable of such expression would do better to content themselves with simply reading the score."²³⁹ The massive *Adagio sostenuto* is a world unto itself, and one of the most significant of Beethoven's many wonderful slow movements. It was this movement that first made me interested in transcribing the piece, and I even wrote out a few bars in F-sharp minor before realizing that the whole piece should be done, and up a step, so in G-sharp minor. In the creation of the movement, Beethoven arrived late at the *Adagio sostenuto*'s opening; it turns out that what seemed like an integral component from the start was actually an afterthought. Beethoven sent the opening measure as a one-bar introduction to Ferdinand Ries in London after the main body of the work had already been sent. For Swafford, "The slow movement now begins with a simple gesture that is the distilled essence of the whole piece."²⁴⁰ The *Adagio sostenuto* is a lament that could continue forever, with momentary glimpses of happier times remembered.

Again in the line of interpretive conundrums, the *Adagio sostenuto* contains at measure 165, like a passage in the *Adagio ma non troppo* of the later op. 110 sonata in A-flat major, a puzzle for the performer to solve. In this case it is the strange notation of a tied note with different fingerings above it (4-3), seemingly implying a fingering change on the tied note with no rearticulation. One might think that this would be a rather futile gesture. Pianist Malcolm Bilson wrote a letter to the editors of *Early Music* in which he offers some thoughts on the fingered tied-note controversy in Beethoven's piano music, praising Jonathan Del Mar's article on the subject ("Once again: reflections on Beethoven's tied-note notation") and stating his opposition to Paul Badura-Skoda's stance (in "A tie is a tie is a tie").²⁴¹ In his view, Beethoven was "concentrating a familiar musical gesture to its bare essence; these are *Appoggiaturas Without Dissonance, on a Single Note or Single Chord*."²⁴² These issues matter to performers who want to discover what the composer was aiming to do. In his edition of the sonatas, Artur Schnabel at this point refers the reader to his commentary

239 Caeyers, 433.

240 Swafford, 715.

241 Bilson, Malcolm, "Beethoven's Tied-Note Notation," in *Early Music*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (Aug. 2004), 489.

242 Ibid.

on the place where this phenomenon occurs in the *Adagio ma non troppo* of the op. 110 sonata: “...regarding the realization of the groups of two notes on a: the fingering 4, 3 is by Beethoven... When the third finger touches the key, it should bring forth an added pulse, something between a real and imagined sound, but audible in any case...”²⁴³

How then does one honor the tie and the fingering, especially in a string quartet realization? Example 18a shows the problem measure, followed by a solution in Example 18b that involves the subtle additional pulse of the unison harmonic played by the second violin:

Example 18

a)

Beethoven, “Hammerklavier” Sonata, op. 106, III: m. 165

b)

Beethoven/Plylar, “Hammerklavier” Sonata, op. 106, III: m. 165

Sometimes what Beethoven asks for is so singular that it is difficult to approach it convincingly. The crossed-hands extremely low melodic line that occurs at m. 45 and elsewhere in the movement is a great example—the melodic bass seems to sing up from the depths, and it is well out of the cello’s range. Since playing at the written pitch is out of the question, every

243 Schnabel, 414.

part can be surreptitiously shifted up an octave and the characteristic timbres of the instruments in those particular *tessiture* end up providing a different and not ineffective way to listen to these passages. When similar material occurs later in the movement but in a different key that allows the music to fit the range of the strings, one suddenly has a built-in orchestrational variant that *does* allow at-pitch setting. The result, in my mind at least, is an acceptable trajectory across the movement for these ideas.

Rarely in the “Hammerklavier” does the sound unilaterally move to *pizzicato*, but there is a period of about four measures where the accompaniment does this, offering a brief textural shift at a critical moment. At the very close of the movement, Beethoven rolls the last chord, which is easy enough to do as a soloist but more difficult to accomplish as an ensemble. In the past when confronted with this problem, I have done things like add a half beat or full beat and prescribe where exactly each instrument should enter. But while I think that there is poetry in the controlled roll, there is also a practical function that it serves, elongating the sound and giving the upper note a chance to have the last word before it evaporates. In this string quartet version, it was decided that the strings’ ability to softly attack and suspend the sound could accomplish something similar without the potential awkwardness of the roll (for instance, the speed of the roll might change depending on the circumstances, and when it is prescribed for an ensemble with each member having a specific role, flexibility is lost). The cello is given the option to articulate the bass note before the remainder of the chord comes atop it, giving a nod to the gesture while avoiding its inherent problems for ensemble.

The final movement is the one that probably gave most pianists pause, then as now. The giant culminating fugue is a challenge both technically and artistically, and the way that Beethoven arrives at it is a powerful statement in itself. The finale begins with a *Largo* introduction, something of a palate cleanser in octaves, followed by beautiful, rhythmically pulsing chords and abortive attempts at new material for a fugue subject. The fact that Beethoven presents these imitative moments and rejects them projects that he will be following a different path than the one we might expect. Barlines in this region at the beginning of the introduction cease to have their original function, and we enter a timeless space. It is difficult to pull this off as a soloist, and even more so as an ensemble.

One of the directions that Beethoven rejects is a powerful *Allegro* that leaves you wishing for more:

Example 19



Beethoven, “Hammerklavier” Sonata, op. 106, IV: mm. 3-5

While that material may not be featured, Beethoven does indeed provide more with the fugue that follows. He labels it “Fuga a tre voci, con alcune licenze” (three-part fugue with some liberties taken). The subject is shown in Example 20 below to give a sense of the musical possibilities of the idea, which opens with the leap of a tenth, lands on a trill, and then launches into a running melody—all of this at a rather blistering speed:

Example 20



Beethoven, “Hammerklavier” Sonata, op. 106, IV: fugue subject, mm.16-26

As a final example of another kind of intervention in the transcription, there is a passage with a sustained trill in the bass and rising arpeggios above it:

Example 21a

The image shows a musical score for a piano part. It consists of two staves, treble and bass clef. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The music features a series of sweeping arpeggios that rise in pitch across the staves. Dynamic markings include *ff* (fortissimo) and *sf* (sforzando). There are also some trills and slurs. A wavy line at the bottom of the bass staff indicates a tremolo or a specific performance technique.

Beethoven, “Hammerklavier” Sonata, op. 106, IV: mm. 369-372

The problem is that the sweeping arpeggios are not possible due to the range of the instruments if the cello is to trill the bass note (and even there it must be an octave higher than Beethoven has written it). In this case the inherent drama of the passage suggested another solution, one in which the instruments would play half of each rise in alternation to create the cumulative sweep of the overall gesture:

Example 21b

The image shows a musical score for a string quartet arrangement. It consists of four staves: Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., and Vc. The key signature has two flats. The Vln. I and Vln. II parts play sweeping arpeggios, with dynamic markings *ff* and *sf*. The Vla. part also plays arpeggios, with a *ff* marking and a note marked *(bow freely)*. The Vc. part plays a trill on a low note, with a *ff* marking. There are some slurs and dynamic markings throughout. An *8va* marking is present above the Vln. I staff.

Beethoven/Plylar, “Hammerklavier” Sonata, op. 106, IV: mm. 369-372

These notes have served as a basic introduction to some of the aspects of the “Hammerklavier” sonata that one can learn about, erring on the side of focusing on issues of transcription in the spirit of our (Re) Hearing Beethoven Festival. We did not really touch on the incredibly rich discussions that can be had about its structure and harmony. I encourage those interested to explore this highly influential piece further and consider the breadth of interesting commentary alongside the many excellent performances that one can access. And of course, we hope that you enjoy the two phenomenal performances of the “Hammerklavier” that are included in our series: Adam Golka playing the original version for piano, and the Verona Quartet playing the string quartet version.

David Plylar
Senior Music Specialist
Library of Congress, Music Division



About the Artists

Acclaimed for its bold interpretive strength and electrifying performances, the **Verona Quartet** is the 2020 recipient of Chamber Music America's prestigious Cleveland Quartet Award. The Quartet's members represent four different nations, but their singular approach and unanimity of purpose in both musical and cultural cooperation have quickly earned the group a reputation as an "outstanding ensemble...cohesive yet full of temperament." (*The New York Times*)

The Verona Quartet is one of the most sought after string quartets of its generation, delighting audiences at venues worldwide such as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, Wigmore Hall and Melbourne Recital Hall, in addition to appearances at La Jolla Summerfest, Chamber Music Northwest, Bravo! Vail and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. The group's 2019-2020 season includes tours across North America, Asia and South America; upcoming highlights include performances at The Kennedy Center, Library of Congress, Celebrity Series of Boston, Cliburn Concerts' Beethoven@250 festival, Lunenberg Academy of Music Performance, and Schneider Concert Series.

Since winning the 2015 Concert Artists Guild competition, the Verona Quartet has cultivated a progressive approach to collaboration and programming including numerous cross-cultural and interdisciplinary enterprises. Projects include performances with dancers from Brooklyn's Dance Heginbotham, artistic exchange with traditional Emirati poets in the UAE and collaborations through the Kennedy Center's Direct Current Festival with folk supergroup I'm With Her as well as cellist Joshua Roman. Other notable collaborators include Anne-Marie McDermott, Orion Weiss, Cho-Liang Lin, Atar Arad, Paul Katz, David Shifrin, Charles Neidich, and Renée Fleming.

The Verona Quartet has developed a consummate reputation for its compelling interpretations of contemporary music, and regularly champions and commissions works from composers such as Julia

Adolphe, Sebastian Currier and Richard Danielpour, as well as Michael Gilbertson, whose Quartet was a finalist for the 2018 Pulitzer Prize in Music. Forthcoming album releases include Gilbertson's Quartet, as well as the Verona Quartet's debut album, *Diffusion*, on Azica Records featuring works by Ravel, Szymanowski and Janáček.

The Verona Quartet rose to international prominence by sweeping top prizes at competitions across four continents, including the Wigmore Hall, Melbourne, Osaka and M-Prize International Competitions. The Quartet currently serves as the inaugural Quartet-in-Residence with North Carolina's Chamber Orchestra of the Triangle, where it performs over 10 concerts and 40 community engagement activities annually. Strongly committed to education, the Verona Quartet is also Quartet-in-Residence for the Indiana University Summer String Academy and New England Conservatory Preparatory School. Further positions include the 2017-18 Ernst Stiefel String Quartet-in-Residence at the Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts as well as guest residencies at numerous institutions worldwide including Oberlin Conservatory of Music, USC Thornton School of Music, The Hartt School, UNC School of the Arts, Syracuse University, Lunenburg Academy of Music Performance and the Young Siew Toh Conservatory of Music.

Formed at Indiana University under the tutelage of the Pacifica Quartet and Atar Arad, the Verona Quartet went on to complete residencies at The Juilliard School with the Juilliard String Quartet, as well as the New England Conservatory with Paul Katz. The group also counts among its principal mentors Alex Kerr, David Finckel, Donald Weilerstein, Martha Katz, Merry Peckham, Miriam Fried, Kim Kashkashian and Nicholas Kitchen. The ensemble's "thoughtful, impressive" performances (*Cleveland Classical*) emanate from the spirit of storytelling; the Quartet believes that the essence of storytelling transcends genre and therefore the name "Verona" pays tribute to William Shakespeare, one of the greatest storytellers of all time.



Cellist **Annie Jacobs-Perkins** has been praised for "hypnotic lyricism, causing listeners to forget where they were for a moment" (Alex Ross, *The New Yorker*). Jacobs-Perkins holds the Laurence Lesser Presidential Scholarship at the New England Conservatory of Music, where she completed her Master of Music and is pursuing a Graduate Diploma under the tutelage of Laurence Lesser. She was a Trustee Scholar at the University of Southern California and a 2018 Outstanding Graduate in Ralph Kirshbaum's class at USC's Thornton School of Music.

Jacobs-Perkins is the cellist in the Callisto Piano Trio, the youngest

group ever to medal in the senior division of the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition. Jacobs-Perkins has participated in the Ravinia Steans Institute, Yellow Barn Festival, La Jolla Music Society's SummerFest, Piatigorsky International Cello Festival, and Perlman Music Program. She has collaborated with artists such as Anthony Marwood, Lucy Shelton, Timo Andres, Jörg Widmann, Brett Dean, and the Mark Morris Dance Company. She has performed as a chamber musician, soloist, and principal cellist in the world's leading concert halls, such as Het Concertgebouw, Jordan Hall, and Carnegie Hall.

In 2019 she was the winner of the NEC Concerto Competition, resulting in a performance of Haydn's second cello concerto with the NEC Chamber Orchestra. In 2015 Jacobs-Perkins won the Thornton School's Solo Bach Competition and the Burbank Philharmonic's Hennings-Fischer Young Artist Competition. Earlier that same year she appeared as a soloist on the NPR show "From the Top."



Polish-American pianist **Adam Golka** has been on the concert stage since the age of 16, when he won first prize at the 2nd China Shanghai International Piano Competition. He has also received the Gilmore Young Artist Award and the Max I. Allen Classical Fellowship Award from the American Pianists Association, and was presented by Sir Andrés Schiff in recitals at the Klavier-Festival Ruhr in Germany, Tonhalle Zürich, and in Berlin and New York.

Recent highlights include Mozart's Concerto no. 24, K. 491 with the NFM Leopoldinum Chamber Orchestra in Wroclaw, Poland; Mozart No. 21, K. 467 with JoAnn Falletta and the Buffalo Philharmonic; Grieg's Concerto with Symphony in C in New Jersey; and the Stravinsky Concerto for Two Pianos with pianist Roman Rabinovich in Tel-Aviv. Golka was presented on the Virtuoso series by the Cliburn Foundation in Dallas, where he continues annual performances of his special education program, "Van Cliburn: An American Hero." He made his San Francisco Symphony debut last summer with Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4. He also returned to the Krzywowa Festival in Poland, a favorite destination of his, where he premiered his own two-piano arrangement of Debussy's *La Mer*, and narrated – in Polish, English, and German – Saint-Saens' *Carnival of the Animals* with his own poetry written especially for the opening concert of the Festival.

In concertos ranging from Mozart and Beethoven to Tchaikovsky, Ravel, and Rachmaninoff, Golka has appeared as soloist with the BBC Scottish, Atlanta, Houston, Dallas, Indianapolis, New Jersey, Milwaukee, Phoenix,

San Diego, Fort Worth, Vancouver, Seattle, and Jacksonville Symphonies, Grand Teton Festival Orchestra, National Arts Centre Orchestra of Ottawa, the Sinfonia Varsovia, the Shanghai Philharmonic, the Warsaw Philharmonic, and the Teresa Carreño Youth Orchestra of Venezuela. In 2011 he performed a cycle of all five Beethoven concerti with the Lubbock Symphony under the baton of his brother, Tomasz Golka.

An avid chamber musician, Golka has performed in the Marlboro and Prussia Cove music festivals, Music@Menlo, Caramoor, with the Orpheus Chamber Players, and in regular appearances at Frankly Music in Milwaukee, as well as a tour with the Manhattan Chamber Players.

In recital, Golka has appeared at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall in New York, the Mostly Mozart Festival in David Geffen Hall, Concertgebouw's Kleine Zaal, Musashino Civic Cultural Hall in Tokyo, the Gilmore Keyboard Festival, the Ravinia Festival, the New York City International Keyboard Festival at Mannes, the Newport Music Festival and the Duzniki Chopin festival. He has premiered solo works written for him by Richard Danielpour, Michael Brown and Jarosław Gołombiowski. Golka's debut disc, featuring the first sonata of Brahms and the Hammerklavier Sonata of Beethoven, was released in 2014 by First Hand Records.

In celebration of Beethoven's 250th birthday in 2020, Golka is playing all 32 of Beethoven's sonatas in performance and in tandem with his next recordings for First Hand Records, which will release the complete Beethoven sonatas.

Golka studied with José Feghali and spent four years at the Peabody Conservatory studying with Leon Fleisher. Since finishing his official studies, he has continued his work with great musicians such as Andrés Schiff, Alfred Brendel, Richard Goode, Murray Perahia, Ferenc Rados, and Rita Wagner.

Golka serves as Artist-in-Residence at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts, where he teaches piano and chamber music, and conducts the Holy Cross Chamber Orchestra.



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PIANOS



PROGRAM

FRANZ LISZT (1811-1886)

Les Préludes (after A. de Lamartine), S. 637 (1848-1855)

Symphonic Poem no. 3

Version for two pianos (c. 1855)

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827) / FRANZ LISZT

Transcription for two pianos (1851)

Symphony no. 9 in D minor, op. 125 (1822-4)

Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso (♩ = 88)

Molto vivace (♩ = 116)—*Presto* (♩ = 116)—*Molto vivace* (♩ = 116)—
Coda—Presto

Adagio molto e cantabile (♩ = 60)—*Andante moderato* (♩ = 60)—
Tempo I—Adagio—Lo stesso tempo

Presto (♩ = 96)—*Allegro ma non troppo* (♩ = 88)—*Tempo I—Poco*
Adagio—Vivace—Tempo I—Adagio cantabile—Tempo I, Allegro—
Allegro assai (♩ = 80)—*Tempo I, Allegro—Allegro assai* (♩ = 80)—
Poco Adagio—Tempo I—Presto—Recitativo—Allegro assai—

Alla Marcia: Allegro assai vivace (♩ = 84)—*Andante maestoso*
(♩ = 72)—*Adagio ma non troppo, ma divoto* (♩ = 60)—*Allegro*

energico, sempre ben marcato (♩ = 84)—*Allegro ma non tanto*
(♩ = 120)—*Poco Adagio—Tempo I—Poco Adagio—Poco Allegro,*

stringendo il tempo, sempre più Allegro—Prestissimo (♩ = 132)—
Maestoso (♩ = 60)—*Prestissimo*



About the Program

FRANZ LISZT, *Les Préludes*

"What else is our life but a series of preludes to that unknown Hymn, the first and solemn note of which is intoned by Death?"²⁴⁴

When Liszt embarked on his remarkable series of symphonic poems, he offered a new conception of what instrumental music could be. Born from the world of the concert overture with its extramusical references and typically cast in a single movement (the final *Von der Wiege bis zum Grabe* being the exception), these works became significant players in the debate about absolute music versus program music. The distinction was and is in many ways a forced one; in general Liszt's music does not follow a specific "program" but rather offers something inspired by the

²⁴⁴ Alphonse de Lamartine, *Méditations Poétiques*, extracted from Liszt, Franz, *Les Préludes and Other Symphonic Poems in Full Score* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1994), 3.

topic at hand (often a work of literature or a figure like Hamlet, Mazeppa or Tasso) that can still be described in known formal terms. Material for Liszt's symphonic poems, as we shall see in the case of *Les Préludes*, often had an early genesis that developed over many years into its final form. The first numbered symphonic poem was *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne*, after Hugo, which coincidentally bore the same title and inspiration as what some consider the "earliest" symphonic poem by César Franck.²⁴⁵

As we often find with Liszt, the genesis of *Les Préludes* was remarkably complex and involves a multitude of versions and preliminary works. That is partly why it is difficult to speak with certainty about influences between versions of the pieces, as we will see; for this program we will be focusing on the two-piano version of the symphonic poem that was published concurrently with the orchestral score in 1856. In addition to the orchestral and two-piano versions, there is also a four-hands duet version and even a solo piano version, the preparation of which Liszt supervised, as a "Partition de piano par K. Klauser, avec additions de F. Liszt." Liszt's edits to Karl Klauser's work were significant enough for Leslie Howard to record it as part of his complete recordings of Liszt's piano works.²⁴⁶

An interesting aspect of the piece is the declaration of "after Lamartine," because that inspirational source only came toward the end of the process, after Liszt had already associated the material with another literary source. This re-association of inspirations happened sometimes with Liszt, as with the second symphonic poem *Tasso* and its relationship to both Goethe and Byron. In the case of *Les Préludes*, the piece actually started life as a work for men's voices and piano. Around 1844-5 Liszt composed "Les aquilons" for male voices and piano duet, the second in a series of pieces that formed *Les quatre éléments*, based on the poetry of Joseph Autran. The other movements ("La terre," "Les flots," and "Les astres") were drafted for piano and voices with the intention of orchestrating the set. Liszt enlisted August Conradi to orchestrate the quartet of pieces, while Liszt made corrections and oversaw the process. The final manuscript from Conradi dates from 1848, and here is where

245 Franck's work was composed at about the same time, and finished earlier, but was unpublished in his lifetime.

246 To my knowledge this is the largest solo recording project undertaken, comprising 99 CDs in the original set plus the occasional supplement as more music is discovered. Incidentally, Howard mentions in his always-enjoyable program booklets that "the similarity of the second theme to the trio from Schubert's 'Great' C-major Symphony may be regarded as entirely accidental, since the Schubert was unpublished and unknown at the time of Liszt's first conception of his melody." Howard, Leslie, CD Booklet for Leslie Howard, *The complete music for solo piano, Vol. 38 – Les Préludes* (Hyperion, CDA87015, 1996), online version.

we start to see the shift that led to the work we know. It appears that Liszt planned to open the four-part choral cycle with an instrumental overture that drew on the themes developed in *Les quatre éléments*. This ended up becoming the symphonic poem *Les Préludes*, and the choral works were abandoned.²⁴⁷ The standalone work was revised in 1850-52, and its association had changed to Lamartine by mid-1853. The orchestral version of the symphonic poem was first performed in Weimar in 1854 under Liszt's direction.

Dedicated to his companion Princess Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein, *Les Préludes* has long been an audience favorite among Liszt's orchestral works. This is great in that the piece shows off Liszt's ability to transform material to suit different musical needs, but it can also be a crutch among orchestral programmers who are still wary of more "modern" works like *Prometheus*. There are fascinating things about each of these works, and they are worth exploring. Liszt, although he had abandoned his career as an itinerant virtuoso in favor of focusing on composition while in Weimar, was not naïve about his prospects with the critics and the public. He knew that his innovations would not immediately be embraced, and here is where the notion of the transcription of his own works becomes particularly fascinating.

Hyun Joo Kim, in her book *Liszt's Representation of Instrumental Sounds on the Piano*, points out that while roughly two-thirds of the "golden age" arrangements for two pianos came from the 1880s to 1910s, Liszt's symphonic poem transcriptions for two pianos date from the late 1850s, and his Beethoven 9 transcription from 1853.²⁴⁸ As Kim puts it, "[it] would not be overstating the case to say that Liszt ushered in a new method in the field of orchestral arrangements for two pianos in the mid-century by consistently advocating a more conscientious approach to the original. Liszt's two-piano arrangements, in a word, were in the vanguard of technical and aesthetic development of the medium during the second half of the century."²⁴⁹ Interestingly, Liszt seems to have had a preference for the resources of four hands at two pianos over four-hands at one. Kim explains that "Liszt made a distinction between four-hand and two-piano arrangements, regarding the former as "more practicable for sales" yet incapable of capturing his "tones," while the latter, although it appears acceptable ("sounds reasonable"), remains the province of advanced pianists."²⁵⁰

247 Maria Eckhardt, transl. András Mártonffy, CD Booklet for Ferenc Liszt, *Choral Works for Male Voices*, Honvéd Ensemble Male Chorus, András Tóth and Gergely Bogányi (Hungaraton Classic, HCD 31923, 2000).

248 Kim, Hyun Joo, *Liszt's Representation of Instrumental Sounds on the Piano: Colors in Black and White* (United States: University of Rochester Press, 2019), 80.

249 Ibid.

250 Ibid., 81.

This is to say, the artistic possibilities of two pianos were more attractive to Liszt than what could be accomplished in a four-hands arrangement. For Liszt the ideal was often a version for solo piano, in which the pianist could control every aspect of the performance. When additional resources are needed, two pianos provide the compass of two keyboards, but perhaps more importantly, the independence of thought and movement with respect to the sound and execution of the music on each instrument.

Knowing as he did that his orchestral music was going to have difficulty gaining a foothold, Liszt put into motion a clever strategy using the two-piano medium to promote his orchestral music. In almost all cases of the symphonic poems the two-piano versions were published concurrently with the full score, but as mentioned above, these versions were less conducive to “sales.” Instead of seeking the traditional market for arrangements, excellent pianist-advocates like Camille Saint-Saëns and Francis Planté would play the symphonic poems and symphonies for a select group of guests in a private performance. This served as a primer for the audience, a way to familiarize them with the music before hearing the orchestral work.²⁵¹ The notion is an intriguing one, and given how difficult it is for composers today to get second performances of a work (and therefore a chance for them to be considered more fully)—let alone first performances—it would be interesting to see this more in practice today.

Liszt treated his own symphonic poems with the transcriber’s respect that he generally reserved for works by Beethoven, Berlioz, Weber and Wagner (in the case of the *Tannhäuser* overture). This meant that, while he would adapt things as needed to the needs of the new medium, a guiding light was the orchestral score itself. Kim notes a prime example of this at the very opening of *Les Préludes*, where Piano 2 starts by itself, and instead of completing the full gesture, passes midway through the phrase to Piano 1. This occurs at precisely the moment where there is a corresponding timbral shift in the orchestration. It is a subtle effect that may cause more trouble than desired for the performers, but nevertheless shows a desire to emulate what he had done with the orchestra.²⁵² Throughout the transcription we find that Liszt distributed the parts in such a way as to create a sense of distinction between instrumental groups being represented. While the timbres of the two pianos are generally matched, there is something about seeing the interplay between them that adds to one’s awareness of the orchestrational choices Liszt made. With the split-screen shots featured in Soyeon Kate Lee and Ran Dank’s performance, these aspects come

251 Ibid., 82-3.

252 Ibid., 85.

vividly to life.

As with all notes for the (Re)Hearing Beethoven Festival, our goal is to provide a little context and then to focus on some facets of the transcription that may be of interest, rather than give a detailed accounting of the music (much as I wish we had the scope to do so). With that in mind, we first note that Liszt opens his transcription with the alternation of phrases, each pianist responding to the other. In measure 10, Liszt introduces a *smorzando* rolled chord played only by Piano 2:

Example 1

a)

The musical score for Example 1a shows two staves. The upper staff is labeled 'Winds' and the lower staff is for piano. In measure 10, the piano part has a rolled chord marked 'smorz.' and 'pp'. The wind part has a rolled chord marked 'Più rit.'.

Franz Liszt, *Les Préludes*, orchestral version: mm. 8-10, winds

b)

The musical score for Example 1b shows two staves. The upper staff is for Piano 1 and the lower staff is for Piano 2. In measure 10, the Piano 2 part has a rolled chord marked 'poco rit. e smorz.' and 'pp'.

Franz Liszt, *Les Préludes*, two-piano version: mm. 8-10, Piano 2

The roll is of course the most pianistic of gestures, and works well here. Notice, however, the differences between the bracketed chords and the tempo modification markings, which were preceded by *Poco ritenuto* in the orchestral version and *Poco rallent.* in the two-piano version. Both accomplish similar things, but are sufficiently different to make me suspect that another, earlier version was involved in the preparation of one or the other (likely the two-piano version, which omits a few measures found in the orchestral version), or that some elements may have been developed concurrently (Liszt often worked on multiple pieces simultaneously). There is further evidence of these version differences later in the piece—some sort of disconnect that suggests that

the final orchestral score was not the only one used in preparation of the two-piano version.

Early in the orchestral version the harp begins to play a significant role, and in that first exposed section Liszt actually excludes the harp part from the two-piano version. It would have been possible to include, so a few possible reasons for its exclusion jump to mind: the preparation of the 2-piano version may have been made from a different source, or Liszt was making a decision to declutter the music. In the orchestra the harp part subtly activates the sound, but in the piano version its inclusion may have anticipated too much of the accompanimental variation to come at too early a point in an expository context.

As we will see with several examples, Liszt opted to change the type of accompanimental figuration, perhaps again because he wanted to save the more involved accompaniments for later in the piece. As we see in Example 2, the violins have figuration that is missing from the two-piano version:

Example 2

a)

Franz Liszt, *Les Préludes*, orchestral version: mm. 70-71, violins

b)

Franz Liszt, *Les Préludes*, two-piano version: mm. 70-71,²⁵³ Piano 1

Incidentally, the two-piano version is missing a transitional measure

²⁵³ Because of discrepancies in measure numbers between versions, for the sake of avoiding confusion I am using the orchestral measure-numbering on all listed measure numbers for both versions of *Les Préludes*.

here as well. The rolling arpeggios in the bass are certainly easy for the pianist to execute, and are melodically tied to thematic components, which may have been a factor in their preference for this case.

Sometimes Liszt will offer a double-whammy re-orchestration of an idea. Consider an intensifying moment in the orchestral version, with *tremolando* strings above an offbeat pulsing bass:

Example3a

Franz Liszt, *Les Préludes*, orchestral version: mm. 88-89, strings

Since repeated-note string tremolos are impractical on the piano, Liszt instead amasses sound with chordal tremolos in Piano 2, while Piano 1 continues the triplet pattern established in measure 88. The move is in line with what occurred in the orchestral version, but by not scaling back to duple rhythms the energy of the passage is intensified:

Example 3b

Franz Liszt, *Les Préludes*, two-piano version: mm. 88-89

In a work with such a complex composition history and the early involvement of the keyboard, it may be that the origins of some figuration predate the orchestral version—a different scenario, perhaps, than active deviation from the other version.

Speaking of figuration, Liszt was always conscientious about providing variety in his textures. A good example of this can be found in a passage that features winds articulating the main line in parallel chromatic motion, while the strings play tremolo atop for a special effect:

Example 4a

The image shows a musical score for two parts: Winds and Strings. The Winds part (top staff) features a melodic line with triplets of repeated notes in the first two measures, indicated by a bracket and the number '3'. In measure 125, this changes to duples of repeated notes, indicated by a bracket and the word 'duple'. The Strings part (bottom staff) consists of a dense tremolo texture. A bracket above the first two measures of the strings is labeled '3' and 'triplet repeated notes'. A 'cresc. e string' marking is present above the strings in measure 125. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 3/4.

Franz Liszt, *Les Préludes*, orchestral version: mm. 123-126,
condensed winds and strings

Notice that the tremolos of the first two measures of Example 4a, bracketed above, are measured triplet repeated notes, and they change to measured duple repeated notes in measure 125. Liszt emulates this in a way that doesn't literally do the same thing, but rather differentiates between the figurations. In Example 4b, Piano 1 has the role of the winds, and Piano 2 the strings:

Example 4b

The image shows a musical score for two pianos. Piano 1 (top two staves) has a melodic line with triplets of repeated notes in the first two measures, indicated by a bracket and the number '3'. In measure 125, this changes to duples of repeated notes, indicated by a bracket and the word 'duple'. Piano 2 (bottom two staves) consists of a tremolo texture. The word 'Rea' is written below the first two measures of Piano 2, and an asterisk '*' is placed below the first and third notes of the first two measures. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 3/4.

crescendo e stringendo

ff

ff

ff

ff

crescendo e stringendo

ff

ff

Franz Liszt, *Les Préludes*, two-piano version: mm. 123-126

The first two measures of Piano 2's right hand part include a measured triadic tremolo, and then Liszt opts for a remarkable timbral shift by alternating the hands as they comment on Piano 1's lines. The result is exhilarating.

At other points Liszt shows his knowledge of the piano's voicing possibilities as an orchestrational tool. There is a passage later in the piece where the violin passes a line to solo winds:

Example 5a

Vln. I

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

Franz Liszt, *Les Préludes*, orchestral version: mm. 249-53,
condensed violins and winds

In the two-piano version Liszt actually doubles the violin line at an upper octave, and then alternates the wind solos between the piano parts:

Example 5b

The image displays a musical score for two systems of piano parts. The first system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef, both in the key of D major. The second system is identical in structure. The notation includes various chords, arpeggios, and melodic lines with slurs and accents. The score is presented in a clear, professional layout with standard musical notation.

Franz Liszt, *Les Préludes*, two-piano version: mm. 249-53

Liszt was also willing to remove accompanimental figures if they might overly complicate the texture, even though they may be more welcome in an orchestral context. Ossia or “alternative” passages were also a go-to practice for Liszt, who used them as a way to entertain variant visions for what the music could sound like. Often these different versions each have considerable merit, so it is a question of preference as to which should be chosen.

As the symphonic poem approaches its climax, further differences between the orchestral and two-piano versions emerge. These include differences in accompaniment, melody and proportion (two measures are dropped and the melodic profile is different at a section in the two-piano version leading to the *Allegro marziale animato*). Each is effective in its own way, but this is another indicator that Liszt may have been working with one version that was not “final.”

We will close with one last example of something that Liszt sometimes does in his transcriptions that I admire, which is vary the setting of a recurrence of a passage that has the same music (or nearly the same music) in the original. This happens with the grand *Andante maestoso* theme, which, although there are important differences in the orchestral parts, is essentially the same in figuration and rhythm at each occurrence. Instead of writing the same thing twice, Liszt gives us the following treatment of the “same” music:

Example 6

a)

Musical score for Example 6a, Franz Liszt's *Les Préludes*, two-piano version, mm. 35-36. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It features a grand staff with two piano parts. The tempo is marked "Andante maestoso" and the dynamics are "ff". The right hand part begins with a series of chords and arpeggiated figures, transitioning to a more rhythmic pattern in the second measure. The left hand part provides a steady accompaniment with chords and arpeggiated figures. The score includes performance markings such as "sempre staccato" and "ff".

Franz Liszt, *Les Préludes*, two-piano version: mm. 35-36

b)

Musical score for Example 6b, Franz Liszt's *Les Préludes*, two-piano version, mm. 405-406. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It features a grand staff with two piano parts. The right hand part begins with a series of chords and arpeggiated figures, transitioning to a more rhythmic pattern in the second measure. The left hand part provides a steady accompaniment with chords and arpeggiated figures. The score includes performance markings such as "ff" and "8va".

Franz Liszt, *Les Préludes*, two-piano version: mm. 405-406

Liszt uses variation as a form of development, allowing for a climactic buildup of sound that is differentiated from the earlier instantiation, as big as that was. In effect it is a brilliant means of emulating on the pianos the powerful sound of which an orchestra is capable.



LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN / LISZT, *Symphony no. 9 in D Minor*

“Freude, schöner Götterfunken” (“Joy, beautiful spark of divinity”)
“Seid umschlungen, Millionen” (“Be embraced, you millions”)²⁵⁴

Beethoven’s final symphony came over a decade after the composition of the eighth, and was his swan song to orchestral music. Books have been written about this epochal work in the literature, and countless gallons of ink have been spilled in both exploring the music and laying claim to the mantle of Beethoven’s legacy. One need look no further than the competing claims of Wagner and Brahms to see what was at stake. But for our purposes here, we will be listening to this music with fresh ears, seeking fresh insights from a work that has never ceased being relevant. Our vehicle for this new exploration is the two-piano version of Beethoven’s ninth symphony as transcribed by Franz Liszt, whose Beethoven transcriptions are without parallel in the cornucopia of arrangements that have been made over the years of his music.

One aspect of transcription that is evident in Liszt’s work is his desire for musical clarity, even when rendering the most difficult passages. This is partly why he balked at the prospect of tackling the Finale to Beethoven’s ninth symphony in a transcription for a single piano, after having accomplished the feat with the other eight symphonies. As Liszt protested, “But to screw both parts, the instrumental and vocal, into two hands cannot be done either à peu pres or à beaucoup près!”²⁵⁵ His solution to the difficulty of incorporating the choral component with the instrumental on a single keyboard was a complicated one, and at times involved the use of up to six staves at one time, with the main text doing what it could to present a performance version, and the other staves showing what was important to voice, or giving a context that was needed for the understanding of the primary text. For instance, consider the entrance of the chorus at measure 77 of the Allegro assai “Ode to Joy” setting (at “Küsse gab sie...”):

254 Friedrich Schiller, extracted from “An die Freude,” as quoted in Lockwood, Lewis, *Beethoven: The Music and the Life*, paperback edition (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2003), 412. Lewis Lockwood points to the confluence of these “Ode to Joy” stanzas at a climactic point in the Finale.

255 Liszt, writing to Breitkopf & Härtel about the desired solo piano version. As quoted in Kim, 50.

Example 7a

The image displays two systems of musical notation. The top system, labeled "Chor.", features a vocal line in the treble clef with German lyrics: "steht vor Gott. Kri - se gab sie uns und Re - ben,". The accompaniment in the bottom system, labeled "Main text:", consists of piano parts in both treble and bass clefs. The right hand of the piano part includes trill figures marked with a "3" and a dynamic marking "f".

Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 9 in D minor, op. 125, version for solo piano, IV,
Allegro assai: mm. 76-78

The top two staves are not to be played. Liszt covers the content of those chorus parts in essence but not exactly in the left hand, while the right is free to play adapted trill figuration. Performers I know who have tackled this solo piano version have occasionally integrated some of the music from the extra staves (distinct from *ossia* or “alternative” options that pepper Liszt’s scores), or bypass some of the difficulty by performing with vocal soloists in a remarkable chamber version of the piece. Liszt had fewer concerns about the two-piano version of the ninth symphony, because he had been able to divide the instrumental and vocal parts between the pianos, covering everything that was necessary. Consider the same passage in the earlier 2-piano version:

Example 7b

The image shows a musical score for two pianos with vocal lines. The top system is for the first piano, featuring a melodic line with triplets and a vocal line with lyrics "steht vor Gott." and "sempre f". The bottom system is for the second piano, featuring a bass line with triplets and a vocal line with lyrics "Küsse gab sie uns und Reben,". The score includes dynamic markings like "f" and "sempre f".

Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 9 in D minor, op. 125, version for two pianos, IV,
Allegro assai: mm. 76-78

The solution for two pianos, as can be seen, offers cleaner roles for each pianist and a greater presence for the melody and bass. Even so, what Liszt was still able to accomplish with the solo piano setting was remarkable.

Beethoven had originally planned to compose a “symphonic triptych” at the time he wrote the seventh and eighth symphonies, and indeed his early sketches for the D minor symphony date from this time.²⁵⁶ Lewis Lockwood even notes the existence of a much earlier sketch for a “D-minor symphony” from the 1804 “Eroica” sketchbook.²⁵⁷ There is justifiable speculation that Beethoven had been planning a companion symphony to the choral when he did commence work on the idea more earnestly, including a verbal description from 1818 and some sketches from 1822.²⁵⁸ While it is unclear if Beethoven ever seriously entertained not keeping the choral finale once he had set his mind to it, he did sketch material labeled “Finale instrumentale,” and ultimately used the main theme for this in his op. 132 string quartet.²⁵⁹

The symphony was mostly composed during the space of only 9 months, between May 1823 and February 1824, though sketches for the scherzo date back to 1815/16. When Beethoven revisited the idea of a new symphony when discussing a possible commission from the London

256 Caeyers, Jan, *Beethoven: A Life*, transl. Brent Annable (United States: University of California Press, 2020), 351.

257 Lockwood, Lewis, *Beethoven's Symphonies: An Artistic Vision* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2015), 194.

258 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 195-7.

259 *Ibid.*, 198.

Philharmonic Society in 1817, he sketched some structural elements that would ultimately become part of the final work, including the idea of using text.²⁶⁰ The symphony was premiered in Vienna on May 7, 1824 at the Kärntnerthortheater.²⁶¹ This was not without controversy, as the English had expected initial rights to the work. Beethoven had intended to dedicate the symphony to Alexander I of Russia, but the leader died before it could be accomplished, so the honor went to Frederick William III of Prussia. Beethoven was less than impressed with his compensation—a ring that wasn't worth all that much.²⁶² The issue of dedication was a complicated one in the case of the Symphony no. 9; as Grove put it, “There exists, however, another dedication of the Symphony, to a body who had more right to that honour than was possessed by King or Kaiser—namely the Philharmonic Society of London.”²⁶³ This organization actually paid Beethoven for the manuscript and the exclusive rights to perform the work for eighteen months. That this was not honored is evident by the premiere occurring in Vienna, and the first London performance not actually taking place until 1825.

In any event, the premiere, unusually for Beethoven, ended up being a triumph despite the usual lack of rehearsal time. Two of the soloists, Henriette Sontag and Caroline Unger, had a difficult time with the parts and called Beethoven the “tyrant of all singing organs.”²⁶⁴ The performance involved three conductors: Michael Umlauf was the principal conductor, Ignaz Schuppanzigh (the famed eponymous quartet violinist) led the instrumental forces, and Beethoven was relegated to giving tempos and generally being ignored to the side.²⁶⁵ The premiere was among the most successful of Beethoven's career; after the performance the audience went wild but Beethoven did not notice since his back was to them, and had to be shown by one of the singers. As Jan Caeyers puts it, “[performers] and public alike were transported by the exhilarating final crescendo leading into the glorious apotheosis, after which the audience erupted into wild and rapturous applause, waving hats and white handkerchiefs—a gesture

260 Caeyers, 488.

261 Caeyers, 482 & 485.

262 Caeyers, 494.

263 Grove, George, *Beethoven and His Nine Symphonies*, reprint of third edition from 1898 by Novello, Ewer and Company (United States, Dover Publications, 2012), 332.

264 As quoted in Caeyers, 486. Another difficulty Beethoven faced in his preparations for the premiere had to do with preparing the parts—the bane of any composer. Beethoven had trouble with copyists, especially since his favorite one, Wenzel Schlemmer, had passed away. A year after the premiere of the ninth symphony he “...wondered whether there might not be a way to ‘use a stereotype technique to reproduce one's work automatically, so as to be free from these accursed copyists.’” As quoted in Caeyers, 483.

265 *Ibid.*, 486.

that must have brought immense joy to the unhearing Beethoven.”²⁶⁶

There is an account that Beethoven had considered setting Schiller’s “Ode to Joy” in the early 1790s, and he may have considered it at other points as well, but it was not until 1822 that he adapted the poem for his use in the symphony.²⁶⁷ Beethoven made judicious cuts to the poem, excising the overt references to drinking and politics.²⁶⁸ In his sketchbooks Beethoven annotated the appearance of the first three movements’ material in his own running commentary. As Caeyers relays, “Beethoven’s comment on the first fragment reads, ‘No, this won’t do—I require something more pleasing.’ The Scherzo citation also meets with disapproval: ‘Nor this—it is no better, merely livelier.’ Even the reprise of the idyllic Adagio cannot satisfy him: ‘No, again, it is too tender and sweet. I need something brighter, more cheerful... I shall proceed to sing something of my own... I ask that you join in with me.’” Once he gets to the “Ode to Joy” theme he announces “Ha, this is it! The joy I seek—I have found it.”²⁶⁹ It is always somewhat comforting to find that this type of planning was taking place to produce a work you admire; it both humanizes the composer and forces the realization that they must have possessed a profound ability to self-critique and edit in order to arrive at their end result.

Looking at the music, we will focus on Liszt’s adaptation of Beethoven’s score, instead of a customary analysis of the symphony. The piece opens somewhere deep in the cosmos, with the elements churning together and accreting to form the principal theme, which Lockwood describes as “a theme that seems to be carved in granite.”²⁷⁰ Liszt presents this opening material with a nebulous sound cloud in the second piano, out of which the first specks of material emerge from the other piano:

Example 8

Allegro ma non troppo un poco maestoso

Vln. I

sotto voce

pp

simile

sempre pp

Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 9 in D minor, op. 125, two-pianos, I: opening

266 Ibid., 487.

267 Ibid., 490.

268 Ibid., 491.

269 Caeyers, 493, including quotes adapted from Gustav Nottebohm’s work.

270 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 208.

In general Liszt makes practical use of the instruments at hand, dividing up the winds and strings between the two pianos for a call-and-response effect. He labels them as such in the score, and the effect is both sonically and visually effective. The differentiation between piano sounds may not be as great as that between the winds and the strings, but keeping the lines intact allows each player to present the material as an individual, and not just a composite super-piano.

Over the course of the first movement the texture given in Example 8 is developed, with a remarkable arrival happening at the recapitulatory moment:

Example 9



Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 9 in D minor, op. 125, two-pianos, I: mm. 301-6

This spot has been described as an earth-shattering moment, rending the heavens apart with its force. In David Levy’s book *Beethoven: The Ninth Symphony*, he writes: “The recapitulation of this first movement is as unexpected as it is astonishing. Recapitulations normally represent an area of affirmation and stability after the turbulence of tonal meandering... Never before had a composer destabilized this critical formal juncture as does Beethoven with his first-inversion D major triad. And never before had a major chord sounded so apocalyptic! A sense of arrival is unequivocal, but the effect is, at the same time, profoundly disturbing.”²⁷¹ By the close of the movement, the forces have united in a unison statement in barren octaves.

271 Levy, David Benjamin, *Beethoven: The Ninth Symphony* (United States: Schirmer Books), 1995, 61.

The scherzo would be the largest Beethoven would ever write, and harkens back to the world of the seventh symphony with its relentless rhythmic drive. The music of the scherzo erupts at once into a single fireball of an idea, grounded by the surprising use of timpani in the initial statement. That such an eruption can be followed by a five-voice fugue based on the introduced motive shows that these tectonic forces are nevertheless grounded by Beethoven's mastery of technique. This movement is a real tour-de-force for the pianists. Liszt is generally pretty diplomatic about spreading the challenges between the players, but there are occasions when he does so in order to provide the potential for musical variety. For instance, during a short repeated section in the trio, instead of simply repeating the measures, Liszt gives the same passage to the other pianist to play where the repeat would have been. This ends up resonating with the call and response tactics he employs throughout the transcription between the two pianos.

Occasionally there is no avoiding tricky moments, but Liszt nevertheless does what he can to help make coordination easier. Example 10 shows the opening measures of the last *Presto* of the movement next to the final measures. Both involve similar hand positions (indicated by brackets; those labeled in Piano 1 apply to those in Piano 2 except where marked differently), but Liszt makes the final setting a bit more incisive and easier to pull off until the last three notes:

Example 10

The image displays a musical score for two pianos, labeled 'Presto'. It is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 4, and the second system contains measures 5 through 8. Each system has a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. Brackets are used to indicate hand positions for both Piano 1 and Piano 2. Dynamics are marked as *ff* and *f*. The notation includes various note values and rests, with some notes in the final measures of the second system being marked with a fermata.

Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 9 in D minor, op. 125, two-piano version, II: final *Presto* 13 mm. from end, and 3 mm. from end

But what must we lose if we never risk anything? For the transcriber and composer these decisions are made with a tacit understanding that the

bold may flub, and that is okay. It should be noted that the sudden return of this interruptive gesture at the end of the scherzo foreshadows the kind of rejection that the musical spheres of the first three movements will experience in the finale, before the introduction of the “An die Freude” theme.

The *Adagio molto cantabile* is another movement of profound beauty, sharing some elements in common with the majestic *Adagio sostenuto* of the “Hammerklavier” sonata, heard earlier in our (Re)Hearing Beethoven Festival. For Berlioz, Beethoven’s fast music is great and all, but his slow movements he describes as “extra-human meditations.”²⁷² Liszt continues the expected alternation of winds and strings between the pianos where appropriate, and we sense some other similarities to the *Adagio* of the “Hammerklavier,” especially in the interaction between an increasingly florid melody and its accompaniment. Another point that comes to mind when considering this movement has to do with hearing piano music in the same register. In this, two pianos have an advantage over one. It seems obvious, but you may not realize how much one misses, when playing complicated four-hand or solo piano music, the ability to articulate and hear several distinct lines within the same register with clarity.

The sublime is interrupted by the profane, in a gesture that Wagner referred to as the *Schreckensfanfare* (“fanfare of terror”).²⁷³ This jolting material is presented in the winds, brass and timpani before leading to the multipart introduction of the finale. Cello and bass recitatives are interspersed within a catalog of reminiscences, referenced above, with the instrumental recitatives serving as declamatory arbiters of what music will be allowed to propagate in the finale. In Liszt’s version, after one piano does recitative work, Liszt the egalitarian gives the main theme at the *Allegro assai* to the other piano.

Occasionally Liszt will leave out appearances of instruments at certain octaves, presumably in an effort to control the dramatic impact of differentiating statements of material or reserving a register for a particular moment. After another *Schreckensfanfare* we arrive at the famous entrance of “O Freunde, nicht diese Töne!” As a bonus in the video of Soyeon Kate Lee and Ran Dank, the German text will be shown on the screen while the pianists play the vocal lines.

It took some time for Beethoven to work out his deceptively simple “Ode to Joy” theme,²⁷⁴ despite having glanced and winked at it with one of the themes in the Choral Fantasy way back in 1808. Beethoven’s varying

272 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 214.

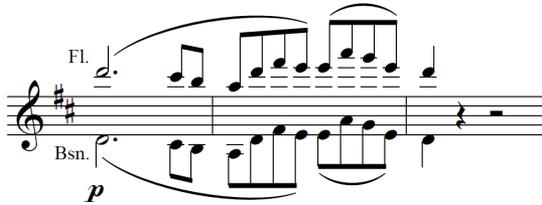
273 Levy, 93.

274 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 215.

presentations of the material provide excellent opportunities for Liszt to differentiate the writing in the two-piano version as well. It may again be out of a desire to reserve particular registers, but occasionally Liszt will simplify what was an interesting texture in the orchestral version, yielding a clearer presentation of the material. As an example, consider that Liszt set the flute and bassoon line of Example 11a smack in the register between the two that Beethoven wrote:

Example 11

a)



Beethoven, Symphony no. 9 in D minor, op. 125, orchestral version, IV:
Allegro assai mm. 35-37, flute and bassoon

b)



Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 9 in D minor, op. 125, two-piano version, IV:
Allegro assai mm. 35-37

Liszt was well known for recreating an orchestra at the piano, but in addition to simulating big sounds, this included using the piano's ability to create beautiful, quiet textures. We find one of those spots in the misterioso tremolo passage alongside delicate triplet chords just prior to the brilliant *Allegro energico* section.

Sometimes less is more when it comes to presenting the essence of the music. Later in the *Allegro energico* Liszt drops the upper first violin line

to avoid a series of runs in tenths, and further distills the texture to the necessary elements without decreasing excitement. The octave tremolo in the treble sets the stage for the passage:

Example 12

Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 9 in D minor, op. 125, two-piano version, IV: *Allegro energico* mm. 64-67

The ecstatic ending *Prestissimo* is a veritable catalog of smart decisions on Liszt’s part, with each part independently playable at tempo and together providing a raucous romp through exciting figurations. Piano 1 is entrusted with the double octaves in the last measures (in keeping with the wind/strings division of the work as a whole), while Piano 2 is there as a failsafe to ensure the final D’s are resoundingly struck. I marvel at Liszt’s ability to create such an effective performance piece without the benefit of the vocal parts, and I suspect that he enjoyed the challenge; it certainly seems that way given his energetic adaptation of the music. We will let Beethoven have the last word, via Liszt, with the closing *Prestissimo* of the ninth symphony:

Example 13

Musical score for the final movement of Beethoven/Liszt's Symphony no. 9 in D minor, op. 125, two-piano version. The score is arranged in two systems. The first system consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a grand staff bracket on the left. The second system also consists of two staves with a grand staff bracket. The music is in D minor (one sharp) and features various dynamics including *sf*, *f*, and *ff sempre*. The final system includes sixteenth-note passages with slurs and a final cadence.

Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 9 in D minor, op. 125, two-piano version, IV:
Prestissimo to end

David Plylar
 Senior Music Specialist
 Library of Congress, Music Division



About the Artists

Technically dazzling and intellectually probing artistry exemplify **Ran Dank's** pianism and musicality—captivating audiences and critics alike. Notable performances during Ran Dank's 2019-2020 season included appearances at the National Gallery in Washington, D.C., the Hawaii Concert Society, Purdue Convocations, Gina Bachauer Concert Series, two consecutive recitals at the Pro Musica series in San Miguel de Allende in Mexico, and a collaboration with Jayce Ogren and the Westchester Philharmonic.

Other recent performances have included recitals at the San Francisco Performances Series, Gilmore, Ravinia, Carnegie Hall's Zankel and Weill Halls, Steinway Hall, Gardner Museum, Kennedy Center, Town Hall, Yale School of Music, Phillips Collection, Morgan Library, Pro Musica in San Miguel de Allende (Mexico) and Portland Ovations, and have garnered critical acclaim from *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. Dank has performed as a soloist with the orchestras of Cleveland, Sydney, St. Luke's, Portland, Eugene, Toledo, Hawaii, Kansas City, Vermont, Charleston, Jerusalem, Valencia, Phoenix, and Hilton Head, among others, working under the batons of Michael Stern, Jahja Ling, Michael Christie, Kirill Karabits, Jun Märkl, Pinchas Zukerman, Jorge Mester, Jaime Laredo, and Ken-David Masur. His chamber music festival appearances have included Santa Fe, Seattle, Chanel in Tokyo, Great Lakes, Bridgehampton, Cooperstown, Mänttä, Bowdoin, Maverick, Skaneateles, and Montreal, and he has collaborated with luminaries in the field such as Paul Watkins, Augustin Hadelich, Eugene Drucker, Jaime Laredo, Sharon Robinson, James Ehnes, and the Orion, Shanghai, Takács, and Dover String Quartets. Dank's recent performance of the monumental set of variations by Frederic Rzewski, *The People United Will Never Be Defeated!*, at the University of Chicago was selected as one of the top ten performances of 2017 by the *Chicago Classical Review*.

Dank is an ardent advocate of contemporary music, and in recent seasons has performed Kevin Puts' piano concerto *Night*, the Tobias Picker concerto *Keys to the City*, and William Bolcom's Pulitzer-winning set of *Twelve New Etudes*, and has given, alongside pianist and wife Soyeon Kate Lee, the world premieres of Rzewski's *Four Hands* and Alexander Goehr's *Seven Impromptus*. This season Dank and Lee are featuring the world premiere of *Tango* for four hands by multiple GRAMMY-nominated pianist and composer Marc-André Hamelin.



First prize winner of the 2010 Naumburg International Piano Competition and the 2004 Concert Artist Guild International Competition, Korean-

American pianist **Soyeon Kate Lee** has been lauded by *The New York Times* as a pianist with “a huge, richly varied sound, a lively imagination and a firm sense of style” and by the *Washington Post* for her “stunning command of the keyboard.”

Highlights of the 2019-2020 season included appearances at the National Gallery where she gave the world premiere of Marc-Hamelin’s *Tango* with Ran Dank, as well as the Gina Bachauer Concert Series, Purdue Convocations, Rockefeller University, Hawaii Concert Society, Corning Civic Music, Cleveland Art Museum, and Rob Kapilow’s “What Makes It Great” at New York’s Merkin Hall. She also returned to the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Carlos Miguel Prieto and collaborated in concert with the Escher and Daedalus String Quartets.

Lee has been rapturously received as guest soloist with the Cleveland Orchestra and the London Symphony Orchestra, as well as the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, San Diego Symphony, symphony orchestras of Columbus, Bangor, Boca Raton, Eugene, Wyoming, Bozeman, Hawaii, Wheeling, Cheyenne, Napa Valley, Scottsdale, Abilene, Naples, Santa Fe and Shreveport in the United States; and the Daejeon Philharmonic Orchestra (South Korea), Ulsan Symphony Orchestra (South Korea), Orquesta de Valencia (Spain) and the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional (Dominican Republic), including performances under the batons of Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, Jahja Ling, Jorge Mester and Otto-Werner Mueller. Past recital appearances include New York City programs at Carnegie Hall’s Zankel Hall and Weill Recital Hall, Merkin Concert Hall, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts’ Alice Tully Hall, Washington’s Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Cleveland’s Severance Hall, the Ravinia Festival’s “Rising Stars” series, Auditorio de Musica de Nacional in Madrid, tour of the Hawaiian Islands, Krannert Center, Herbst Theatre, and Finland’s Mänttä Music Festival.

A Naxos recording artist, her discography spans two volumes of Scarlatti sonatas, Liszt opera transcriptions, two volumes of Scriabin works, and an upcoming release of Clementi sonatas. Lee’s recording of Re!nvented under the E1/Entertainment One (formerly Koch Classics) label garnered her a feature review in *Gramophone* and the Classical Recording Foundation’s Young Artist of the Year Award.

Lee is the co-founder and artistic director of Music by the Glass, a concert series dedicated to bringing together young professionals in New York City. A Yamaha Artist, Lee is an Associate Professor of Music in Piano at the Cincinnati-College Conservatory of Music and serves on the piano faculty of the Bowdoin International Music Festival. She lives in Cincinnati with her husband, pianist Ran Dank, and their children, Noah and Ella.

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PIANO



PROGRAM

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827) /

FRANZ LISZT (1811-1886)

Transcription for solo piano (1863)

Symphony no. 1 in C major, op. 21 (1799-1800)

Adagio molto (♩ = 88)—Allegro con brio (♩ = 112)

Andante cantabile con moto (♩ = 120)

Menuetto: *Allegro molto e vivace* (♩ = 108)—Trio

Adagio (♩ = 63)—*Allegro molto e vivace* (♩ = 88)

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN / FRANZ LISZT

Transcription for solo piano (1863)

Symphony no. 2 in D major, op. 36 (1801-2)

Adagio molto (♩ = 84)—*Allegro con brio* (♩ = 100)

Larghetto (♩ = 92)

Scherzo: *Allegro* (♩ = 100)—Trio

Allegro molto (♩ = 152)

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN / FRANZ LISZT

Transcription for solo piano (1835-7, rev. 1863)

Symphony no. 5 in C minor, op. 67 (1807-8)

Allegro con brio (♩ = 108)—(*Adagio* cadenza)—(implied A tempo)

Andante con moto (♩ = 92)—*Più moto* (♩ = 116)—Tempo I

Allegro (♩ = 96)

Allegro (♩ = 84)—*Tempo I* (♩ = 96)—*Allegro* (♩ = 84)—*sempre più*

Allegro—Presto (♩ = 112)



About the Program

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN / LISZT, Symphony no. 1 in C major

“...I shall think my time well spent if I have succeeded in transferring to the piano not only the grand outlines of Beethoven’s works but also the multitude of details and finer points that combine so powerfully to the perfection of the whole. I shall be satisfied if I carry out the task of the intelligent engraver, the conscientious translator, who precisely grasps the spirit of a work and thereby contributes to the circulation of the masters and the sense of the beautiful.”²⁷⁵

~ Franz Liszt

With the final performance of our (Re)Hearing Beethoven Festival we will hear works at the summit of the 19th-century transcription tradition: three of the nine symphonies of Beethoven as transcribed for solo piano

²⁷⁵ Liszt, Franz, “Preface” to *Franz Liszt: Beethoven Symphonies Nos. 1-5 Transcribed for Solo Piano*, transl. Alan Walker (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1998), vii.

by Franz Liszt. It took some thirty years for the entire set of transcriptions to be prepared and published, and the results were without parallel in their attention to detail and seeming ability to transform the piano into an orchestra at the pianist's command. Liszt made his first versions of symphonies 5, 6 and 7, as well as the funeral march from the "Eroica," between 1836 and 1839. This was during the period when Liszt's star was in the ascendant as a pianist and advocate of Beethoven. For whom were these transcriptions written? Liszt had earlier financed the publication of *Symphonie fantastique* himself—a huge service to Hector Berlioz and music in general—and ample correspondence shows that he had a time of convincing publishers to take on his transcriptions of this ilk.²⁷⁶ The problem that the publishers foresaw was that only a handful of musicians in the world could actually play them, and they were competitors, so unlikely to take up the cudgels for the work of a rival. Liszt, however, had greater aims in mind, both from artistic and political standpoints, and sought to differentiate his work from that of his contemporaries.

Jonathan Kregor, in his book on *Liszt as Transcriber*, suggests that in setting his work up as the supreme artistic achievement in the field, "Liszt had reduced Kalkbrenner's very accomplished pieces²⁷⁷ to run-of-the-mill *Hausmusik*, and [Liszt's] arrangements...supersede the competition because they require a skill of execution tantamount to the exaggerated stature of the composer Beethoven. Thus they can only be meant for 'virtuosos of distinction' and not for 'the majority of competent and respectable dilettantes.'²⁷⁸ This is to say that from this perspective in Kregor's formulation, "Liszt's arrangements thus place a premium on *inaccessibility*."²⁷⁹

Yet Alan Walker points out that the transcriptions "remain unsurpassed in the amount of fine orchestral detail incorporated into their texture, and their solutions—often of the most seemingly impossible technical problems—are carried out in the most pianistic way."²⁸⁰ That is, they may be difficult, but the aim of reproducing the symphonies "*without harming Beethoven's thought*"²⁸¹ was achieved by Liszt's transcriptions. There is a difference, also, between accessibility to pianists in general,

276 Kregor, Jonathan, *Liszt as Transcriber*, paperback ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 137.

277 That is, Kalkbrenner's Beethoven transcriptions.

278 Kregor, 137.

279 Ibid.

280 Walker, Alan, "Liszt and the Beethoven Symphonies," in *Franz Liszt: Beethoven Symphonies Nos. 1-5 Transcribed for Solo Piano* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1998), ix. An aspect of these transcriptions that is frequently lauded is Liszt's use of instrumental cues to give the pianist a sense of what instruments would be playing a particular passage in the orchestral version, presumably influencing the pianist's approach.

281 Ibid.

and playability. While Liszt's Beethoven transcriptions do require an extraordinary technique and musical vision on the part of the pianist in order to pull them off in performance, Liszt made decisions that were, in the end, "playable." He could have made choices that were not. Further to this point, Walker relates the story of Breitkopf's follow-up project that Liszt attempted but ultimately did not pursue: transcriptions of Beethoven's string quartets. Walker writes, "The reason [he did not pursue this further]... was his unwillingness to publish anything unplayable. As for the playable, that was merely pointless to him where the result was simply to obscure Beethoven's intentions."²⁸²

I have stated elsewhere in these (Re)Hearing Beethoven Festival program notes that there are many reasons why a transcription might be made, from interest in monetary gain to disseminating the music to a broader public. The most compelling of these, at least from an audience's perspective, is artistic. I have advanced the notion that the act of transcription is performative, that it gives a person the chance to participate in a work that might otherwise be closed to them. This can be a particularly potent motivation when the transcriber is in a position, as Liszt was, to realize the transcription in performance. When allied with the genuine desire to translate the spirit of the original into a new medium, the results can be spectacular, as they are in Liszt's Beethoven symphony transcriptions.

Of course, there is also a polemical side to this—it does not hurt to be associated with a name like Beethoven, and Liszt embraced this. As Kregor put it, "In arranging, then, Liszt hoped simultaneously to realize two goals that he had been advancing for the last decade: establishing Beethoven at the head of the pantheon and himself as the Beethovenian heir apparent."²⁸³ This desire for legitimacy via the mantle of Beethoven was of course a pursuit not limited to Liszt, but had been a staple of his advocacy work on behalf of the composer since the earliest days when Liszt had studied with Czerny. The infamous Weihekuss ("kiss of consecration") that ostensibly occurred when Liszt met Beethoven for the only time in April of 1823²⁸⁴ as a precocious 11-year old pianist served throughout his life as a symbol for this conferral of legitimacy.

In 1840 Liszt may have had difficulty convincing publishers to pursue his mammoth transcriptions, but their perceived value changed once they had been available for a time. Since Liszt had only completed a little over a third of the project during his initial foray, a new impetus had to come into play. This eventually happened in the form of a request from Breitkopf & Härtel, which had come to see the value of the enterprise,

282 Ibid., x.

283 Kregor, 132.

284 Ibid., 121-122.

and Liszt finished the entire set between 1863 and 1865. He did this while in preparations for taking the Minor Orders, and as Walker describes, “[perhaps] the most piquant part of the business was that much of the creative work was done on an antiquated pianino (with a missing D!)...”²⁸⁵ In the course of the notes below we will get a glimpse of what Liszt accomplished in his Beethoven symphony transcriptions, which reside at the apex of the artform. As before, we will offer a bit of context about each piece before exploring the transcription in more detail.

Beethoven first started sketching music for what would become the first symphony in 1795, but significant advancement did not come until 1799.²⁸⁶ Incidentally, Gustav Nottebohm noted the presence of material for “Adelaide” in that same sketchbook;²⁸⁷ this is a work that holds special significance for the Library of Congress, as it is in possession of the holograph manuscript of one of Liszt’s solo piano transcriptions of the song. The first symphony was dedicated to Baron van Swieten, and as is often the case with Beethoven’s dedications, it is complicated. In this case, the dedication exists in the original published parts from 1801, but not in the later score of 1820.²⁸⁸

The symphony was premiered on April 2, 1800 at the Burgtheater in Vienna. It was a significant moment for Beethoven, a part of his public debut as a symphonic composer. In addition to the symphony, the program included works by Haydn and Mozart as well as Beethoven’s op. 20 septet²⁸⁹ and a piano concerto, the identity of which is unknown but may have been the first.²⁹⁰ It is notable that Ignaz Schuppanzigh played the violin in the septet, and Haydn may have been at the concert as well.²⁹¹ The concert was also intended to showcase Beethoven as a pianist, and included an improvisation component, a talent for which he was notable. Audience members were quaintly instructed to procure tickets directly from the composer at his home.²⁹²

285 Walker, ix.

286 Lockwood, Lewis, *Beethoven: The Music and the Life*, paperback edition (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2003), 147.

287 Grove, George, *Beethoven and His Nine Symphonies*, reprint of third edition from 1898 by Novello, Ewer and Company (United States, Dover Publications, 2012), 2.

288 Grove, 3.

289 Liszt also created a high-fidelity transcription of the septet for solo piano.

290 Lockwood, Lewis, *Beethoven’s Symphonies: An Artistic Vision* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2015), 29.

291 Swafford, Jan, *Beethoven: Anguish and Triumph* (United States: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014), 242-3.

292 Caeyers, Jan, *Beethoven: A Life*, transl. Brent Annable (United States: University of California Press, 2020), 147-8.

As it turned out, the performance—especially of the piano concerto—left something to be desired, and it may have been due to a form of “musical sabotage” on the part of the players on account of Beethoven replacing the orchestra’s conductor.²⁹³ Performer psychology is a tricky thing, and woe to the composers who end up imperiously (or even inadvertently) slighting the musicians performing their work. In the end, they are in control of what sounds are produced.

Beethoven’s first symphony created quite a stir, given the wind chords, use of pizzicato and the wind use in general. One critic wrote that “The employment of the winds was excessive in any case, producing a sound more reminiscent of a wind band... than an orchestra.”²⁹⁴ In the case of the later luminary Berlioz, he felt that in the first symphony “...Beethoven is not here.”²⁹⁵ One wonders, however, how Berlioz might have responded in the moment, without the benefit of hindsight and the historical knowledge of how Beethoven’s music would evolve. The first symphony without the “Eroica” is not “nothing.”

Concerning unauthorized arrangements of the first symphony and septet, Beethoven wrote that “...one [has] at least the right to demand that publishers should state the fact on the title page [that it is an arrangement], so that the composer’s honour may not be endangered or the public deceived.”²⁹⁶ I have this same gripe today when one hears what is clearly a transcription of a work on the radio but the piece is ascribed only to the author of the original work; depending on its merits, the transcriber should be praised or blamed for their intervention, usually done without the knowledge or consent of the original composer.²⁹⁷

Beethoven’s first symphony opens auspiciously. As Lewis Lockwood describes it, “[by] presenting the initial tonic C major chord as a dominant seventh, Beethoven maintains and dramatizes the idea of opening with a short slow introduction, clearly in the manner of Haydn’s London symphonies. This way of beginning was celebrated as a coup, although it is in fact a harmonic condensation of a familiar opening gambit inherited from Mozart and Haydn.”²⁹⁸ Lockwood’s caveat is a good one, but it is the combination of the “harmonic condensation” and the perhaps unexpected

293 Ibid., 149.

294 As quoted from the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* in Caeyers, 149.

295 As quoted in Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 31.

296 Grove, 16.

297 If my first exposure to Beethoven’s work is the “Moonlight” sonata for kazoo

band, I might be forgiven for thinking that while Beethoven had a powerful vision for what the kazoo could do, pursuing more of his work might not be for me (though having written this, I would now like to hear this hypothetical transcription).

298 Lockwood *Beethoven Life*, 147.

nature of it that makes the opening effective. Early Beethoven was not above criticism; Sir George Grove had this to say about the orchestration: “The opening of the present work was an experiment; the sharp staccato chords in the strings, which never can be effective, even in the largest orchestra, when overpowered by loud holding notes in the wind...”²⁹⁹

How does Liszt handle the opening? From the very beginning of the enterprise, he offers two ways to play it, to be chosen at the discretion of the performer:

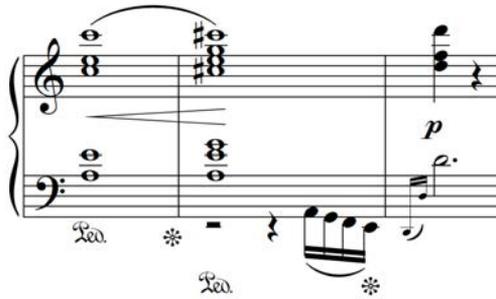
Example 1

The image shows two systems of musical notation for the opening of Beethoven's Symphony no. 1. The top system is labeled 'ossia' and the bottom system is the standard version. Both are in 3/4 time, C major, and marked 'Adagio molto'. The score includes dynamics like *fp*, *p*, *cresc.*, and *f*, and features like '8va' and 'ten.'. The notation includes treble and bass staves with various musical symbols and markings.

Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 1 in C major, op. 21, I: mm.1-4, with ossia

For our performance, Christopher Taylor plays the upper two staves—the *ossia* or alternative option; it is more difficult with its additional leaps, but has more registral space and richer chords, making the payoff of taking the risk worthwhile. These low-bass rolls can be tricky to bring off. If not managed carefully, these rolls in the opening movement of the first symphony can prove to be one of Liszt’s more potentially awkward solutions in the entire set. This is apparent at the onset of the *Allegro con brio*, where the pianist is asked to end a quick descending scale with a three-octave articulation of the bass line *in one hand*, rolled:

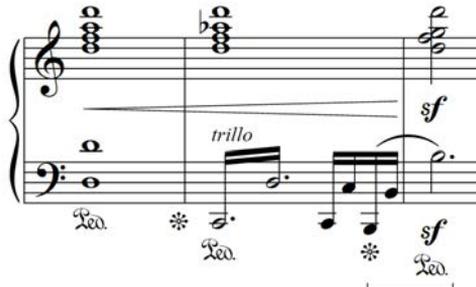
Example 2a



Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 1 in C major, op. 21, I: mm.17-19

Once that decision was made, however, Liszt embraced it. He cleverly integrates the gesture into the realization of an upcoming trill, as you can see bracketed after the measured tremolo at the ninth (itself a wonderful effect):

Example 2b



Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 1 in C major, op. 21, I: mm.23-25

Sometimes Liszt will offer a “hint” as to what is important that nevertheless differs from the main text. For instance, at the wonderful duet between bass voices and oboe, Liszt gives the melody an octave below where it is in the orchestral version in his main text, but offers the actual oboe line in a single staff above the main text. The implication is that one could choose to use it somehow, and this is what Christopher Taylor does in his performance, slightly redistributing the inner voices in order to achieve the upper oboe line:

Example 3

The image shows a musical score for Example 3. It consists of three staves. The top staff is for the Oboe (Ob.), featuring a melodic line with a long slur over the first two measures and a series of eighth notes in the third measure. The middle and bottom staves represent the piano accompaniment, with the middle staff in the treble clef and the bottom staff in the bass clef. The piano part features complex chordal textures and rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth-note runs in the bass line.

Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 1 in C major, op. 21, I: mm.79-82 with “ossia”

A savvy performer recognizes the inherent musical value of both the primary text and Liszt’s alternatives, making the choice at times a difficult one. When the choice occurs in the exposition and is repeated, the option is there to provide the alternative reading during the second pass, and this is something that Taylor does in his performance; on the first pass he plays the main text, then plays the ossia on the second:

Example 4

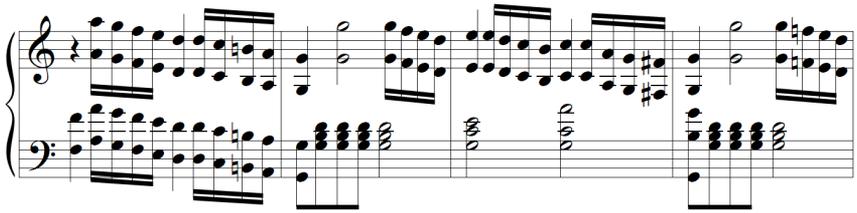
The image shows a musical score for Example 4, labeled as an 'ossia' passage. It consists of three staves. The top staff is for the Oboe (Ob.), featuring a melodic line with a long slur over the first two measures and a series of eighth notes in the third measure. The middle and bottom staves represent the piano accompaniment, with the middle staff in the treble clef and the bottom staff in the bass clef. The piano part features complex chordal textures and rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth-note runs in the bass line. The word 'f' (forte) is written below the piano part in several places. There are also some markings like 'x' and '*' at the bottom of the piano part.

Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 1 in C major, op. 21, I: mm.69-71 with ossia

The *ossia* passage is “closer” in attack profile to the fast string tremolos, but both settings have their merits. In other areas Liszt reserves the use of a particular choice of figuration that might otherwise have seemed like a “go-to” option for special moments (such as the repeated eighth-note octaves of measures 250-252, in lieu of *tremolando* 16th notes in the strings). These decisions have a dramatic impact on the flow of the work as a piano piece. Occasionally these kinds of changes occur in the main text, yielding a “deviant” but effective variation on the original. Consider the change in the violins to the new rhythm in Liszt’s setting:

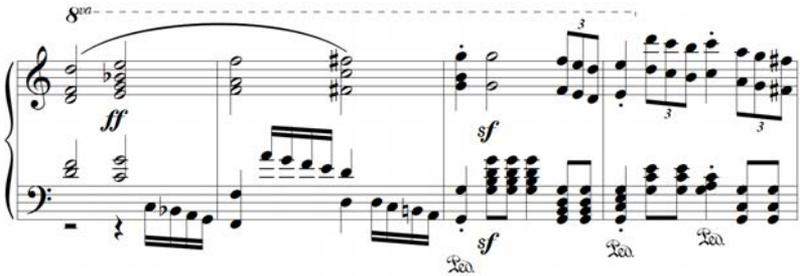
Example 5

a)



Beethoven, Symphony no. 1 in C major, op. 21, I: mm.197-200, strings, condensed

b)



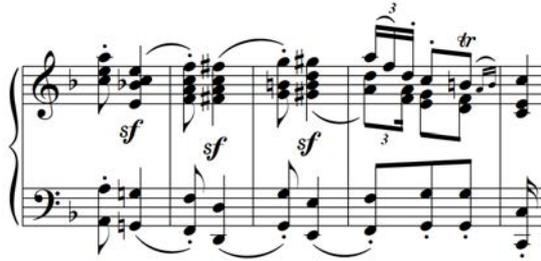
Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 1 in C major, op. 21, I: mm.197-200

Choices like these were likely made with several things in mind, with musical clarity and executability at the forefront. At tempo it would be deleterious to the music to offer a literal accounting of the notes in Example 5a.

Moving into the second movement, we find music that Jan Swafford described as closer to a *galant* style.³⁰⁰ Again for the sake of clarity, in this case melodic, Liszt opts to exclude some components from the initial presentation of an idea. For instance, the flute line is left out where it could be perceived to impede the presentation of the theme in the opening page of the second movement. Showing that he was operating with the mindset of some integration across movements, Beethoven incorporated a reference to the opening chords of the symphony:

³⁰⁰ Swafford, Jan, *Beethoven: Anguish and Triumph* (United States: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014), 245.

Example 6



Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 1 in C major, op. 21, II: mm.49-52

Right after this spot Liszt felt obligated to teach us what was in the original, dividing the wind and string chords in extra staves. We marvel then at how the omission, about which Liszt felt a measure of guilt that required the acknowledgment of its absence in extra staves, is adequately and pianistically covered in the music that made it to the main text.

Lewis Lockwood sees the Menuetto as Beethoven's breakout moment in the symphony, the germ of the Beethovenian scherzo to come.³⁰¹ If the first symphony may be seen as comparatively conservative in Beethoven's symphonic output, it is interesting to note the upending of norms one finds here. Lockwood compares the Menuetto from Haydn's 103rd symphony ("Drumroll") to Beethoven's as contrast: Haydn's has two sections totaling 48 measures before a 41-measure Trio, while Beethoven's two sections are divided into exceptionally unequal groups of 8 measures and 71 measures followed by a trio.³⁰² Later in the movement Liszt offers another didactic moment, showing trumpet and timpani parts in extra staves, but again the main text covers them adequately with different octave motion. One is left with less a sense of loss than a sense of an intelligent alternative.

There is also a passage in the trio of the Menuetto that earlier commentators have described as unplayable without the modern sostenuto pedal, and suggest that Liszt must have written what he did with the hope that one day the proper mechanism would be in place. In *Metamorphoses*, a book by the wonderful pianist Rian de Waal (who passed away too early), de Waal points out that not only would such pedaling not work in this particular case in practice, but that Liszt's instructions are themselves perfectly effective as they are written if carried out with sensitivity. Note the pedal indications in Example 7, and be mindful of the difference in resonance between Liszt's early 1860s piano and an instrument today. As de Waal puts it, "Careful half pedalling on a modern Steinway will do the

³⁰¹ Grove saw affinities with the Symphony no. 7 in particular, and brought up multiple examples to support the notion. Grove, 10-11, 256-7.

³⁰² Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 24-5.

job as well.”³⁰³ The third staff below is not an optional one, but is part of the primary text:

Example 7

Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 1 in C major, op. 21, III: trio, pickup to mm.80-7

Jan Swafford contends that because Beethoven transferred material originally intended for a first movement to the finale of the first symphony and started from there, “...the finale became the heaviest and most serious, rather than the first movement carrying the main weight as in symphonies of the past.”³⁰⁴ In this case, though, Lockwood feels that Beethoven adapted the material to produce a finale that is “...all lightness and wit... a clever 2/4 sonata-rondo...”³⁰⁵

Beethoven opens the music with a brief “accretion” introduction, in which a scale is built in front of our eyes as we anticipate the faster music to follow. The similarity between the open G’s and the dotted rhythm that follows and the opening of Schubert’s C-minor impromptu may be coincidental, but in my mind I immediately hear the possibility of the other whenever one is heard:

Example 8

a)

Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 1 in C major, op. 21, IV: mm. 1-3

303 De Waal, Rian, *Metamorphoses: The Art of the Virtuoso Piano Transcription* (Delft: Eburon Academic Publishers, 2013), 74-75.

304 Swafford, 244.

305 Lockwood *Beethoven Life*, 148.

b)

Allegro molto moderato



Franz Schubert, *Impromptu* in C minor, op. 90/1, opening

Later in the finale a wonderful literal interpretation of the timpani rhythm is given with Liszt's fingerings—a bit harder to execute than an octave tremolo, but effective in this limited usage:

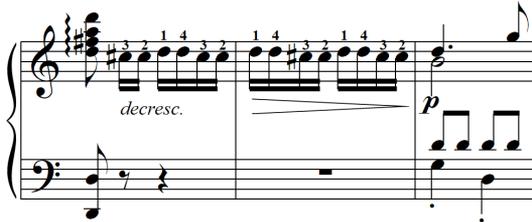
Example 9a



Beethoven/Liszt, *Symphony no. 1* in C major, op. 21, IV: mm. 34-6

Having made that commitment to the occasional strategic use of repeated notes, Liszt applies what all arrangers should consider carefully: the value of consistency in figuration. We then find that the repeated notes of the violin are allowed a rhythmic echo of the timpani:

Example 9b



Beethoven/Liszt, *Symphony no. 1* in C major, op. 21, IV: mm. 54-6

In measures 234-7 Christopher Taylor makes a rare deviation from Liszt's score, opting to emphasize the timpani rolls with an elongated unmeasured tremolo to build sound instead of using the shorter measured

tremolo given by Liszt.

At the end of the symphony Liszt chooses to vary the figuration, sacrificing exact replication of Beethoven's writing to better allow for the amassment of sound on the piano. Liszt offers the running sixteenths as an *ossia* option, but the use of triplet octaves gives a greater sound and differentiates from the many earlier instances of the running sixteenths (which are of course melodically significant as well). What makes the move work is that he had prepared the use of triplets earlier as an optional figural variant. Here are the two versions of this passage side by side:

Example 10

The musical score for Example 10 is presented in two systems. The first system, labeled 'ossia', features a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a running sixteenth-note pattern. The second system shows a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a triplet octave pattern. Dynamics include *sf*, *ten.*, and *ped.*

Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 1 in C major, op. 21, IV: mm. 289-292

To tackle this symphony at the piano is a gargantuan feat, yet it is just the opener for Christopher Taylor, who is able to perform all nine of Liszt's solo piano transcriptions of Beethoven's symphonies.



LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN / LISZT, *Symphony no. 2 in D major*

“In matters of translation...there are some exactitudes that are the equivalent of infidelities.”³⁰⁶

~ Franz Liszt

Beethoven's second symphony was composed during a period when Beethoven was beginning to come to terms with his progressive deafness. His hearing issues had begun around 1796 and led to the famous Heiligenstadt testament in 1802, in which his existential crisis came to the fore in the form of a will.³⁰⁷ There is a tradition among commentators of seeking a “...literal-minded belief in the aesthetic unity of life and work,”³⁰⁸ and because of that philosophy (especially as promoted by J.W.N. Sullivan), certain works were therefore part of Beethoven's developmental trajectory, and others were to be excluded. This is one of the reasons there persists the mind-boggling bias against the even-numbered symphonies. As Lockwood quotes Sullivan, “Beethoven himself did not always plumb the depths. He was not always busy with major problems and the most significant spiritual experiences. Such works as the fourth, sixth, and eighth symphonies depict states of mind that require no such intensity of realization...They are not in the main line of Beethoven's spiritual development.”³⁰⁹

We can be assured that Beethoven did not rely on retrospective assessment of how his work might fit into a plan for his development when determining how to proceed with his next project. He would certainly have differentiated between barnburner works like *Wellington's Victory* and the “Eroica,” but when he started an even-numbered symphony, I doubt it was ever his intention to offer something less “Beethovenian” in comparison to his odd-numbered symphonic efforts. It is perhaps more productive to remark on the diverse character of Beethoven's music, in which each work was afforded the attention and space it needed in order to realize its potential.

While Beethoven's music for the ballet *The Creatures of Prometheus* is most commonly associated with the third symphony, given the shared theme

306 Liszt, as quoted in Walker, Alan, “Liszt and the Beethoven Symphonies,” in *Franz Liszt: Beethoven Symphonies Nos. 1-5 Transcribed for Solo Piano* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1998), ix.

307 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 38. It should be noted that Beethoven's crisis did not simply peak with the Heiligenstadt testament, to be supplanted by resignation to his fate. Particularly in his correspondence with friend Franz Wegeler we still find the composer not reconciled to his situation as the years pass. Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 121.

308 *Ibid.*, 40.

309 As quoted in Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 41.

of their finales, it was composed concurrently with the second symphony and there seems to be some connections, as in the March (no. 8 from the ballet),³¹⁰ and experiments with orchestration. The second symphony was composed between 1800 and 1802, and based on the chronology of the sketches, it seems most likely that Beethoven worked on movements one, three and four before working on the second, and then went back to finish the finale.³¹¹

The symphony was premiered on April 5, 1803 at the Theater an der Wien, and published a year later presumably after a revision process.³¹² Also on the premiere program was the oratorio *Christ on the Mount of Olives*, as well as the third piano concerto and a reprise of the first symphony. It is astounding to consider that all of these new works were premiered after only 10 hours of rehearsal, done on the same day as the performance.³¹³ A humorous aspect was that things were so hastily put together that Beethoven didn't have time to write the piano part for the third concerto, a fact that the conductor/page-turner Ignaz von Seyfried discovered only when Beethoven opened his part at the keyboard and the "...pages were largely full of empty measures, with only a few 'Egyptian hieroglyphs' to remind the composer of passages;" the anxiety of the page turner gave Beethoven a laugh later at dinner.³¹⁴ Beethoven dedicated the symphony to Prince Lichnowsky, with whom Beethoven would break in 1806 but in the meantime was still enjoying his patronage.³¹⁵

With the second symphony we find a composer increasingly assured of his abilities, and with the experience to execute his vision. Lewis Lockwood mentions that Beethoven may have held Mozart's "Prague" symphony as a model for the slow introduction of the first movement, but "...if the 'Prague' lurks in the background, it does so at a distance."³¹⁶ As the music builds, the shadow of a visitor from the future passes over. As Grove, puts it, "It is strange at this early date to meet with the arpeggio of the chord of D minor, in a shape which almost textually anticipates, Ninth Symphony."³¹⁷ I located a spot at the coda of the first movement of

310 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 42.

311 *Ibid.*, 48.

312 *Ibid.*, 46.

313 Swafford, 315.

314 *Ibid.*, 316. The anxieties of a page turner are no joke. I am reminded of an experience I once had when I was enlisted to turn pages at the premiere, sight unseen, of a two-piano work by George Rochberg called *Circles of Fire*, and we arrived at the movement called the "Infinite Ricercar" where, as the name suggests, similar music can go on forever with repeats across a page turn. You do not want to be the one who derails the performance, and I have a great deal of empathy for those brave souls who provide this essential service.

315 Caeyers, 87.

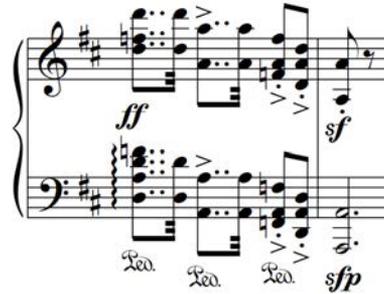
316 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 34.

317 Grove, 25.

the ninth to show in comparison:

Example 11

a)



Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 2 in D major, op. 36, I: mm. 23-24

b)



Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 9 in D minor, op. 125, I: mm. 427-8

Given the temporal distance between when the works were composed and the fact that they are really just outlining an arpeggio, one probably should not make too much of it. But it is an interesting exercise to trace the influence of one piece on the next in succession—this is particularly fruitful in studying Mahler’s symphonies, as he almost always has elements that anticipate successive works embedded in his scores.

In the second symphony we see more examples of Liszt’s remarkable approach to adapting orchestral music for performance at the keyboard. There is a great example of this near the end of the first movement’s exposition, and it is worth looking at this next to the string parts in order to examine what Liszt did to “piano-fy” it:

Example 12

a)

Musical score for Example 12a, showing piano (*p*) and forte (*f*) dynamics in a string section. The score is in D major and consists of four measures. The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, while the forte part features a similar pattern with a different articulation. The dynamics alternate between *p* and *f* in a regular fashion.

Beethoven, Symphony no. 2 in D major, op. 36, I: mm. 122-125, strings

b)

Musical score for Example 12b, showing piano (*p*) and forte (*f*) dynamics in a string section. The score is in D major and consists of four measures. The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, while the forte part features a similar pattern with a different articulation. The dynamics alternate between *p* and *f* in a regular fashion. An *ossia* part is shown below the main score, featuring a more complex rhythmic pattern with accents and slurs.

Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 2 in D major, op. 36, I: mm. 122-125

If one plays the *ossia*, which Taylor does in his performance, the important components are articulated but there is a misterioso re-imagination of the string tremolos that is quite powerful. Sometimes Liszt's approach to setting the music is bold and treacherous, but well worth the effort if the octaves can be both accurate and feel effortless (!):

Example 13

Musical score for Example 13, showing piano (*p*) and forte (*f*) dynamics in a string section. The score is in D major and consists of four measures. The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, while the forte part features a similar pattern with a different articulation. The dynamics alternate between *p* and *f* in a regular fashion. An *ossia* part is shown below the main score, featuring a more complex rhythmic pattern with accents and slurs.

Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 2 in D major, op. 36, I: mm. 344-8

The second movement of Beethoven's second symphony was regarded at the time of its premiere and throughout the century as, in Jan Caeyers

words, “[...embodying] the soul of Beethoven’s new, rich, and flexible orchestral sound: a *Larghetto* conjuring up a poetic atmosphere that until that time had only been possible in the more intimate genres of piano repertoire or chamber music.”³¹⁸ Ferdinand Ries, who saw the autograph score, said that the movement was “...so beautiful, so purely and happily conceived, and the voice-leading so natural, that one can hardly imagine anything in it was ever changed,” yet he goes on to say that some of the string parts were so covered with corrections that he couldn’t see the original, and Beethoven gave the laconic response that “it’s better that way.”³¹⁹ I think it is safe to say that while we understand Beethoven’s sentiments as a creator, archivists feel otherwise. As the Library of Congress collects manuscripts and other primary sources for musicians and scholars to study, we can attest to the great interest by most parties placed in finding *deviations* from the final work—that is, anything that can illuminate the process of an artwork’s coming into existence. For us, the messier the better.

That rule does not usually apply when it comes to presenting complicated music in transcription. In those cases, care must be taken to maintain clarity when multiple voices compete for attention. As an example, Liszt actually changed the key signature (without changing the pitches) to make this passage easier to read, and the four main ideas here are clearly articulated—the mid-register melody, the bass echo, the rhythmic pulse, and the arpeggiated “commentary:”

Example 14



Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 2 in D major, op. 36, II: mm. 128-129

Another tactic that Liszt judiciously employs is the omission of some wind doublings at the octave. Oftentimes this is done out of consideration of the immediate context—it may be more successful for the piece to reserve the use of a particular register until a few phrases later, for instance. I think of these kinds of decisions as critical to orchestrational development—if a passage is very easy to play except for one measure, the arranger may want to smooth out that passage with a more playable solution and reserve the

318 Caeyers, 208.

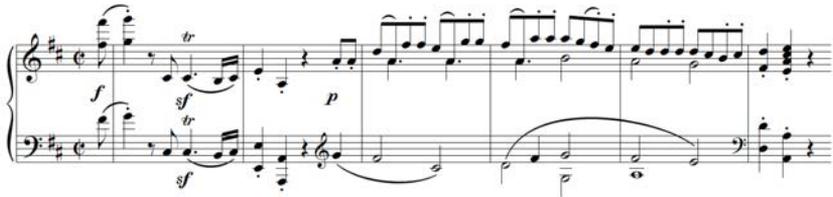
319 As quoted in Lockwood *Beethoven Life*, 158-9.

harder one for an instance more commensurate with its surroundings.

A hocketing effect between orchestral instruments can be emulated on the piano is by alternating the hands playing a given snippet of music. There is a choreography here that is visual in addition to creating a distinction of character; it is especially effective in places like those in the third movement that involve the rapid exchange of simple, articulated gestures. The scherzo is as fun to watch as it is to hear. When the trio arrives we hear a second theme, but only briefly, as we move suddenly from D major to F-sharp major. Referring to this section of the trio, Grove states that “We are then, without an instant’s warning, plunged head over ears into F sharp major, and, as it were, held there till the water runs into our eyes and ears...”³²⁰ It is curious indeed, and I bring it up here only to point to it as preparation for a similar moment in the movement to follow, which will be referenced below.

Swafford describes the opening gesture of the finale as a hiccup. “Before long, astute listeners would have realized that, believe it or not, this is actually the rondo theme; the hiccup is developed diligently.”³²¹ This “hiccup” is worth showing in full, as Beethoven works his magic with each element of the incongruous concoction:

Example 15

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece, likely a transcription of a section from Beethoven's Symphony no. 2 in D major, op. 36, IV. The score is written for piano and consists of two staves, treble and bass clef. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 2/4. The music is characterized by a complex, rhythmic pattern of sixteenth and thirty-second notes, creating a hocketing effect. There are dynamic markings such as *f*, *sf*, and *p*. The piece ends with a final chord in D major.

Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 2 in D major, op. 36, IV: pickup to mm.1-6

This final movement was described contemporaneously as “...a rough-hewn monstrosity, an impaled dragon resolutely battling on and refusing to perish, blindly and savagely thrashing its tail as it bleeds to death.”³²² Presumably this is negative, but I think that if I had composed something that created such a reaction, I might respond with pride.

There are times when Liszt revels in the transformation from orchestra to piano, and his brilliant figuration takes over naturally:

320 Grove, 34.

321 Swafford, 320.

322 As quoted in Caeyers, 208.

Example 16

A musical score for piano and bass clef. The piano part features a series of chords and melodic lines with dynamic markings *sf* and *f*. The bass clef part consists of a steady eighth-note accompaniment with dynamic markings *sf* and *f*. The key signature is D major.

Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 2 in D major, op. 36, IV: mm.230-233

Earlier in these notes I mentioned the sudden, unexpected move to F-sharp major. Beethoven dramatically revisits this in the finale, and Liszt capitalizes on the moment with an “optional” thunderous tremolo in the depths of the piano before the quiet F-sharp major chord appears:

Example 17

A musical score for piano and bass clef. The piano part features a series of chords and melodic lines with dynamic markings *sf*, *ff*, and *p*. The bass clef part consists of a steady eighth-note accompaniment with dynamic markings *sf* and *ff*. The key signature is D major. A section of the bass clef part is marked *ossia*.

Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 2 in D major, op. 36, IV: mm.332-337

The writing for the remainder of the long coda works exceptionally well for the piano; Liszt’s adaptations make one forget that this was an orchestral piece. As Caeyers said about Beethoven’s codas, “Beethoven clearly understood the laws of musical inertia: as the size and speed of a movement body increase, so too does the braking distance.”³²³ Liszt, too, knew when to hold back and when to figuratively step on the gas in order to create a balanced account of the symphony.



LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN / LISZT, *Symphony no. 5 in C minor*

“...yesterday I played [Liszt’s arrangement of] the C minor Symphony. It really is incomparably beautiful and masterfully set, but incredibly difficult, especially the last movement. I doubt whether I will ever be able to learn it.”³²⁴

Clara Wieck to Robert Schumann

Our (Re)Hearing Beethoven Festival comes to a close with a work that may be the most recognizable piece Beethoven ever wrote (or anyone, really, for that matter). Or at least, the most recognizable opening motive, often described as “fate knocking on the door.” If I were fate, I might think twice before knocking and slowly step away from the door, given what Beethoven had said in the past: “I will seize Fate by the throat; it shall certainly not bend and crush me completely.”³²⁵ We will find that Liszt once again rises to the occasion in transcribing Beethoven’s orchestral music with profound respect and purpose, creating the music anew as piano music.

There were not too many precedents for C-minor symphonies, though Beethoven probably knew Haydn’s 1791 symphony no. 95 in that key.³²⁶ At any rate there were no precedents for the concise, integrated style that Beethoven brought to each movement and the symphony as a whole. E.T.A. Hoffman wrote a famous, highly-detailed review, and as Lockwood relates, it “...may have been written to influence readers on behalf of the new aesthetic aims of the German Romantics,” as Hoffman describes “... this work [that] evoked terror, fright, horror, and pain, and awakens that endless longing which is the essence of romanticism.”³²⁷ For Hoffmann, Beethoven’s fifth symphony “opens up the kingdom of the gigantic and the immeasurable.”³²⁸ The double edges of raw music and nature could be found in the pair of Beethoven’s fifth and sixth symphonies, so different and yet allied in showing the breadth of what could be accomplished in symphonic music.

Beethoven’s earliest sketches for the fifth symphony can be found in the “Eroica” sketchbook of 1804, and he wrote some material intended for the third and first movements near music intended for his opera *Leonore*.³²⁹ As is often the case, intermediate sketch material is missing, so it is supposed that Beethoven returned to the first movement in 1806 and the remaining

324 As quoted in Kregor, 138.

325 Beethoven to Franz Wegeler in 1801, as quoted in Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 95.

326 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 97.

327 *Ibid.*, 98.

328 As quoted in Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 64.

329 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 99.

movements in 1807, with the full manuscript coming to completion in March, 1808.³³⁰

The fifth symphony was dedicated to Prince von Lobkowitz and Count von Rasumovsky, a savvy move in terms of securing funding for the composer. The first performance took place on December 22, 1808; at this premiere, which also featured the “Pastoral” symphony, the fifth was performed second and labeled the sixth symphony in the program—though the numeration was revised by the time of the symphony’s publication.³³¹ Also on the concert was the premiere of the fourth piano concerto, a concert aria (*Ah! Perfido*), an improvisation that may have been a precursor to the op. 77 Fantasia, several movements from the Mass in C (Gloria and Sanctus) and the Choral Fantasy.³³² This concert was famous for its cold weather as well as its immense length, and the audience did not handle the chilly four hours of intense music well, especially given a debacle in the performance of the Choral Fantasy that required a re-start of the proceedings.³³³ Elements of these works connect in interesting ways, from the structural impact of fantasia-inspired transitions to more literal motivic connections; Jan Swafford notes that in the “Eroica” sketchbook Beethoven had not only written some material destined for “fate knocking” fame in the fifth symphony, but he had also struck on the opening of the fourth piano concerto at the same time, sketched on the opposite page.³³⁴ When one considers these two themes next to each other, one can see a possible shared point of origin and marvel at the wealth of possibilities that Beethoven was able to spin from these initial ideas.

The opening theme was originally four bars, but a fifth was added (with a fermata) to set the opening phrase apart from the ensuing one.³³⁵ Although one must always be wary of third- and fourth-hand accounts, Carl Czerny suggested (via Alexander Wheelock Thayer) that the opening motive came to Beethoven after a run-in with a yellow-hammer bird in a park; if so, that was one “fateful” encounter.³³⁶ Liszt’s setting of this opening is notable in part because of the idiosyncratic fingering that he suggests starting in measure 6.

330 Ibid., 103.

331 Grove, 148.

332 Lockwood, Lewis, *Beethoven’s Lives: The Biographical Tradition* (Great Britain: The Boydell Press: 2020), 155.

333 Caeyers, 290.

334 Swafford, 489-90.

335 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 105.

336 Grove, 147.

Example 18

Allegro con brio

The image shows a musical score for Example 18. It consists of two staves: a piano part on the left and a violin part on the right. The piano part is in 2/4 time, starting with a forte (*ff*) dynamic. The violin part is in 2/4 time, starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The piano part features repeated notes in the right hand and octaves in the left hand, with some notes marked with a double asterisk (**). The violin part features repeated notes in the right hand and octaves in the left hand, with some notes marked with a double asterisk (**).

Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 5 in C minor, op. 67, I: mm.1-9;

I do not know a pianist who uses this fingering, and it is not so important that one follow such prescriptions, given the many ways to achieve a given musical goal. But it is interesting to see what Liszt is suggesting here, because it implies a certain type of articulation and separation that differs from his usual legato repeated-note fingerings of 4-3-2.

Liszt used the power of octaves to assist in replicating a string section. In Example 19 he transforms the string parts, and then when the phrase repeats, he raises the right hand an additional octave.

Example 19

a)

The image shows a musical score for Example 19a. It consists of two staves: a violin part on the left and a viola/cello part on the right. The violin part is in 2/4 time, starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The viola/cello part is in 2/4 time, starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The violin part features repeated notes in the right hand and octaves in the left hand, with some notes marked with a double asterisk (**). The viola/cello part features repeated notes in the right hand and octaves in the left hand, with some notes marked with a double asterisk (**).

Beethoven, Symphony no. 5 in C minor, op. 67, I: mm.398-402, violins, violas and cellos

b)

The image shows a musical score for Example 19b. It consists of two staves: a piano part on the left and a violin part on the right. The piano part is in 2/4 time, starting with a forte (*ff*) dynamic. The violin part is in 2/4 time, starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The piano part features repeated notes in the right hand and octaves in the left hand, with some notes marked with a double asterisk (**). The violin part features repeated notes in the right hand and octaves in the left hand, with some notes marked with a double asterisk (**).

Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 5 in C minor, op. 67, I: mm.398-402

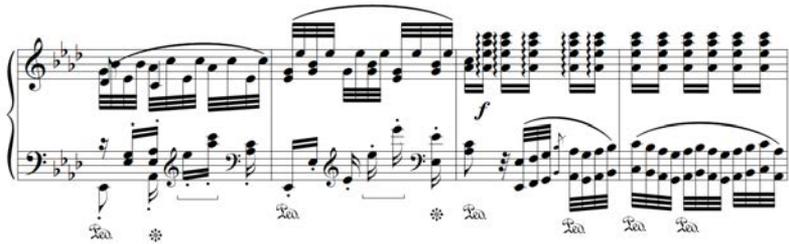
The four sections of the movement (exposition, development, recapitulation and coda) are roughly equally proportioned, and the music

is kept tautly constructed from the germinal motivic seeds. But Beethoven had originally conceived of an extra twenty-plus bars at the end of the movement that would have “...hammered home the four-note motif once more, just before the last three-chord cadence.”³³⁷ Ultimately economic considerations of balance led Beethoven to restrict the ending to just a few bars.

Beethoven sketched some material in 1802 that was initially intended for the second symphony, but within was a precursor for the fifth symphony’s slow movement.³³⁸ These early sketches have labels like *Andante quasi Menuetto* and *quasi Trio*, suggesting that the slow movement might have originally had a different structural function.³³⁹ The movement Beethoven ended up composing for the symphony has two principal themes, juxtaposing A-flat and C major. In Lockwood’s formulation, “[as] a whole, the slow movement picks up from the finale of the *Eroica* the idea of a variations movement that transforms its more rigid classical model (theme and chain of variations, each variation a closed total unit) into a more plastic form. Beethoven’s freedom of formal disposition would prove as significant for the history of the symphonic slow movement as the *Eroica* fourth movement had been for the history of the symphonic finale.”³⁴⁰

At the very opening of the movement, Liszt asks the pianist to cross the right hand over to take the low bass line—such a move is not required by the technical circumstances of the music (the usual rationale for crossing hands), but seems borne of a desire to have the left hand take the initial melody. A more traditional rationale for hand crossing is taken later in the movement, as Liszt cleverly varies the accompanimental bassoon and clarinet lines to cover all aspects of the score in a pianistic (if challenging) way. Note the crossings in brackets in Example 20 below:

Example 20



Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 5 in C minor, op. 67, II: mm.112-115

337 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 109.
 338 *Ibid.*, 46.
 339 *Ibid.*, 101-102.
 340 Lockwood *Beethoven Life*, 223.

Sometimes it is the soft, quiet parts that are the hardest to handle technically, but here is an instance where Liszt manages this with a beautifully wrought three-hand illusion technique:

Example 21

Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 5 in C minor, op. 67, II: mm.166-8

In cases like these, Liszt was able to handle the material deftly by keeping registers intact. It is by no means easy to play, but once the pianist is used to it the effect is magical.

The scherzo continues the notion of juxtaposing contrasting ideas, starting with its mysterious, quiet opening gesture. Beethoven himself saw a “close structural affinity to [this] rising C-minor arpeggio” at the scherzo’s opening to music from the finale of Mozart’s 40th symphony in G minor (K.550). The reason this can be stated so unequivocally is because Beethoven “wrote out an extended passage” of the Mozart on the same leaves with sketches of the scherzo.³⁴¹ Grove notes that Gustav Nottebohm was the first to notice this. The scherzo was originally intended to be a five-part structure with repeats, and evidently was performed as such for a period during Beethoven’s lifetime; ultimately Beethoven shortened it to the three-part version we now know.³⁴²

When the horns enter with the symphony’s omnipresent rhythmic motto, Liszt reinforces them with octaves to emulate a fuller sound. In the trio, Grove quotes Berlioz about the double bass imitative passage, which evidently made a “confusion ‘like the gambols of an elephant.’”³⁴³ Swafford suggests an inside joke—“...Beethoven retaliating against perennial grumbles over the difficulties of his bass parts.”³⁴⁴ I suppose in this case the joke is on the pianist, who is asked to play this passage in octaves in the left hand—cheating by using both hands might actually take away

341 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 97.

342 *Ibid.*, 112-113.

343 As quoted in Grove, 165.

344 Swafford, 502.

from the desired effect:

Example 22



Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 5 in C minor, op. 67, III: pickup to mm.141-7

Grove tells of an “unverifiable” account that Mendelssohn noticed two extra bars in the scherzo, and indeed it appears that Beethoven had written to the publisher to ask him to fix it, but nobody seems to have done anything about it. Apparently Mendelssohn kept the wrong two bars instead of removing those Beethoven had indicated, and Berlioz was against removing them at all, but eventually the “correct” version made it into performance practice.³⁴⁵

A long series of repeated Cs in the timpani builds massively to move the music attacca into the finale. Lockwood sees the direct transition from the scherzo into the finale as drawing on the fantasia tradition; not too long before in 1801 Beethoven had composed the op. 27 sonatas “quasi una fantasia.” As Lockwood puts it, “It would not be wrong to call the Fifth a ‘sinfonia quasi una fantasia.’”³⁴⁶

The finale is a monster to tackle, and it features four themes in its exposition alone. From the beginning there were mixed feelings about the exceptionally long coda (or rather, two codas) of the finale. Hoffmann felt that “the perfect calmness which the heart feels as a result of the several closing figures... is destroyed by these single stuck chords and pauses.”³⁴⁷ Lockwood notes Sir Donald Francis Tovey’s response to that criticism, aired “with a classic assertion of belief in Beethoven’s sense of proportions, that ‘these forty bars are meaningless without the rest of the symphony, but the symphony ends as truly within its own length as the *Et in terra pax* of the B-Minor Mass.’”³⁴⁸ Beethoven used the piccolo and contrabassoon to great effect, and the piccolo in particular has its moment in Liszt’s transcription.

345 Grove 174-6. See Gustav Nottebohm’s *Beethoveniana*, “The Excluded Two Bars in the Third Movement of the C Minor Symphony, Lockwood *Biographical Tradition*, 47.

346 Lockwood *Beethoven Life*, 221.

347 As quoted in Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 116.

348 Lockwood *Beethoven Symphonies*, 116. There is a nail here itching to be hit on the head, wherein the material is simultaneously dispensable and indispensable. In any case, those are fighting words in musicological circles.

The very opening of the movement, coming on the heels of the growing sound of the timpani and orchestra that precedes it, is a huge affirmation of C major in a rising series of chords. Taylor takes the *ossia* options in his performance, which are more difficult but provide a greater buildup of sound:

Example 23

The image shows a musical score for Example 23, which is the opening of the fourth movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 in C minor, as performed by Liszt. It consists of three staves. The top staff is the piano part, starting with a fortissimo (*fff*) dynamic and a rising series of chords. The middle staff is the *ossia* part, providing alternative fingering and articulation options for the piano part. The bottom staff is a detailed view of the *ossia* part, showing complex fingering and articulation, with the instruction "ossia più difficile" (ossia more difficult). The score includes various performance markings such as *fff*, *tremolando*, and *ossia più difficile*.

Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 5 in C minor, op. 67, IV: mm.1-5

Liszt asks for fairly impossible octaves at that speed; one could glissando but most won't notice if you just start with an octave and then play just the upper octave.³⁴⁹ Liszt uses the piano's resources to build the sound, and while the main text works, the *ossia* really propels things with the staggered octaves:

Example 24

The image shows a musical score for Example 24, which is the opening of the fourth movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 in C minor, as performed by Liszt. It consists of three staves. The top staff is the piano part, starting with a fortissimo (*f*) dynamic and a rising series of chords. The middle staff is the *ossia* part, providing alternative fingering and articulation options for the piano part. The bottom staff is a detailed view of the *ossia* part, showing complex fingering and articulation, with the instruction "ossia più difficile" (ossia more difficult). The score includes various performance markings such as *f*, *rinf.*, and *ff sempre*.

Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 5 in C minor, op. 67, IV: mm.24-27

We will let a few other examples of inventive figuration suffice in an effort to give a sense of the breadth of technique that Liszt brought to the table in creating his quasi-orchestral textures:

349 (Shh!)

Example 25

a)

Musical score for Example 25a, showing piano and violin parts. The piano part is in the upper system, and the violin part is in the lower system. The piano part features a series of chords in the left hand and a melodic line in the right hand. The violin part features a melodic line with a prominent eighth-note scale. The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff* and *8va*, and articulation marks like *acc* and *5_5*.

Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 5 in C minor, op. 67, IV: mm.57-60

b)

Musical score for Example 25b, showing piano and violin parts. The piano part is in the upper system, and the violin part is in the lower system. The piano part features a series of chords in the left hand and a melodic line in the right hand. The violin part features a melodic line with a prominent eighth-note scale. The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff* and *8va*, and articulation marks like *acc* and *5_5*.

Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 5 in C minor, op. 67, IV: mm.71-3

One of Liszt's brilliant tactical moves in terms of emulating the orchestra comes with the prominent piccolo scales toward the end of the movement. Instead of having the piccolo set at its sounding pitch, Liszt doubles it two octaves below. The effect is one in which the high piccolo cuts through the texture, but the gesture is somehow grounded by the lower octave. The effect is inspired:

Example 26

Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 5 in C minor, op. 67, IV: mm.329-330

As we near the close of the symphony, our attention is drawn to a special notation that Liszt had developed during the 1830s. Liszt always sought effective ways of notating his music, and often came up with novel solutions. One of these is a “multiple accent” that covers multiple notes, forming a sort of phrased accentuation over an entire measure. It only appears a few times in the entire symphony:

Example 27

Beethoven/Liszt, Symphony no. 5 in C minor, op. 67, IV: mm.416-19

I find that I learn a great deal about music every time I listen to a work in transcription. My interpretive and appreciative sensibilities widen when I follow an orchestral score while listening to the piano version, or vice-versa. I question why the arranger might have done this or that, and while I occasionally might think that it could have been done differently, with a composer like Liszt I find that there is often great wisdom in the choices made. Understanding why a transcriber made a particular choice helps you to understand what the composer was after, because for an arranger the decision is forced—pen must be put to paper if the transmission to performer is to be made. That decision may, in the end, be incorrect (at least according to some), but there is a palpable boost to musicianship that comes with each attempt at transporting a musical idea into a new sphere and the attempt to hear it there.

Franz Liszt's accomplishments with these transcriptions of Beethoven's symphonies are not just didactic, though they certainly achieve that aim. They are primarily performative, though we may rarely have the occasion to hear them in concert. In these transcriptions Liszt sought to distill the essence of Beethoven's symphonic thought and make it performable by a single human being—it is a privilege to witness this essential act of homage realized at the keyboard.

David Plylar
Senior Music Specialist
Library of Congress, Music Division



About the Artist

Hailed by critics as “frighteningly talented” (*The New York Times*) and “a great pianist” (*The Los Angeles Times*), Christopher Taylor has distinguished himself throughout his career as an innovative musician with a diverse array of talents and interests. He is known for a passionate advocacy of music written in the past 100 years — Messiaen, Ligeti, and Bolcom figure prominently in his performances — but his repertoire spans four centuries and includes the complete Beethoven sonatas, the Liszt *Transcendental Etudes*, Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, and a multitude of other familiar masterworks. Whatever the genre or era of the composition, Taylor brings to it an active imagination and intellect coupled with heartfelt intensity and grace.

Taylor has concertized around the globe, with international tours taking him to Russia, Western Europe, East Asia, and the Caribbean. At home in the U.S. he has appeared with such orchestras as the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Detroit Symphony, and the Milwaukee Symphony. As a soloist he has performed in New York's Carnegie and Alice Tully Halls, in Washington's Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Ravinia and Aspen festivals, and dozens of other venues. In chamber settings, he has collaborated with many eminent musicians, including Robert McDuffie and the Borromeo, Shanghai, Pro Arte, and Ying Quartets. His recordings have featured works by Liszt, Messiaen, and present-day Americans William Bolcom and Derek

Bermel. Throughout his career Taylor has become known for undertaking memorable and unusual projects. Examples include: an upcoming tour in which he will perform, from memory, the complete transcriptions of Beethoven symphonies by Liszt; performances and lectures on the complete etudes of György Ligeti; and a series of performances of the *Goldberg Variations* on the unique double-manual Steinway piano held at the University of Wisconsin. He has actively promoted the rediscovery and refurbishment of the instrument, and in recent years he has built a reinvented and modernized version of it, unveiling it in a demonstration recital in 2016.

Numerous awards have confirmed Taylor's high standing in the musical world. He was named an American Pianists Association Fellow for 2000, before which he received an Avery Fisher Career Grant in 1996 and the Bronze Medal in the 1993 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. In 1990 he took first prize in the William Kapell International Piano Competition and also became one of the first recipients of the Irving Gilmore Young Artist Award.

Taylor owes much of his success to several outstanding teachers, including Russell Sherman, Maria Curcio-Diamand, Francisco Aybar, and Julie Bees. In addition to his busy concert schedule, he currently serves as Paul Collins Associate Professor of Piano Performance at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. He pursues a variety of other interests, including: mathematics (he received a summa cum laude degree from Harvard University in this field in 1992), philosophy (an article he coauthored with the leading scholar Daniel Dennett appears in the Oxford Free Will Handbook), computing, linguistics, and biking, which is his primary means of commuting. Taylor lives in Middleton, Wisconsin, with his wife and two daughters. Christopher Taylor is a Steinway artist



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Damien Gaul
Michal E. Gross
James S. and Zona F. Hostetler
In memory of Randy Hostetler
Kim and Elizabeth Kowalewski
Helen and David Mao
George P. Mueller
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In memory of Irving L. Sablosky
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