

Oxford History of Western Music: Richard Taruskin

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Lorenzo da Ponte

Le nozze di Figaro

THE “DA PONTE” OPERAS

Chapter: CHAPTER 9 Enlightenment and Reform

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

After *Die Entführung*, Mozart did not complete another opera for four years. Part of the reason for the gap had to do with his burgeoning career in Vienna as a freelancer, which meant giving lots of concerts, which (as we will see) meant writing a lot of piano concertos. But it was also due to Joseph II’s unexpected disbanding of the national singspiel company and its replacement by an Italian *opera buffa* troupe at court whose regular composers Giovanni Paisiello, Vicente Martín y Soler, and Antonio Salieri—Italians all (Martín being a naturalized Spaniard)—had a proprietary interest in freezing out a German rival, especially one as potentially formidable as Mozart.



fig. 9-7 Lorenzo da Ponte, engraving by Michele Pekenino after a painting by Nathaniel Rogers (Mozarteum, Salzburg).

Mozart's letters testify to his difficulty in gaining access to Lorenzo da Ponte (1749–1838, original name Emmanuele Conegliano), the newly appointed poet to the court theater. (There was a certain typically Joseph II symbolism in the fact that a specialist in *opera buffa* should have been chosen to replace the aged Metastasio, the paragon of the *seria*, who died in 1782 at the age of 84.) “These Italian gentlemen are very civil to your face,” Mozart complained to his father in 1783. “But enough—we know them! If Da Ponte is in league with Salieri, I shall never get anything out of him.”²⁰ It was these letters, and the intrigues that they exposed, that led to all the gossip about Salieri's nefarious role in causing Mozart's early death, and all the dubious literature that gossip later inspired.

Mozart's wish to compete directly with “these Italians” is revealed in another passage from the same letter to his father, in which he described the kind of two-act realistic comedy (but frankly farcical, not “*larmoyante*”) at which he now aimed. This was precisely the kind of libretto that Da Ponte, a converted Venetian Jew, had adapted from the traditions he had learned at home and brought to perfection. In this he was continuing the *buffa* tradition of Carlo Goldoni, which sported lengthy but very speedy “action finales” at the conclusion of each act and a highly differentiated cast of characters. About this latter requirement Mozart is especially firm:

The main thing is that the whole story should be really *comic*, and if possible should include two equally good female parts, one of them *seria*, the other *mezzo carattere*. The third female character, if there is one, can be entirely *buffa*, and so may all the male ones.²¹

This mixed genre insured great variety in the musical style: a *seria* role for a woman implied coloratura and extended forms; *buffa* implied rapid patter; "medium character" implied lyricism. Da Ponte's special gift was that of forging this virtual smorgasbord of idioms into a vivid dramatic shape.

Mozart (aided, according to one account, by the Emperor himself) finally managed to secure the poet's collaboration in the fall of 1785. The project was all but surefire: an adaptation of *La folle journée, ou le mariage de Figaro* ("The madcap day; or, Figaro's wedding"), one of the most popular comedies of the day. It was the second installment of a trilogy by the French playwright Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais (1732–99), of which the first installment, *Le barbier de Séville* ("The barber of Seville"), had already been turned into a hugely successful *opera buffa* by Paisiello (1782; first staged in St. Petersburg, Russia). These plays by Beaumarchais were the very epitome of that old standby, the servant-outsmarts-master routine, familiar on every operatic stage since the very earliest intermezzi: *La serva padrona* was of course the first classic of this type. In the spirit of the late eighteenth century, the old joke became much more pointed and audacious than before—"outrageously cheeky," in Hertz's words.²² And yet, with both master and servant now portrayed as rounded and ultimately likeable human beings rather than caricatures, the ostensible antagonists are ultimately united in "enlightened" sympathy.

Thus, contrary to an opinion that is still voiced (though more rarely than it used to be), Beaumarchais's Figaro plays were in no way "revolutionary." The playwright was himself an intimate of the French royal family. In his plays, the aristocratic social order is upheld in the end—as, indeed, in comedies (which have to achieve good "closure") it had to be. It could even be argued that the plays strengthened the existing social order by humanizing it. Hence Joseph II's enthusiasm for them, which went—far beyond tolerance—all the way to active promotion.

In the play Mozart and Da Ponte adapted for music as *Le nozze di Figaro*, the valet Figaro (formerly a barber), together with his bride Susanna (the *mezzo carattere* role), acting on behalf of the Countess Almaviva (the *seria* role), outwits and humiliates the Count, who had wished to deceive his wife with Susanna according to "the old *droit du seigneur*" (not really a traditional right but Beaumarchais's own contrivance), which supposedly guaranteed noblemen sexual access to any virgin in their household. All three—Figaro, Susanna, and the Countess—are vindicated at the Count's expense. But the Count, in his discomfiture and heartfelt apology (a moment made unforgettable by Mozart's music), is rendered human, and redeemed. On the way to that denouement there is a wealth of hilarious by-play with some memorable minor characters, including an adolescent page boy (played by a soprano *en travesti*, "in trousers") who desires the Countess, and an elderly pair of stock *buffo* types (a ludicrous doctor and his housekeeper) who turn out to be Figaro's parents.

Mozart and Da Ponte had such a success with this play that their names are now inseparably linked in the history of opera, like Lully-and-Quinault or Gluck-and-Calzabigi, to mention only teams who have figured previously in these chapters. The triumph led to two more collaborations. *Don Giovanni* followed almost immediately. It was a retelling of an old story, long a staple of popular legend and improvised theatrical farce, about the fabled Spanish seducer Don Juan, his exploits, and his downfall. Its first performance took place on 29 October 1787 in Prague, the capital of the Austrian province of Bohemia (now the Czech Republic), where *Le nozze di Figaro* had been especially well received; it played Vienna the next year. Its success was only gradual, but by the time he came to write his memoirs, Da Ponte (who died an American citizen in New York, where from 1807 he worked as a teacher of Italian literature, eventually at Columbia University) could boast that it was recognized as "the best opera in the world."²³

Their third opera, produced at the Burgtheater on 26 January 1790 (a day before Mozart's thirty-fourth birthday), was the cynical but fascinating *Così fan tutte, ossia La scuola degli amanti* ("Women all act the same; or, The school for lovers"), which had only five performances before all the theaters in Austria had to close following the death of Joseph II. It would be Mozart's last *opera buffa*. The plot concerns a wager between a jaded "old philosopher" and two young officers. The old man bets that, having disguised themselves, each officer could woo and win the other's betrothed. Their easy success, much to their own and their lovers' consternation, has made the opera controversial throughout its history.

Many textual substitutions and alternative titles have seen duty in an attempt to soften the brazenly misogynistic message of the original. That message, preaching disillusion and distrust, is perhaps larger (and more dangerous)

than its immediate context can contain. Its ostensible misogyny can be seen as part of a broad exposure of the “down side” of Enlightenment—a warning that reason is not a comforter and that perhaps it is best not to challenge every illusion. Some, basing their view on the assumption—the Romantic assumption, as we will learn to identify it—that the music of an opera is “truer” than the words, have professed to read a consoling message in Mozart’s gorgeously lyrical score. Others have claimed that, on the contrary, Mozart and Da Ponte have by that very gorgeousness in effect exposed the falsity of artistic conceits and, it follows, unmasked beauty’s amorality.

The tensions within it—at all levels, whether of plot, dramaturgy, musical content, or implication—between the seductions of beauty and cruel reality are so central and so deeply embedded as to make *Così fan tutte*, in its teasing ambiguity, perhaps the most “philosophical” of operas and in that sense the emblematic art work of the Enlightenment.

Notes:

(20) Blom, ed., *Mozart’s Letters*, Ibid., p. 208.

(21) Blom, ed., *Mozart’s Letters*, Ibid., p. 208.

(22) Hertz, *Mozart’s Operas*, p. 108.

(23) *The Memoirs of Lorenzo Da Ponte*, trans. Elisabeth Abbott (New York: Orion Press, 1959), p. 232.

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Oxford History of Western Music: Richard Taruskin

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Die Zauberflöte

La clemenza di Tito

LATE WORKS

Chapter: CHAPTER 9 Enlightenment and Reform

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

In his last pair of operas, both first performed in September 1791 less than three months before his death, Mozart reverted to the two genres in which he had excelled before his legendary collaboration with Da Ponte. *Die Zauberflöte* (*The Magic Flute*) is a singspiel to a text by the singing actor and impresario Emanuel Schikaneder, who commissioned it for his own Theater auf der Wieden, a popular playhouse in Vienna. Behind its at times folksy manner and its riotously colorful and mysterious goings-on, it too is a profoundly emblematic work of the Enlightenment, for it is a thinly veiled allegory of Freemasonry.

A secret fraternal organization of which both Mozart and Schikaneder were members (along with Voltaire, Haydn, and the poets Goethe and Schiller), the Order of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons purportedly traced its lineage back to the medieval stonemasons' guilds (and thence, in legend, to ancient Egypt, the land of the pyramids), but became a widespread international association in the eighteenth century and an important vehicle for the spread of Enlightened doctrines such as political liberalism and religious tolerance. Persecuted by organs of traditional authority, including the Catholic Church and the autocratic monarchies of Europe, the Masons had elaborate rites of initiation and secret signals (the famous handshake, for instance) by which members could recognize one another.

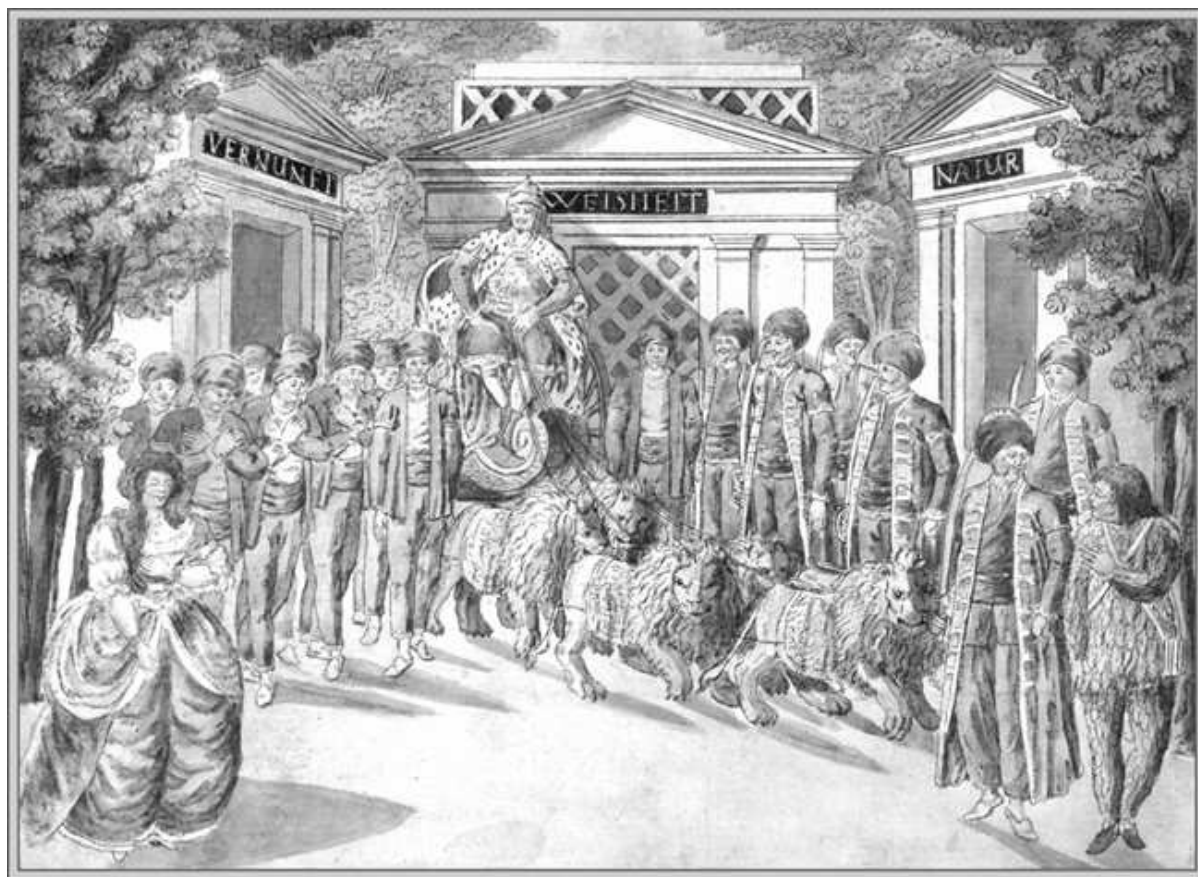


fig. 9-8 Sarastro arrives on his chariot in act I of Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*. Engraving published in an illustrated monthly to herald the first performance of the opera in Brünn (now Brno, Czech Republic) in

1793.



Papageno.

fig. 9-9 Emanuel Schikaneder in the role of Papageno in the first production of *Die Zauberflöte* (Theater auf der Wieden, Vienna, 1791).

The plot of *The Magic Flute* concerns the efforts of Tamino, a Javanese prince, and Pamina, his beloved, to gain admission to the temple of Isis (the Earth- or Mother-goddess of ancient Egypt), presided over by Sarastro, the Priest of Light. Tamino is accompanied by a sidekick, the birdcatcher Papageno (played by Schikaneder himself in the original production; see Fig. 9-9), who in his cowardice and ignorance cannot gain admittance to the mysteries of the temple but is rewarded for his simple-hearted goodness with an equally appealing wife. The chief opposition comes from Pamina's mother, the Queen of the Night, and from Monostatos, the blackamoor who guards the temple (a clear throwback to Osmin in *Die Entführung*). The allegory proclaims Enlightened belief in equality of class (as represented by Tamino and Papageno) and sex (as represented by Tamino and Pamina) within reason's domain. Even Monostatos's humanity is recognized, betokening a belief in the equality of races. On seeing him, Papageno (who first sounds the opera's essential theme when he responds to Prince Tamino's question as to his identity by saying "A man, like you") reflects, after an initial fright, that if there can be black birds, why not black men?

The range of styles encompassed by the music in *The Magic Flute* is enormous—wider than Mozart had ever before attempted. At one extreme is the folk-song idiom of Papageno, “Mr. Natural.” At the other are the musical manifestations of the two opposing supernatural beings—the forces, respectively, of darkness (The Queen of the Night) and light (Sarastro)—both represented by *opera seria* idioms, altogether outlandish in a singspiel. In act II, the Queen, seeing her efforts to thwart the noble pair coming to nought, gets to sing the rage aria to end all rage arias (Ex. 9-7a). Its repeated ascents to high F *in altissimo* are a legendary test for coloratura sopranos to this day. (That pitch had actually been exceeded, incidentally, in a coloratura aria—or rather, a spoof of coloratura arias—that Mozart tossed off early in 1786 as the centerpiece of a little farce called *Der Schauspieldirektor* or “The Impresario,” sung at its first performance by his sister-in-law Aloysia).

Sarastro, in the scene that immediately follows, expresses the opera’s humanistic creed in the purest, most exalted sacerdotal manner (Ex 9-7b). George Bernard Shaw, the famous British playwright, worked in his youth as a professional music critic. Perhaps his most famous observation in that capacity pertained to this very aria of Sarastro’s, which he called the only music ever composed by mortal man that would not sound out of place in the mouth of God.²⁴ That is as good a testimony as any to the hold Mozart has had over posterity, but it is also worth quoting to reemphasize the point that such sublime music was composed for use in a singspiel, then thought (because it was sung in the German vernacular) to be the lowliest of all operatic genres. That was in itself a token of Enlightened attitudes. In such company, the lyrical idiom of the lovers Tamino and Pamina occupies the middle ground, the roles (so to speak) of *mezzo carattere*.



fig. 9-10 Pamina, Tamino, and Papageno in a scene from act II of *Die Zauberflöte* (Brünn, 1793).

Mozart’s last stage work, an *opera seria* called *La clemenza di Tito* (“The clemency of Titus”), was composed to one of Metastasio’s most frequently set librettos, one that had been first set to music almost sixty years before by Antonio Caldara, then Vice-Kapellmeister to the Austrian court. Its revival was commissioned, symbolically as it might seem, to celebrate the accession to the Austrian throne of Joseph II’s younger brother, the Emperor Leopold II, who would rule for only two years—just enough time to undo all of his Enlightened predecessor’s reforms. Just so, it could seem as though Mozart’s reversion to a stiffly conventional aristocratic drama of sacrifice “undid” the modern realistic comedies that had preceded them—though of course no one had any premonition that this was to be his last opera.

K

so bist du mein, mei - ne

K

23

Toch - ter nim - mer - mehr,

K

26

Quart. Ob. Quart.

K

29

mei - ne

Fl. Ob. Quart. f p

33
K
Toch - ter nim - mer - mehr...

36
K
FL. Ob.
Quart.

39
K
FL. Ob.
Quart.

42
K
so bist du mei - ne
Quart.
f p *f p* *f p*

45
K
Toch - ter nim - mer - mehr.
Tutti
cresc.

ex. 9-7a W. A. Mozart, *Magic Flute*, “Der Hölle Rache” (The Queen of the Night), mm. 21–47

S

dann wan - delt er an Freun - des
 wen sol - che Leh - ren nicht er -

Str. Quart.

S

Hand— ver-gnügt und froh ins— beß - re
 freun, ver - die - net nicht ein— Mensch zu

S

Land, dann wandelt er an Freun - des
 sein, wen sol - che Leh - ren nicht er -

Fl.
 Vln.

S

Hand ver-gnügt und froh ins beß - re
 freun, ver - die - net nicht ein Mensch zu

S

Land, ins beß - re, beß - re— Land.
 sein, ein Mensch, ein Mensch zu sein.

Fl.
 Hn.
 Quart.

ex. 9-7b W. A. Mozart, *Magic Flute*, “In diesen heil’gen Hallen” (Sarastro), mm. 16–26

It has been claimed that Mozart accepted the commission with reluctance; but while his letters complain of some fatigue (and although he had to work in haste, farming out the recitatives to a pupil, Franz Xaver Süssmayr), there is no evidence that he felt the century-old genre of *opera seria* to be an unwelcome constraint. In any case, his setting of *La Clemenza* was fated to be the last masterpiece of that venerable genre, which barely survived the eighteenth

century.

DON GIOVANNI CLOSE UP

For a closer look at the team of Mozart and Da Ponte in action, we can focus in on what the librettist proudly called “the best opera in the world.” Many have endorsed Da Ponte’s seemingly bumptious claim on behalf of *Don Giovanni*. For two centuries this opera has exerted a virtually matchless fascination on generations of listeners and commentators—the latter including distinguished authors, philosophers, and even later musicians, who “commented” in music.



fig. 9-11 Poster announcing the first performance of Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* (Prague, 1787).

For E. T. A. Hoffmann (1776–1822), a German writer (and dilettante composer) famous for his romantic tales, it was the “opera of operas,” altogether transcending its paltry ribald plot—about “a debauchee,” as Hoffmann put it, “who likes wine and women to excess and who cheerfully invites to his rowdy table the stone statue representing the old man whom he struck down in self-defense”—and becoming, through its music, the very embodiment of every noble heart’s “insatiable, burning desire” to exceed “the common features of life” and “attain on earth that which dwells in our breast as a heavenly promise only, that very longing for the infinite which links us directly to the world above.”²⁵ There could be no better evidence of the way in which Mozart’s music reflected to a sensitive listener an image of his own idealized humanity, however at variance with the composer’s.

For Søren Kierkegaard (1813–55), the great Danish religious philosopher, *Don Giovanni* was Mozart’s greatest work (hence the greatest of all art works) because in it the greatest of all composers tackled the subject matter that music was uniquely equipped to represent. “There is only one work,” he wrote (and that work is *Don Giovanni*), “of which it can be said that its idea is altogether musical in such a way that the music does not merely serve as accompaniment but discloses its own innermost nature as it discloses the idea.”²⁶ Once again, that essence or innermost idea is desire, the sensation that lies at the universal core of consciousness. It is by representing desire that music can represent to us an image of our own subjectivity. That representation undoubtedly became the virtually universal aim of musicians during the age of so-called Romanticism, an age that saw its own beginnings in the music of Mozart’s time, and in *Don Giovanni* preeminently. The title character’s insatiable erotic appetite, and the voracious amatory quests on which it led him, became a symbol—or more precisely, a *metonymy*, an attribute standing in for the whole—of human aspiration, and music became the primary vehicle for its artistic modeling.

That is because polyphonic music in common European practice had, in its basic harmonic and formal processes, long provided superlative models of tension and release, of loss and recovery, of transport and return, of complication and consummation. These processes could be represented in dramatic action as well as musical

composition, and the task of dramatic musician and musical poet alike became that of fashioning explicit analogies between the two signifying media. The shape of the comic opera libretto, with its two acts, perfectly analogized these patterns of musical modeling. The two acts observed opposite trajectories, the first culminating in the *imbroglio* or tangle, the second in the crisis and the swift sorting out of threads. The first could be likened to dissonance, to remote tonality, to the “far out point”; the second—to resolution, restoration of the home key, harmonic and formal closure. The comic libretto, in short, was a “binary” form, and could be ideally elaborated by using all of the musical means associated with that most basic of “closed” musical formats.

And just as the musical process works itself out through points of harmonic repose (cadences) and passages of harmonic motion or “modulation,” so the libretto structure made provision for points of stasis and passages of kinetic energy. The former were of course the arias, like the ones we have been sampling from Mozart’s earlier output. In this the *buffa* did not differ greatly from the *seria*. The kinetic passages were the novelty, and for the composer the greatest opportunity. These were long passages of continuous music, already sampled in Piccinni’s second-act finale from *La buona figliuola*, in which swift dramatic action, leading either toward *imbroglio* or toward closure, was to be embodied in music that was (unlike recitative) fully composed, with full use of the orchestra and sung throughout to lyrically conceived, well-shaped melodies. But at the same time it was (unlike an aria) forwardly progressing rather than rounded or symmetrical in harmony and phraseology.

Usually there were three main kinetic sections in a late eighteenth-century *opera buffa*: the *introduzione* to the first act, in which the plot was set in motion and given a maximum “spin”; the first-act finale, in which the *imbroglio* reached its peak; and the second-act finale, in which the action was driven home to closure. (The second act generally began at a low point of dramatic pressure, so that there could be a new buildup to the culmination; in most comic operas, the second-act curtain rose on simple recitative.) As Da Ponte himself remarked in his memoirs, the finale was the key to the libretto, and mastering its conventions was the test of a true musical dramatist, whether poet or composer. “This *finale*,” he wrote in mock complaint:

which must remain intimately connected with the opera as a whole, is nevertheless a sort of little comedy or operette all by itself, and requires a new plot and an unusually high pitch of interest. The *finale*, chiefly, must glow with the genius of the composer, the power of the voices, the grandest dramatic effects. Recitative is banned from the *finale*: everybody sings; and every form of singing must be available—the adagio, the allegro, the andante, the intimate, the harmonious and then—noise, noise, noise; for the *finale* [to the first act] almost always closes in an uproar: which, in musical jargon, is called the *chiusa*, or rather the *stretta* [literally, “squeeze” or “pinch”], I know not whether because in it, the whole power of the drama is drawn or “pinched” together, or because it gives generally not one pinch but a hundred to the poor brain of the poet who must supply the words. The *finale* must, through a dogma of the theatre, produce on the stage every singer of the cast, be there three hundred of them, and whether by ones, by twos, by threes or by sixes, tens or sixties; and they must have solos, duets, terzets, tenets, sixtyets; and if the plot of the drama does not permit, the poet must find a way to make it permit, in the face of reason, good sense, Aristotle, and all the powers of heaven or earth; and if then the *finale* happens to go badly, so much the worse for him!²⁷

We can observe concretely everything that has been described up to now in the abstract, and at the same time justify the eloquent but somewhat mysterious pronouncements of Hoffmann and Kierkegaard, by examining in some detail the *introduzione* and the two finales from *Don Giovanni*, noting at all times how the libretto mediates between plot (action) and music, cementing their affinities. The following sections of close descriptive commentary should be read with vocal score in hand.

Notes:

(24) George Bernard Shaw, quoted in *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. “Opera” (www.britannica.com/eb/print?eu=118789).

(25) E. T. A. Hoffmann, “A Tale of Don Juan” (1813), in *Pleasures of Music*, trans. Jacques Barzun (New York: Viking, 1960), p. 28.

(26) S. Kierkegaard, *Eithor/Or*, Part I, trans. H. V. Hong and E. H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 57.

(27) *The Memoirs of Lorenzo Da Ponte*, pp. 59–60.

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Don Giovanni

Opera buffa

MUSIC AS A SOCIAL MIRROR

Chapter: CHAPTER 9 Enlightenment and Reform

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

Since it is attached directly to the *introduzione*, of which it is actually a part—and since, therefore it ends not with a cadence (except in its specially adapted “concert version”) but with a modulation—the overture (or, as Mozart called it, the *sinfonia*) to *Don Giovanni* must also figure in our discussion. Like the drama to which it is appended, the *sinfonia* by Mozart’s day was no longer a little three-movement suite but more often a single quick (Allegro) movement in binary (there-and-back) form. At the beginning, Mozart appended a startling andante that gives a forecast of the plot’s grisly resolution, also forecast in the opera’s subtitle, *Il dissoluto punito* (The immoralist punished).

The forecast is one not only of musical theme and mood but also of key. It was a convention of the *opera buffa* that the second-act finale end in the key in which the *sinfonia* begins, thus matching musically the resolution of the plot. As Daniel Hertz has pointed out, there were in practice only three tonics that could be used in this way: namely C, D, and E-flat, the keys of the natural trumpets and horns that would normally figure at the opera’s loudest moments, including its launching and its culmination.

The dire prognosis having been given, the key shifts over to the parallel major for a typically effervescent *buffo* Allegro. Except for the horrific *introduzione*, in which a murder will take place before the eyes of the audience, and its harsh consequences in the last finale, the opera will adhere to the tradition of the Don Juan plays of the past, which was a tradition of farce. The form of the fast main body of the overture is essentially that of the J. C. Bach sonata allegro studied in the previous chapter (Ex. 8-6), also in D major. This coincidence is no surprise; we have already identified J. C. Bach as an important formative model for Mozart. In both Allegros, a theme in the tonic with fanfare characteristics (note the sudden loud entry of winds, brass and timpani in m. 38, between the phrases of Mozart’s first Allegro theme) is contrasted with a pair of themes in the dominant, in which a decisive form-defining cadence is marked (at the double bar in J. C. Bach, followed by a repeat; in m. 120 of Mozart’s overture, from which a repeat might just as easily have been made were it conventional to do so in an overture).

The cadence on the dominant is then followed in both pieces by a section that moves out to the FOP. In J. C. Bach, this is B minor (vi with respect to the tonic); in Mozart’s case it is B-flat major, which has the same degree function with respect to the *original* tonic, namely the D minor of the andante—thus, it could be argued, again foreshadowing the drama’s dénouement. As is typical of orchestral pieces (as opposed to keyboard sonatas), the thematic content of the freely modulating section containing the FOP is largely based on motives taken from the opening section of the piece, in new juxtapositions and new tonalities. The return to the tonic is signaled in both JC’s piece and Mozart’s by the all-important “double return,” in which the first theme comes back in its original key, which is then maintained to the end. In Mozart’s case this simply means transposing the big chunk of music first heard between m. 56 and m. 115 down a fifth, so that what had been originally cast in the dominant is now securely in the tonic. But then the coda (mm. 277 to the end) unexpectedly dissolves into a modulation, preparing the key of the first vocal number in the *introduzione* (F major) by coming to rest on its dominant, just as the awesome andante had come to rest on the dominant of D major, the key of the Allegro. Cadences on the dominant (also known as half-cadences), which need to be resolved, are the most efficient means of maintaining the all-important forward momentum that the large kinetic sections of an *opera buffa* required.

That first vocal number belongs to the noble title character’s grumpy manservant (here named Leporello), a stock *opera buffa* type always sung by a bass. Its opening march-like ritornello sketches his impatient pacing and stamping as he awaits the return of his master. Its diminutive “rondo” form (ABCB) with refrain, permits the repetition of

Leporello's envious line, "I'd like to be the master for a change," with its reminder of all the licenses and privileges that Don Giovanni enjoys—and abuses. Just as in the overture, the last cadence of the vocal melody is trumped by a modulation. That modulation, from F major to B-flat major, casts Leporello's whole song in retrospect as a sort of upbeat in the dominant to the first bit of kinetic action, corresponding to Don Giovanni's entrance, pursued by the enraged Donna Anna, the lady with whom he has been keeping company while his servant had been outside, stewing.

The three characters now on stage sing a tense trio in B-flat major, Donna Anna accusing the Don of attempted rape and calling for help, the Don attempting to flee, and Leporello cowering off to one side. This little number, too, fails to make complete closure: tremolando violins intrude upon its final cadence, and a bass figure introduces an incongruous F-sharp to coincide with the entrance of the Commander, Donna Anna's father, in response to her screams. That F-sharp, a leading tone, wrenches the tonality into an unstable G minor, the relative minor of the previous key, for another trio, much shorter than the one preceding, in which the two noblemen exchange threats and Leporello continues his horrified commentary from his hiding place.

The final cadence of the male trio is on D minor, a significant key that had already served for the menacing slow introduction to the overture. The men draw swords and fight to the strains of an orchestral passage making frantic modulations around the circle of fifths, but ending on a diminished-seventh chord that coincides with Don Giovanni's fatal thrust. The tempo now changes radically as the Commander, mortally wounded, falters and dies, while Don Giovanni gloats and Leporello panics, all in the remote key of F minor—remote, that is, in terms of the immediately preceding music, but coming full circle with respect to the opening of the *introduzione*, which had begun with Leporello's pouting song in F major.

Not even this ending section of the *introduzione*, though, makes a full cadence. The last dominant chord peters out into *its* dominant, the harpsichord takes over, and only now do we hear the first recitatives, inaugurating the "normal" succession of recitative and fully elaborated aria. In the space of less than two hundred measures, lasting only a few minutes, we have met four characters, witnessed an attempted arrest and a murder, and been through a veritable tonal whirlwind. This kind of uninterrupted action music seemed to eighteenth-century listeners to reproduce the rhythms and the passions of life itself. Its sustained dramatic pressure was unprecedented.

But now things settle down into a more orderly (that is, a more obviously contrived) rhythm, as the traditional farcical plot takes over. A series of closed numbers, linked by recitatives, ensues. Don Giovanni and Leporello scurry off and Donna Anna returns, accompanied by her fiancé, Don Ottavio. They vow revenge in passionate duet. Don Giovanni and Leporello regroup in another part of town, where they come upon and observe Donna Elvira, an old flame of the Don's traveling incognito. She is the opera's *mezzo carattere* role. Her raillery at her betrayer is cast in a coloratura aria reminiscent of the *opera seria*, while their mock-sympathetic asides are of the purest *buffo* manner. When Don Giovanni approaches her with an eye toward conquest, she hurls abuse at him. He withdraws, leaving her alone with Leporello, who "consoles" her with a leering "catalogue aria" listing all the Don's conquests (640 in Italy, 230 in Germany, 100 in France, 91 in Turkey, but in Spain 1003).

The scene changes to a peasant wedding. Don Giovanni is attracted to the bride, Zerlina, and invites everyone to his house, thinking thereby to seduce her. The groom, Masetto, flies into an aria of impotent rage; he is dragged off while the Don, preposterously proposing marriage in a duet with Zerlina, manages to gain her assent to a tryst. Donna Elvira arrives in pursuit. She warns Zerlina off in a brief coloratura explosion. Donna Anna and Don Ottavio appear. With Donna Elvira and Don Giovanni, whom at first they do not recognize in the daylight, they sing a brief quartet. With the help of Donna Elvira's insinuations, Donna Anna understands that Don Giovanni is none other than her villain seducer from the night before. Anna, Elvira, and Ottavio join forces to bring him to justice. Donna Anna sings another noble aria of vengeance. Don Ottavio, left briefly alone, sings of his devotion to her.

The remaining arias before the first finale are two: Don Giovanni's madcap "Champagne aria," in which he lustily looks forward to the orgy where he thinks a combination of wine and increasingly vigorous dancing (minuet, then "follia," then "allemande") will result in the addition of a dozen or so new names, including Zerlina's, to his catalogue; and a dulcet aria in which Zerlina manages to appease Masetto with the help of an unctuous obbligato cello.

This brings us to the act I finale, the first "little comedy in itself" as Da Ponte described it. Its self-contained quality is emphasized by its own tonal closure. It begins and ends in C major—another good trumpet key, and one that stands in relation to the original (and ultimate) tonic like a "far out point," reflecting its dramatic function as the *neak of imbroelio*—a "dissonance" in the plot that stands in urgent need of resolution

It begins with a little “quarrel duet” between Masetto and Zerlina, he expressing suspicion, she exasperation; he hides as Don Giovanni appears, shouting instructions to his servants. The wedding party is invited inside, but Don Giovanni spies Zerlina and detains her outside the house as the music modulates to F major. He woos; she resists. All at once he spies Masetto, as the music makes a feint toward the relative minor. Thinking quickly, the Don reassures Masetto that Zerlina has been looking for him, invites them both in, and the music returns to the security of the major key.

From within, the sound of the Don Giovanni’s hired (onstage) orchestra is heard, playing a contredanse. The counterpoint of stage music (that is to say, music “heard” by the characters on stage as actual performed music) and the “metaphorical” music of the singers and the pit orchestra (representing the characters’ speech, thoughts, feelings, and actions, “heard” as music only by the audience), will henceforth be virtuosically exploited as a dramaturgical gimmick throughout the finale. It is a distinction all operagoers learn to make “instinctively.” Only rarely is it thematized—made overt and explicit by the composer as a dramatic effect—the way it is here.

The stage music is silenced (for the audience) by the sudden appearance of Don Giovanni’s pursuers—Don Ottavio, Donna Anna, and Donna Elvira, wearing masks—as the music takes a decisive turn to the minor, symbolizing their caustic frame of mind. Leporello throws open a window from within, and once again the Don’s orchestra is heard, this time playing a stately minuet. Leporello, spying the maskers (whom he fails to recognize), tells his master of their presence. They, too, are of course invited to the ball.

Once again the stage music falls silent from the audience’s perspective, as the pit orchestra focuses in like a zoom lens on the maskers. The change of tempo—to adagio—and of key—to B-flat, again casting the preceding music retrospectively as a dominant—announces a moment of solemn “inwardness,” as they utter a prayer for heavenly assistance in revenge (a “silent” prayer, we understand, since they sing not in dialogue but as an ensemble).

The prayer being done, the music again lurches forward along the circle of fifths, to E-flat (another “horn key”), as the stage set opens in on the Don’s glittering ballroom. All but the sulking Masetto enter into the festive spirit, egged on by the orchestra’s jig rhythms. As the maskers enter they are greeted by an abrupt change to C major; trumpets now pompously replace the horns, and the trio of “strangers” exchange formal greetings with their quarry, joining in (but of course ironically) when the Don sings the praises of the “freedom” his generous hospitality betokens.

At Don Giovanni’s signal, the stage orchestra strikes up the minuet again to inaugurate the main dance episode, one of Mozart’s most famous tours de force. Taking his cue, evidently, from the dances named in the “Champagne aria” (minuet, folia, allemande), Mozart superimposes three dances, played by three sub-orchestras in various corners of the room, in a kind of collage. They represent the various social classes who are mixed harum-scarum in this weird ball that Don Giovanni’s irrepressible libido has engineered.

Thus atop the noble minuet, in a stately triple meter, the rustic contredanse (or “country dance”) heard earlier in the scene is superimposed, presumably for the benefit of the peasants from the wedding party. (It is introduced, wittily, by some suitable tuning-up noises from the second orchestra.) Its duple meter contradicts that of the dance already in progress, three measures of contredanse equaling two of minuet. The two dances are cleverly harmonized by the composer, however, so as to create no dissonances with one another.

Everyone but Masetto now dancing to one orchestra or another, Don Giovanni starts to lead Zerlina offstage. He tells Leporello to keep Masetto at bay, and Leporello signals to the third group of musicians, who strike up the “allemande,” or rather the “Teitsch,” as Mozart now designates it. Like allemande, the word *Teitsch* means “German”; the more usual term for this dance of Mozart’s time was the *Deutscher Tanz*. A far cry from the dignified allemande of the old French dance suite, the *Deutscher* was a boisterous, whirling affair, the progenitor of the waltz. One of its fast triple measures equals a single beat of the concurrent minuet and contredanse. As soon as it starts, Leporello seizes Masetto and twirls him around while the Don slips away with Zerlina. Leporello, noticing her resistance and fearful at the possible outcome, abandons the whirling, confused Masetto and follows them.

Once off stage Zerlina lets out a bloodcurdling scream for help. Its outlandish harmonization, a sudden dominant-seventh chord on B-flat, utterly disrupts the complicated proceedings on stage and ushers in the “noise, noise, noise” with which a first-act finale must conclude. The tempo is now marked *allegro assai*, the fastest designation then in common use—and it will get faster. Everyone begins chasing after Don Giovanni, who comes out dragging Leporello and accusing him of having been Zerlina’s abductor. The maskers are not taken in; they reveal themselves to Don Giovanni, who makes a desperate exit, leaving all the rest in confusion.

With each turn of events, the harmony is wrenched accordingly. There are many feints. E-flat seems to give way to the dominant of D, but instead F arrives with Don Giovanni's impetuous accusation. The maskers threaten in a C major liberally mixed with jarring notes borrowed from the parallel minor. At the last moment, as the Don makes his frantic escape, the tempo is "pinched" up even beyond *allegro assai* by means of the marking *più stretto*, as if quoted from Da Ponte's description. The imbroglia has indeed reached an unsurpassable peak.

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Oxford History of Western Music: Richard Taruskin

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Don Giovanni

Opera buffa

MUSIC AND (OR AS) MORALITY

Chapter: CHAPTER 9 Enlightenment and Reform

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

In the second act the trajectory is reversed, leading to the Don's inevitable downfall. The first scene finds him farcically brazen as ever, rejecting Leporello's advice to mend his ways and wooing Elvira's maidservant with a serenade. In the second scene, both noble ladies are cynically shown wavering in their hatred of the irresistible Don. The third scene is the turning point. Don Giovanni, having escaped another scrape by leaping a wall into a graveyard, and having revealed the true depths to which he can descend (now he's been dallying with Leporello's girl!), is brought up short by the voice of the Commander from beyond the grave (accompanied by sepuchrally solemn trombones). He sends Leporello to see where the voice is coming from, and they discover the Commander's monument. With his usual bravado, Don Giovanni bids Leporello invite the statue to dinner. To Leporello's great fright and Don Giovanni's bewilderment, the statue nods assent.

As a foil to the horrific finale, a tender scene for Don Ottavio and Donna Anna now ensues, in which she promises to marry him, but only after she's settled her score and rid herself of her obsession.



fig. 9-12 Don Giovanni meets his doom. Engraving by P. Bolt after a drawing by Vincenz Geor

Kinninger, used as the frontispiece to the first edition of the vocal score (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1801).

And now the second-act finale. Like the previous finale, it is a party scene: Don Giovanni, with renewed bravado, is getting ready for the repast to which he had mockingly invited the Commander.

And so, again like the previous finale, it features stage music: a wind octet such as actually did furnish dinner music at aristocratic salons (and for which many composers, including Mozart, made arrangements of popular numbers from operas). They play three actual excerpts from the current *opera buffa* repertory as of 1787 (for all that the ostensible setting of the opera is “the sixteenth century”). First comes an excerpt from *Una cosa rara* (full title, “A rare thing: beauty and honesty together”), by one of Mozart’s rivals, Martìn y Soler, to a libretto by Da Ponte, premiered in Vienna only the year before (Don Giovanni’s comment: “a tasty dish!”). Next, a tune from *Fra i due litiganti il terzo gode* (“While two dispute, a third rejoices”) by Giuseppe Sarti (libretto by Carlo Goldoni), just then the most popular of all operas on the Vienna stage (Leporello greets it with delight). Finally, the musicians strike up one of the hit tunes from Mozart and Da Ponte’s own *Le nozze di Figaro* (Leporello, in mock disgust: “Now that one I know all too well!”).

These gay snatches have not only been entertaining the pair on stage and the audience in the opera house; they have also been establishing the finale’s fluid tonal scheme and staking its limits: the first in D major, the key both of the overture at the front of the opera and of the looming final cadence; the second in F major, the flat mediant, which shares its signature of one flat with the parallel minor key, in which the statue music will be played; and the third in B-flat major, the flat submediant (linked through its relative minor with G major, which will also figure prominently in the design). These keys also—and probably deliberately—recapitulate the opening tonalities of the *introduzione* (overture, Leporello’s pacing, the Don’s entrance).

The final cadence of the *Figaro* snatch is bizarrely elided into loud chords signaling the sudden arrival of Donna Elvira, in a state of feverish anxiety. Somehow she has had a premonition of the Don’s impending doom and has come to warn him. In an agitated trio, he meets her concern with derision, finally addressing to her the same insultingly insouciant invitation to sit herself down and dine with him that he had previously addressed to the statue of the Commander. At this even Leporello has to reprove his master’s hard-heartedness.

Elvira rushes off in despair but rushes right back on again in horror, her scream matched in the orchestra by a bellowing diminished-seventh chord, horror-harmony par excellence. She flies out at the opposite end of the stage and Don Giovanni sends Leporello to investigate. Leporello, too, recoils to the same horror-harmony, transposed up a step and sounding even ghastlier because the chord of its implied resolution is now the chord of D minor that will spell death to Don Giovanni. In a breathless duet, the voice parts interrupted by panting rests, Leporello explains that he has seen him, “the man of stone, the white man” and imitates his crushing gait, “ta! ta! ta! ta!”

With undiminished bravado, Don Giovanni flings open the door. His gesture is greeted by what was surely the most awful noise that ever sounded in an opera house: yet another diminished-seventh chord, this one blasted in his face by the full orchestra, augmented by the three trombones from the graveyard scene, to announce the Commander’s arrival. The harmony is the very one that accompanied Don Giovanni’s fatal thrust in the *introduzione*; its recurrence seems to bracket the whole intervening action and cast the whole opera in terms of a single horrible deed and its expiation.

The stone guest now enters, accompanied by the grim music that had so unexpectedly launched the overture, thus providing a musical recapitulation to correspond with the fulfillment of the subtitle’s prophecy. The Don continues to resist against the evidence of his own eyes. A hideous trio of three basses develops as the statue advances, the Don scoffs, and Leporello trembles. Here Mozart came as close as he would ever come to violating his own conceit—the bedrock precept of all “Enlightened” aesthetics—that *music, even in the most terrible situations, must never offend the ear, but must please the hearer*. Here his music gives intimations not of beauty but of what must at the very least be called sublime: matters vast and grave, awesome to contemplate.

Things get worse. The statue’s command that Don Giovanni repent is sung to another gruesomely portentous recapitulation: the duel music from the *introduzione* that had accompanied Don Giovanni’s most horrible crime. The Don remains proudly unrepentant: that is his idea of courage. But at the icy touch of the statue’s hand, his demeanor crumbles into one of rack and ruin; the statue is replaced by a unison chorus of hellish spirits; the harmony is

riddled with searing dissonance as the orchestra's noisiest resources are summoned up: trombone sforzandi, timpani rolls, string tremolos. Music like this, to say the least, had never figured before in any *opera buffa*. As the Don disappears, screaming in agony, the orchestra settles in on a chord of D major. The change of mode offers no consolation, though: it is more like the *tierce de picardie*, the "Picardy third" (a famous misnomer derived from *tierce picarte*, "sharp third"), the major chord that was used to end solemn organ preludes and toccatas in the minor in days of old.

And now the resolution: D major resolves to G major as dominant to tonic, the stage brightens, and (according to the old prescription), the librettist assembles all the remaining characters on stage on a flimsy pretext: Donna Anna, Donna Elvira (who has presumably summoned the rest), Don Ottavio, Zerlina, and Masetto (the last pair unseen since the first act) all rush on stage, together with some policemen who never get to sing, to join the dazed Leporello. The five pursuers, singing in a sort of chorus, interrogate Leporello about Don Giovanni's fate.

When all are satisfied that the Don has truly perished ("Ah, it must have been that ghost I saw!" says Elvira knowingly to the others), they react by turning their attention to the future, symbolizing the end of Don Giovanni's reign, and (like the harmony) providing the action with its long-awaited closure—a closure that could not take place so long as the Don's disruptive force was abroad in the opera's world. In a tender *larghetto*, Don Ottavio and Donna Anna make their plans to marry (in a year, at her insistence, so that she may fully mourn her father). Elvira announces that she is bound for a convent. Zerlina and Masetto agree to patch things up and resume their domesticity. Leporello vows to find himself a better master.

Meanwhile, the harmony has been quietly veering back to D major through its dominant on which the *larghetto* makes its (half) cadence. It is time to wrap things up in D major with a moral, launched *presto* by the women's voices in what sounds for all the world like the beginning of a fugue, Donna Anna and Elvira with the subject, Zerlina with the answer. (It was for touches like this that Mozart had the reputation of being a "difficult" composer.) But no, all six characters continue in chorus to the final cadence, to the accompaniment of ripping scales and fanfares in the orchestra, in a fully restored *buffa* style.

Together, Mozart and Da Ponte brought to a new height the faculty of imagining (or, in this case, re-imagining) a dramatic action in terms suitable for musical elaboration. In Mozart's case, the achievement had mainly to do with the unique skill with which he interwove the voices of his characters in ensembles—a variegated play of vocal color that made his finales flash and glitter, moving with unprecedented speed and flexibility. His finales were a powerful influence on later composers: indeed, the history of opera during the nineteenth century could be described as the genre's gradual transformation into one great big continuous "finale," lasting from curtain to curtain.

But it also had to do with fine calibrations of rhythm and harmony to underscore shifting sentiments and passions, finally homing in as if inevitably on the indispensable closure, lending a sense of surefooted progression—that is, of real dynamism—to that newly speedy yet flexible pace. These were the devices by which, more compellingly than ever, Mozart could "move an audience through representations of its own humanity," lending his music the aspect that the Enlightenment prized above all—the achievement of a "universal portrait" of mankind.

Nowadays, of course, it is easy to see how far such a representation fell short of true universality. In the case of *Don Giovanni*, as in that of *Così fan tutte*, the viewpoint that claims universality is clearly the viewpoint of a male ego. The "insatiable, burning desire" to exceed "the common features of life" and "attain on earth that which dwells in our breast as a heavenly promise" that so affected Hoffmann is all too clearly the barely sublimated male sexual drive. The "altogether musical idea" that Don Giovanni "disclosed" to Kierkegaard was likewise a reflection of the philosopher's maleness and its attendant desires.

It follows from this that all the women in the opera, even the noblest, are mocked and negated in varying degrees, regarded finally as catalogue entries—sexual "objects," rather than what a philosopher like Kierkegaard would have called a true "subject," which is to say an independent agent. Donna Elvira is willing up to the bitter end to suffer humiliation for the Don's sake; Donna Anna is more than faintly ridiculous in her constant deferral of her marriage plans, and painful to observe in her progressively deteriorating moral condition over the course of the opera; Zerlina is a virtual mirror reflection of the Don himself—a cruelly manipulative creature ruled by her animal appetites. Don Giovanni's, in short, is the viewpoint that ultimately prevails in the opera, his bad end and all attendant moralizing notwithstanding. Not for nothing has the critic Joseph Kerman dared suggest that the "closure ensemble" that follow the Don's demise is a dramatic failure, a "dead spot" that only "goes to show how drab life is without the Don."²⁸ It would be hard to argue that sneaking admiration for the villain has not been widely shared ever since the opera's

première. Those, after all, were the cynical “gender politics” of Mozart’s time, and it would not be reasonable to expect to find them transcended in a work that aspired to popular success. Much more recently, in the early part of the twentieth century, Ferruccio Busoni, a great late-Romantic pianist and composer, professed his admiration for Don Giovanni as “the man who gave every woman the supreme experience of happiness.” One might want to ask Donna Elvira or Donna Anna about that. Or so we are quick nowadays to object. In Mozart’s day, or even in Busoni’s, no one would have posed the question. It would not have been thought reasonable. Now it gives discomfort.

But that is the paradox of all “Enlightened” thinking. Reason’s promise can be kept only provisionally. Its answers are inevitably superseded by others that will be superseded in their turn. To insist on their universal applicability—on a final, single truth—can only end in dogmatism or hypocrisy. And only dogmatism or hypocrisy will condemn the attempt to place the morality of great works of art, even works as great as *Don Giovanni*, in historical perspective.

Notes:

(28) Joseph Kerman, *Opera as Drama* (New York: Knopf, 1956), p. 122.

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Oxford History of Western Music: Richard Taruskin

CHAPTER 10 Instrumental Music Lifts Off

The Eighteenth-Century Symphony; Haydn

Chapter: CHAPTER 10 Instrumental Music Lifts Off

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

PARTY MUSIC GOES PUBLIC

In one or another linguistic variant, the term “symphony” (*symphonia*, *sinfonia*) has been in the European musical vocabulary since the ninth century. At first it meant what we now call “consonance,” a term that merely substitutes Latin roots for Greek ones meaning “together-sounding” (*con* = *sym*; *sonus* = *phonos*). By the turn of the seventeenth century, the term had resurfaced as a prestigious “humanistic” (pseudo-Greeky) cognate to the homelier *concerto* in the original meaning of the word, designating a composition that mixed vocal and instrumental forces over a basso continuo, as in Gabrieli’s (and later Schütz’s) *Symphoniae sacrae*.

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, the term had become attached to the Italian opera, where it designated what the French called the *ouverture*, or opener, the orchestral curtain-raiser. As we may recall from chapter 4, the Italian *sinfonia avanti l’opera* as employed by the theater composers of Alessandro Scarlatti’s generation was a short three- or (very occasionally) four-movement suite akin to what the string-players of Corelli’s generation might have called a *concerto da camera* (see Ex. 4-4). Being meant for the larger space of a theater rather than an aristocratic salon, it was usually scored for oboes and horns or trumpets in addition to strings. The brass instruments set limits on harmonic complexity.

But still the term, and the associated genre, would not stay put. By the end of the eighteenth century, 16,558 symphonies had been written (probably many more: the number is merely the sum total of items listed in the *Union Thematic Catalogue of Eighteenth-Century Symphonies, c1720–c1810*, compiled in the 1960s and 1970s under the direction of the American musicologist Jan LaRue). That is many times more than the number of operas. Symphonies were living a life of their own, as freestanding three- or four-movement orchestral compositions, and were being produced in unprecedented quantities.

Immense production, of course, implies immense consumption. A new pattern of consumption implies a new demand; and a new demand implies a change of taste (or “esthetic”). Such changes have social as well as esthetic causes. And that will be the key to understanding what the term-and-genre “symphony” came to mean over the course of the eighteenth century. For as Jan LaRue has pointed out, the term “symphony” was not uniformly associated with the genre that now bears the name. It only gradually won out over a welter of synonyms that included, in a fashion that can seem bewildering to today’s musicians who are used to hard-and-fast dictionary definitions, “overture” and “concerto,” as well as many terms no longer associated with orchestral music, such as “sonata,” “partita,” “trio,” “quartetto,” “quintetto,” and so on practically ad infinitum. Neither was the genre of free-standing symphony strictly distinguished from that of *sinfonia avanti l’opera*. Sometimes opera overtures were detached from their operas and performed as symphonies. Sometimes symphonies got attached to operas and were performed as overtures. Sometimes symphonies that never had any operas attached were called overtures out of habit, or because they opened concert programs.

But if we tend to rely on textbook or dictionary definitions for our idea of genres, eighteenth-century musicians and listeners identified them by their contexts and uses. For them, and so for us, a symphony will be any multimovement orchestral piece performed at certain kinds of social occasions. A crucial hint to the nature of the social occasions at which those thousands of free-standing symphonies were performed comes by way of some other early synonyms for the term in its new usage, including “divertimento,” “scherzando,” “serenata,” “notturmo,” and “cassatione.” “Divertimento” comes from the Italian verb *divertire*, and means “entertainment music.” “Scherzando” comes from *scherzare*, to have fun. “Serenata” comes from *sera*, evening; “notturmo” from *notte*, night. “Cassatione,” though

disguised as an Italian word (suggesting an improbable derivation from *cassare*, to dismiss or rescind, or an even more improbable one from the French *casser*, to break) actually comes from the Austrian German noun *Gasse*, meaning street: hence, "street (or outdoor) music."

To sum up, then, the free-standing orchestral symphony, produced in great numbers all over Europe beginning in the 1720s and 1730s, was originally a genre of entertainment music, usually performed in the evenings, sometimes out of doors. In short, the term meant aristocratic party music, which over the course of the century, responding to forces of urbanization and the economic empowerment of the bourgeoisie, became more and more available to public access. In the course of its becoming public it became more and more the pretext for the occasions at which it was performed, rather than their mere accompaniment. Thus, finally, the growth of the symphony paralleled the growth of the concert as we know it today—a growth that in turn paralleled a vastly increasing taste for esthetically beguiling or emotionally stirring instrumental music, sought out for the sake of its sheer sensuous and imaginative appeal, and listened to, increasingly, in silent absorption. This was indeed a momentous esthetic change, indeed a revolution. Its beginnings, however, were modest and artistically unpretentious in the extreme.

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Oxford History of Western Music: Richard Taruskin

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Concert

Concert Spirituel

Giovanni Battista Sammartini

CONCERT LIFE IS BORN

Chapter: CHAPTER 10 Instrumental Music Lifts Off

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

The word “concert,” originally, was merely the French form of the word “concerto.” And it was in France—in 1725, to be exact—that the word was first used in its modern sense. It was in France, then, the cradle of Enlightenment and “civilized” taste, that the modern vogue for public instrumental music—“concert music”—was born. That first French usage was associated with the earliest significant and lasting European concert series, the Concert Spirituel (literally, “sacred concert”), organized in Paris by the minor court composer Anne Danican Philidor (1681–1728), son and brother to several other Parisian musicians, including François-André Philidor, who although a successful composer of operas was (and remains) much better known as one of the greatest chess players of all time.

The Concert Spirituel was intended as an excuse for musical entertainments on religious holidays, and especially during the Lenten season, when opera houses were closed. It had a remote ancestor in London, that great mercantile city, where an enterprising musician named John Banister rented a public building and put on what seem to have been rather shoddy musical programs almost fifty years earlier; it did not catch on (see Weiss and Taruskin, *Music in the Western World*, 2nd ed., No. 58). At the much more lavishly endowed Concert Spirituel the staple fare was pious cantatas and concerted (vocal-instrumental) *grands motets* in keeping with its “spiritual” nature; but since it was a substitute for opera, it began with an overture—that is, a *sinfonia* or “symphonie”—which thus at the outset retained its traditional position as festive curtain-raiser.

At the very first concert spirituel, 18 March 1725, Corelli’s famous “Christmas Concerto” (Ex. 5-8) served this purpose, which certainly illustrates the fluidity of genres and terms at this early period of concert life. But specially composed symphonies after the Italian operatic model quickly became the order of the day; indeed, it was the existence of the concert series that stimulated their production. The sacred vocal works were likewise interspersed with virtuoso instrumental solos, often composed and performed by the great Italian-trained violinist Jean-Marie Leclair, the “French Vivaldi.”

The Concert Spirituel, which lasted until 1790, thus set the tone for concert programs throughout the eighteenth century. Almost always, and almost everywhere, concerts were variety shows mixing vocal music with instrumental and sacred with secular. A typical concert program from Vienna, dated 16 April 1791, printed in both German and Italian (Fig. 10-1), begins with a “grande Sinfonia della composizione del Sig. *Mozart*” as curtain raiser, followed by some opera arias by Mozart and Paisiello; a cello concerto by Ignatz Pleyel, a former apprentice of Haydn then working in Strasbourg; a choral *Alleluja* by the Vienna court composer Johann Georg Albrechtsberger, the most famous music pedagogue of the day; and *per finale*, a “harmonie,” or wind-band partita “first performed in honor of the coronation of his Imperial Majesty” Leopold II, by Georg Druschetzky, a famous regimental musician of the day.

Except for outdoor band concerts consisting entirely of partitas like Druschetzky’s (alias serenatas, cassations, nocturnos, and the like), there were no all-instrumental concerts until the first decade of the nineteenth century. The idea of what we now call a “symphony concert,” with the audience paying rapt attention to one orchestral work after another, was unheard of; the symphony was just one of the ingredients and almost always the opener. (In the opera house, free-standing symphonies were eventually performed from the pit as entertainment or sonic wallpaper between the acts; according to contemporary witnesses, they were usually ignored by the audience.)

Dienste Sonnabende den 16. — und Sonntags den 17. April 1791.
n i t t

im kaiserl. königl. National- Hof- Theater
von der vereinigten Tonkünstlergesellschaft
zum Vortheil ihrer Wittwen und Waisen

eine große musikalische Akademie,

gehalten werden. die aus folgenden Stücken besteht:

- 1) Eine große Sinfonie von der Erfindung des Hrn. Mozart.
- 2) Ein Mäzang aus der Oper: *Phedra*.
Es werden dabey folgen:
Die Rolle der Arija Hrn. Lang.
Die Rolle des Hippolyt Herr Kalchauer.
Die Rolle des Idas Herr Kirnler.
C b o r.
Die Musik ist vom Hrn. Johann Pasquillo, mit Aufseher der Arija, welche Hrn. Lang singet, und von der Composition des Hrn. Mozart ist.
- 3) Ein Concerto auf dem Violoncello von der Composition des Hrn. Pleyel, welches Hr. Cajet. Gontli, ein Virtuoso neuwamente arrivato di Fiorenza, spielen wird.
- 4) Der sehr beliebte große Chor: *Missa!* von Hrn. Georg Albrechtsberger, k. k. Hofmeister und Mitglied hiesiger Gesellschaft.
- 5) Dem Endlich eine neue Harmonik aus 21 Heiligen Instrumenten bestehend, von Erfindung des Hrn. Dr. Schöberl, die in Presburg bey der Eröffnung Sr. Maj. des Kaisers aufgeführt wurde, und von denen Kapten J. J. Durchlauchten der Herren Fürsten Esterhazy und Grafen Salm zu sehen sein wird.

Die Musik, Instrumente und Gesangstimmen gründet, wird von mehr denn 120 Personen angeführt.

Die Einsteckpreise sind folgende:

Erster Platz 1 fl. 45 kr.	Zweiter Platz im ersten St. 1 fl. 30 kr.
Dritter Platz 1 fl. 15 kr.	Vierter Platz 1 fl. 10 kr.
Fünfter Platz 1 fl. 10 kr.	Sechster Platz 1 fl. 5 kr.
Siebter Platz 1 fl. 5 kr.	Achter Platz 1 fl. 5 kr.

Die Herrn Offiziere von der Garnison werden ersucht, jeder für sich Quartier zu 30 kr. zu bezahlen.

Das von der hohen Nobilität, welche sich bey der festlich grandiosen Schlußfeier abzeichnen lassen wird beschreiben werden, werden ersucht, zu dem Exponirten beyzeiten zu kommen.

Die Kinder vom Mäzang sind bey dem Exponirten das Geld für 10 kr. zu haben.

Der Anfang ist um 7. Uhr.

Oggi Sabbato il 16, e Domenica il 17. Aprile 1791.
nel Teatro Nazionale
si darà
DALLA SOCIETÀ DI MUSICA
A BENEFIZIO DELLE LORO VEDOVE ED ORFANI

UNA GRANDE ACADEMIA DI MUSICA,

nella quale si eseguirà

- 1) Una grande Sinfonia della composizione del Sig. Mozart.
- 2) Un' Estratto dell' Opera: *FEDRA*, dove canteranno nella Parte
dell' Arija la Signa. Lang.
dell' Hippolyt il Signe. Kalchauer.
dell' Idas il Signe. Kirnler.
C O R O.
La Musica è del Sig. Gio. Pasquillo fuori dell' Arija, che canta la Signa. Lang, ed è del Sig. Mozart.
- 3) Un Concerto sul Violoncello, composto dal Signe. Pleyel, ed eseguito dal Signe. Cajet. Gontli, un Virtuoso nuovamente arrivato di Fiorenza.
- 4) Il tanto gradito gran Coro: *ALLELUJA* del Signe. Albrechtsberger, Musico di quella Cesare Corte, e membro di quella Società.
- 5) Per il Finale sarà proferta dai Virtuosi in actual servizio di L. A. i Signori Principi d' Esterhazy e Graf Salm una *NUOVA ARMONIA*, consistente in 21 instrumenti da feto della compositione del Signe. Dr. Schöberl, che si eseguirà in Presburgo in occasione dell' incoronazione di S. M. I. e R.

La Musica fra Cantanti e Suonatori farà eseguita da più di cento ottanta Persone.

I prezzi per l' ingresso sono i seguenti:

Al Parterre nobile .. . 1 Soc. 45 kr.	Scdia chiosa al terzo piano .. . Soc. 30 kr.
Al primo Piano .. . 1 .. 45 ..	Al quarto Piano 30 ..
Al secondo Parterre .. . 1 .. 34 ..	Una Loggia 4 .. 30 ..
Al terzo piano 40 ..	

Li Signori Offiziali della Guarnigione si compiaceranno di pagare per l' entrata ciascuno 30 kr.

Quelli però della Nobilità, che non sono intenzionati di tener loro Balchi abbonati, sono ricercati, di avvisarne a tempo il Maestro delle Loggie.

I libretti dell' Estratto si trovano dal Maestro delle Loggie a 10 cent. l' uno.

Si comincerà alle ore 7.

fig. 10-1 Bilingual handbill for a Tonkünstler-Sozietät concert in Vienna, 1791.

The Viennese concert listed above was actually not called a concert but an *Akademie* or *academia*—a term that goes back to sixteenth-century Italy, where it already designated aristocratic house concerts. And northern Italy was, after France, the next great venue for public concerts in the eighteenth century. A particular center was Milan, where Lenten “*academie di sinfonia e di canto*” were a fixture beginning in the 1730s. Their director, Giovanni Battista Sammartini (or San Martini, 1700–75), was both the *maestro di cappella* at the Milan cathedral and a leading composer of operas for the city’s ducal theater. At first he adapted his operatic *sinfonie* for use at concerts, later he wrote them especially for concert use, in great quantities. Sixty-eight such works by Sammartini survive, making his the first big name in the history of the genre.

A “*Sinfonia del Signor St Martini*” (Ex. 10-1), now found in a Paris manuscript collection assembled in the 1740s, probably dates from the previous decade, making it one of the earliest free-standing concert symphonies now extant, and one that very likely served its festive purpose both in its city of origin and in the French capital. It is in four movements, of which all but the tiny second one (little more than a snatch of chordal connective tissue) are cast in binary form. The third and fourth movements, respectively a gigue and a minuet, are traditional dance-suite (or *concerto da camera*) items. Their harmonically defined form—the usual pendular swing from tonic to dominant and back (the return trip by way of a FOP)—plays itself out through a parallel thematic structure, as one would find in a suite by Bach, at this time (lest we forget) still very much alive and working in Leipzig.

Their style, however, has been modified by their Italian operatic background in ways that Bach would have despised (“the little Dresden tunes!”), but that his sons were much drawn to, as we have known since chapter 8. These telltale traits include their relatively homophonic texture and their relatively slow and regular “harmonic rhythm” (rate of chord change)—which, however, by no means precluded an interesting phrase structure. The concluding minuet, with its varied reprise standing as a middle section, is reminiscent of the keyboard sonatas examined in chapter 8.

Allegro ma non tanto ♩ = 69

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
B.C.

f *mf* *p* *mf* *cresc.* *mf*

The first system of the musical score consists of four staves. The top two staves are for the Violin I and Violin II parts, and the bottom two are for the Viola and Cello/Double Bass parts. The music is in G major and 3/4 time. The first measure of each staff begins with a *pp* dynamic and a *cresc.* marking. The second measure continues the *cresc.* marking. The third measure features a *f* dynamic. The first staff has a trill (*tr*) over the final note of the first measure. The second system of the score continues the same four-staff arrangement, with the first two staves playing a melodic line and the bottom two staves providing harmonic support. The third system concludes with a trill in the first staff and a final chord in the bottom two staves.

ex. 10-1a Giovanni Battista Sammartini, Sinfonia in G, from Fonds Blancheton, mm. 1–17

The second system of the musical score continues the four-staff arrangement. The first measure of the first staff begins with a *p* dynamic and a *cresc.* marking. The second measure continues the *cresc.* marking. The third measure features a *pp* dynamic. The first staff has a trill (*tr*) over the final note of the first measure. The second system of the score continues the same four-staff arrangement, with the first two staves playing a melodic line and the bottom two staves providing harmonic support. The third system concludes with a trill in the first staff and a final chord in the bottom two staves.

ex. 10-1b Giovanni Battista Sammartini, Sinfonia in G, from Fonds Blancheton, mm. 23–34

It is the first movement that differs most strikingly from anything J. S. Bach could ever have written and reminds us most of his sons' work—or rather, the work his sons would later produce under the influence of music like Sammartini's. Although in dance-form, it is not a dance. In rhythm it resembles a march, and the brassy fanfarelike chords at the outset, so appropriate to a concert symphony's festive function, strengthen the military association (or "topic," to use a properly eighteenth-century term) even though only strings are used.

Like the work of Bach's sons, the opening section (Ex. 10-1a) moves not through a continuously developing or "spun out" melodic line (such as Bach the Father might have provided), but through a series of well-articulated, contrasting ideas (mm. 1–2, 3–5, 6–7, 9–11, 12–14). The last two measures close the section off with a reference to the opening music, but with its scoring as if "reversed." There is a noticeable inclination to "dramatize" the harmony: for example, the short sequence leading to the dominant (mm. 9–11) culminates in a complete diminished-seventh chord, rather a spicy harmony to use without any textual motivation.

The second half begins as if it were going to parallel the thematic structure of the first, but after four measures a long bout of modulating sequences sets in (Ex. 10-1b), putting continuity in place of contrast and dramatizing the onset of the journey to the Far Out Point. The journey is vividly contrasted in direction, with a passage of sharpward-leaning chromaticism (introducing D# as leading tone to vi. the FOP) not only followed but strongly contradicted by a

flatward-leaning cascade that gets as far as the previous limit's enharmonic equivalent, E ♭ (functioning here as the third of a minor subdominant triad), before veering in toward home.

As in the work of Bach's sons (and also Domenico Scarlatti), "home" means not only a returning key, but a returning theme as well: the "double return" has now already become fully established in Sammartini's style as the normal procedure for rounding off the opening movement of an orchestral *sinfonia*, whether intended for theater or "academy." From now on we will call the expanded binary form with dramatized key contrasts and double returns the "symphonic binary" form in recognition of its origin in the operatic *sinfonia* and its concert offshoot.

And now recall the overture (or *sinfonia*) to Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, discussed in the previous chapter, and notice that in form it is in all essentials identical to Sammartini's first movement, albeit far more elaborately worked out. The process of that elaboration—the evolution of the symphonic binary form (more commonly known today as "sonata form") over the course of the later eighteenth century—is one of the things this chapter will trace with particular zeal, for it gave rise to what would be the dominating genre of instrumental music for more than a century, a genre that would reach levels of development, both as to dimensions and as to elaborated content, that could never have been predicted before the advent of the concert symphony.

The spread of that magnificently fertile genre was facilitated by a number of political and social factors. During the eighteenth century Milan, Sammartini's city (along with all the rest of northern Italy, then called "Lombardy and Venetia"), was under Austrian rule. Musical developments there spread rapidly to Vienna, the Hapsburg capital, thence outward to all the other cities and courts within the Hapsburg ("Holy Roman") realm. Musical academies with their brilliant orchestral adornments became a site of conspicuous aristocratic, then (beginning in the 1770s) public, musical consumption throughout the Empire. Though practiced and supported elsewhere, and although it had other centers (notably Paris), the concert symphony became the Austrian genre *par excellence*, and the virtuoso orchestra (also emulated in Paris) became an Austrian specialty.

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Mannheim

Carl Stamitz

AN ARMY OF GENERALS

Chapter: CHAPTER 10 Instrumental Music Lifts Off

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

As Lombardy-Venetia marked the Austrian Empire's southern frontier, so the so-called Rhine Palatinate (now part of Bavaria in southern Germany) was its most westerly extension, bordering France. The name goes back to late Roman times, when the title Count Palatine was bestowed on the Emperor's chief vassal in the region, and so it remained under the "Holy Roman" Empire, when the ruler of the region became known as the Elector Palatine, one of the foremost nobles in the whole Hapsburg hierarchy. In the early eighteenth century, the seat of this substantial court was unexpectedly moved from Heidelberg, a large city whose castle had been ravaged during the War of the Spanish Succession, to Mannheim, a small town on the right bank of the Rhine.

A new capital had to be established, which meant building a large palace and equipping it with all the attributes of majesty. The town had no opera house, and so court instrumental music—semiweekly "académies de musique"—suddenly became one of the Elector Palatine's chief vehicles for displays of what sociologists call "quantitative luxury." The court musical establishment grew accordingly by leaps and bounds, especially during the reign of the Elector Carl Theodor (1743–78), himself a musical amateur.

In the seventh year of his reign, there were sixty-one musicians on his payroll. By the last year, when Mozart visited Mannheim and described the place in an enthusiastic letter to his father, there were ninety, of whom no fewer than sixty (many of them famous virtuosos) were members of what was by then the largest, most famous, and by all accounts most accomplished orchestra in Europe. Dr. Burney, another visitor, wrote in 1772 that "there are more solo players and good composers in this than perhaps in any other orchestra; it is an army of generals, equally fit to plan a battle as to fight it."¹ Many of these musical generals—particularly the wind players (including virtuosos of the clarinet, the latest instrument to join the standard orchestral complement)—had been brought in from the easterly portion of the Elector's realm, known as the Upper Palatinate, which bordered on or overlapped with Bohemia, the part of central Europe now known as the Czech Lands. The leader of the band under Carl Theodor, and its very exacting trainer, was a Bohemian violinist and composer named Jan Václav Stamic (1717–57, known in German as Johann Wenzel Stamitz or Steinmetz), whose son Carl (1745–1801) became even more famous than his father. (Carl toured the continent as a violin virtuoso and finally settled in Paris, where he became a favorite at the Concert Spirituel both as performer and as a composer specializing in *symphonies concertantes*, symphonies full of virtuoso solo passages for outstanding members of the orchestra.)



fig. 10-2 Carl Theodor, Elector Palatine, who maintained the Mannheim orchestra at his court.

Under Stamitz senior and his successor Christian Cannabich (1731–98), a native Mannheimer whose conducting Mozart observed and admired, the Palatine orchestra became famous for its quasi-military discipline and the exquisite effects that such discipline enabled. “Its *forte* is a thunderclap,” wrote another visitor, the poet and musical journalist Christian Friedrich Schubart, “its crescendo a cataract, its diminuendo a crystal stream babbling away into the distance, its *piano* a breath of spring.”² The composing members of this band became the virtuoso orchestrators of their day, exploiting all kinds of special effects that acquired nicknames: “rockets” (quick rising passages, often arpeggiated), “steamrollers” (crescendos over ostinatos), and of course the explosive beginning, known as the *premier coup d’archet* (“first stroke of the bow”). Needless to say, Mannheim became a major spawning ground for concert symphonies.

In his short career Stamitz produced about seventy symphonies, of which ten were written in three-part score and are sometimes called “orchestral trios.” The title page of Stamitz’s op. 1, a collection of six such works published in Paris in 1755, reads *Six Sonates à Trois parties concertantes qui sont faites pour Exécuter ou à trois, ou avec toutes l’Orchestre*: “Six sonatas in three solo parts that are made to be performed either as a trio or with the whole orchestra.” In their scoring alternatives these pieces occupied a middle position between chamber music (played,

according to the modern definition, by one player on each part) and orchestra music (played with “doubling” of parts, especially string parts, by as many musicians as desired, and with the bass line doubled at the octave and joined by a continuo keyboard). They could be performed, in other words, either privately or publicly. That was true of many early symphonies, including the one by Sammartini with which we are already familiar, and it was almost always true, too, of works designated “divertimento” or “serenade.” Stamitz’s symphony or orchestra-trio in C minor, the third item in his posthumously published op. 4 (Paris, 1758), is a particularly distinguished yet fully representative example of his practice. All four of its movements are in binary form, and the sequence is similar to that in Sammartini’s symphony: a marchlike first movement, a slower lyrical second, and two suite dances. Stamitz has reversed the order of the concluding pair, so that a stately minuet precedes a rollicking gigue marked *prestissimo*, evidently meant (like many Mannheim finales) as a showpiece of precision execution.

Like many orchestral minuets going all the way back to the time of Lully, the one in Stamitz’s symphony is actually a pair of minuets, played *da capo*. This was a custom that originated in the aristocratic ballroom, where the full set of required dance steps or “figures” came to exceed the number of measures a single dance could reasonably provide. The second of the pair, in a related key and traditionally played by a smaller complement of instruments, was for that reason called the “trio.” The term is redundant in the context of Stamitz’s symphony, which is scored in trio texture throughout. But that just goes to show that it was truly a custom, like the pairing of dances itself. Like many customs, they persisted long after their practical necessity had been obviated and the reason for their existence forgotten.

The gigue finale is an impressively extended composition. Its tonal trajectory embodies a number of interestingly adventurous key relations, including a vagary into E-flat minor, in modern parlance the “parallel minor of the relative major.” Among its admirers, evidently, was Beethoven, who probably encountered Stamitz’s works during his formative years in Bonn, his native town, then another Electoral seat on the Rhine at the western extremity of the Austrian empire, where his father and grandfather before him had served as Electoral court musicians. As we will see in chapter 13, the third movement of Beethoven’s famous Fifth Symphony contains the same unusual modulation to E-flat minor and even contains a perhaps unwitting quotation from Stamitz’s work, the sincerest form of tribute (see Ex. 13-12a–b on p. 719). Stamitz’s work had thus achieved “classic” status; it was a work worthy of study and quotation.

Notes:

(1) Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in Germany, the Netherlands, and United Provinces* (2nd ed., London, 1775), p. 95.

(2) C. F. D. Schubart, *Ideen zu einer Ästhetik der Tonkunst* (Vienna, 1806), p. 130 (describing a performance heard in 1784).

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Symphony

Johann Christian Bach

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach

THE BACH SONS AS “SYMPHONISTS”

Chapter: CHAPTER 10 Instrumental Music Lifts Off

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

Among the other composers of concert symphonies whose works became early classics of the genre were two of J. S. Bach's sons. Johann Christian Bach, a prolific composer of *opera seria* and, later in life, a concert impresario in his own right, naturally gravitated toward the genre as a spinoff from his primary activities. The interchangeability of opera overture and early symphony, both as genres and as terms, is well illustrated by J. C. Bach's popular Symphony in B \flat , op. 18 no. 2. It was originally composed in 1774 as the *sinfonia avanti l'opera* preceding Bach's *Lucio Silla*. Publication followed seven years later in London, in a set entitled “Six Grand Overtures,” of which two others were actual operatic sinfonias and the remaining three were symphonies composed for concert use. The use of the word “overture” to refer to what we now call symphonies persisted in London to the end of the century.

Bach's *Lucio Silla* was first performed in November 1775, at the court of Mannheim, which by then boasted a major opera house. (The libretto had already been set three years earlier by Mozart for performance in Milan.) The orchestra for which it was written, then, was the very same Mannheim orchestra whose feats of virtuoso concert execution had become legend. Bach's symphony (or “overture”) can thus serve as an illustration of the fabled Mannheim style. The tempo marking, *allegro assai*, is already a mark of confidence in the band's virtuosity. The scoring is rich, with ten wind parts including clarinets, a Mannheim specialty. The first sound heard, a loud tutti on the tonic triad rhythmically repeated four times, is the redoubtable *premier coup d'archet*. It is immediately (and typically) contrasted with a quiet or “charming” passage for the three upper string parts, after which the two violins reapproach the fanfare through a quick rising passage marked with a crescendo—in other words, a “rocket.” All of this is shown in Ex. 10-2b.

The festive fanfare mood is maintained throughout. (The ending—the “*dernier coup d'archet*,” so to speak—is an even more emphatic paraphrase of the beginning.) While clearly organized around the binary (tonic/dominant) axis, the form of the piece is somewhat nonchalant, with the “double return” preceding rather than following the main modulatory section. The latter rather unusually includes a cadence on IV (E \flat), possibly chosen for the same reason it was often avoided by other composers: like the tonic and the dominant, the subdominant is another major triad, no farther away from the tonic than the dominant along the circle of fifths (but in the opposite direction). Thus it offers little in the way of variety or adventure, but in compensation it continually reinforces the festive fanfare affect (Ex. 10-2b). The piece is an unmitigated celebration (of the Electoral presence in the opera house, of the London customers in the stalls) and an unclouded entertainment. As well as any compositions of their kind, J. C. Bach's symphonies (like those of Carl Friedrich Abel, his London business partner) uphold the ideal of high-class party music, transferred to a public occasion.

It is therefore especially interesting to compare them with the symphonies of his older half-brother Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach. Like his father, C. P. E. Bach never wrote an opera (hence never wrote a *sinfonia avanti l'opera*), yet he nevertheless contributed some twenty symphonies to the burgeoning orchestral repertoire, mostly rather late in his career. Many of them exhibit the stern and stormy, harmonically restless and unpredictable idiom identified in chapter 8 as the *empfindsamer Stil*, the “sentimental” or “pathetic” style—a style reserved, as CPE put it himself, *für Kenner und Liebhaber* (“for connoisseurs and amateurs” of the art), not for the average partygoer.

Allegro assai

Fl. *f*

Ob. *f*

Cl. *f*

Bn. *f* a2

Hn. *f*

Vln. I *f* *p*

Vln. II *f* *p*

Vla. *f* *p* div.

Vc., Cb. *f*

ex. 10-2a J. C. Bach, Sinfonia, Op. 18, no. 2, mm. 1–7

Six of Emanuel's symphonies, scored for strings alone, were composed in 1773 on commission from Baron van Swieten, the Vienna antiquarian, who absolutely personified the connoisseur-amateur type. Another set of four, composed in 1776 when the composer was sixty-two, was dedicated to Prince Frederick William of Prussia, the nephew and eventual successor of Emanuel's old patron, King Frederick the Great. The younger Frederick was an enthusiastic and skilled cellist who if it were possible would have outdone his flute-playing uncle in arts patronage.

The 1776 symphonies were published in Leipzig in 1780 with a curious title page that somewhat oversold them as *Orchester-Sinfonien* ("Orchestral symphonies," as if there were another kind) and advertised the fact that they were scored *mit 12 obligaten Stimmen*, that is, in twelve instrumental parts, all of which take solo passages and hence cannot be omitted. In many early symphonies, including some by CPE, the wind parts were an optional harmonic reinforcement and filler that merely took over the function of the continuo keyboard, which it tended to replace until the orchestra, by the end of the eighteenth century, was generally continuo-free. That is why in the eighteenth century wind ensembles were often called "Harmonie," as in the partita by Druschetzky encountered earlier on a Viennese concert program. In C. P. E. Bach's "Orchester-Sinfonien," the wind scoring is elaborately detailed and virtuosic, and there are many passages where the continuo "flügel" (keyboard) is explicitly suppressed. This was an extremely, indeed self-consciously modern style of orchestration, all the more remarkable in view of the composer's age and his relative aloofness from the theater.

The first movement from the first of these symphonies shows off Emanuel's singular symphonic style at full potency. The orchestra is handled brilliantly, and in a way that especially dramatizes the "symphonic binary" form. The solo wind writing is contrasted strategically with the continuoless strings. It is the latter group—two violins, viola, and cello without double bass support or keyboard—that get to play the rhythmically agitated and tonally

inconclusive opening theme (Ex. 10-3a). (Note particularly the use of the C-natural, which turns the tonic into the "V of IV" before it has even had a chance to establish itself through a cadence.) A stressful tutti, erupting in diminished-seventh chords, makes a headlong dash to the contrasting (dominant) key; and when that key arrives, the solo winds enter with a placid, harmonically stable theme of their own, creating a maximum of contrast with the earlier music (Ex. 10-3b).

The musical score for Ex. 10-3b is a tutti section for a symphony. It features the following instruments and parts:

- Fl. (Flute):** Starts with a tenor dynamic (*ten.*) and forte (*f*) in the first measure. In the second measure, it is silent. In the third measure, it enters with a tenor dynamic (*ten.*) and forte (*f*), marked *a2*.
- Ob. (Oboe):** Starts with a tenor dynamic (*ten.*) and forte (*f*) in the first measure. In the second measure, it is silent. In the third measure, it enters with a tenor dynamic (*ten.*) and forte (*f*).
- Cl. (Clarinet):** Starts with a tenor dynamic (*ten.*) and forte (*f*) in the first measure. In the second measure, it is silent. In the third measure, it enters with a tenor dynamic (*ten.*) and forte (*f*), marked *a2*.
- Bn. (Bassoon):** Starts with a tenor dynamic (*ten.*) and forte (*f*) in the first measure. In the second measure, it is silent. In the third measure, it enters with a tenor dynamic (*ten.*) and forte (*f*), marked *a2*.
- Hn. (Horn):** Starts with a tenor dynamic (*ten.*) and forte (*f*) in the first measure. In the second measure, it is silent. In the third measure, it enters with a tenor dynamic (*ten.*) and forte (*f*).
- Vln. I (Violin I):** Starts with a tenor dynamic (*ten.*) and forte (*f*) in the first measure. In the second measure, it plays a melodic line starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic. In the third measure, it returns to a tenor dynamic (*ten.*) and forte (*f*).
- Vln. II (Violin II):** Starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic in the first measure. In the second measure, it plays a melodic line starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic. In the third measure, it returns to a forte (*f*) dynamic.
- Vla. (Viola):** Starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic in the first measure. In the second measure, it plays a melodic line starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic. In the third measure, it returns to a forte (*f*) dynamic.
- Vc., Cb. (Cello/Double Bass):** Starts with a tenor dynamic (*ten.*) and forte (*f*) in the first measure. In the second measure, it is silent. In the third measure, it enters with a tenor dynamic (*ten.*) and forte (*f*).

Fl. *ten.*
f

Ob. *ten.*
f

Cl. *ten.*
f

Bn. *ten.*
f a2

Hn. *ten.*
f

Vln. I *p* *ten.*
f

Vln. II *p* *f* *p* *f*

Vla. *p* *f* *p* *f*

Vc., Cb. *f* *f*

ex. 10-2b J. C. Bach, Sinfonia, Op. 18, no. 2, mm. 81–87

Allegro di molto

Vln. I *mf*

Vln. II *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Vc. *mf*

Ob. solo

Bn. solo

Ob.

Bn.

Fl. solo

Ob.

Bn.

Vln. I *p*

Vln. II *p*

ex. 10-3a C. P. E. Bach, first Orchestral Symphony (Wotquenne. 183; 1776), mm. 1-19

ex. 10-3b C. P. E. Bach, first Orchestral Symphony
(Wotquenne. 183; 1776), mm. 35–48

This strongly established contrast serves as a compass for the listener as the movement proceeds, since the composer's efforts seem mainly bent on maintaining an impetuous momentum, and incorporating a maximum of surface diversity, deployed with fantasialike (that is, unpredictable) caprice. Although the form is recognizably binary, there is no double bar dividing the two sections, and no repeats. Instead, the opening theme (associated with the continuous strings) serves as a formal marker, somewhat in the manner of a ritornello. It resurfaces in the dominant at the halfway point, to set the tonal trajectory on its complicated homeward path, and again when the home key is reached (m. 136), providing the crucial “double return.”

Although the recurrences of the opening theme thus provide an orientation point, its harmonic instability lends the whole movement a tonally precarious (hence emotionally fraught) aspect. The only points of harmonic repose are the contrasting wind solos, the first confirming arrival in the dominant and the second reconfirming the tonic. The obligato wind theme is thus given a unique function in the movement's unfolding. The rigorous contrast in timbres—solo strings versus solo winds—reinforces a thematic dualism that reflects and dramatizes the tonal dualism on which this movement, like any binary movement, is constructed.

Thematic dualism of this kind would eventually become such an important ingredient of standard symphonic procedure as virtually to define it. Textbook descriptions of "sonata form" would eventually identify thematic dualism as its procedural basis. As we can see from this example, however, thematic dualism arose as an epiphenomenon—a surface event—to mirror, and thus to dramatize (as well as clarify), the underlying harmonic basis of the form.

The image displays a musical score for a symphony, featuring nine staves. The instruments are: Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Bassoon (Bn.), Horn (Hn.), Violin I (Vn. I), Violin II (Vn. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Bassoon/Contrabass (B.C.). The score is written in a key signature of two sharps (D major or F# minor) and a 3/4 time signature. The first three measures are shown. The Flute, Oboe, and Horn parts are mostly silent, indicated by rests. The Bassoon part begins with a melodic line starting on G4, moving to A4, B4, and C5. The Violin I and II parts play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The Viola part plays a similar rhythmic pattern. The Violoncello part plays a melodic line starting on G2, moving to A2, B2, and C3. The Bassoon/Contrabass part plays a melodic line starting on G2, moving to A2, B2, and C3. The dynamic marking *p* (piano) is present in the Bassoon, Violin I, Violin II, and Viola parts. The score is numbered 6 and 5 at the bottom.

The image displays a page of a musical score for a symphony, featuring nine staves. The instruments are: Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Bassoon (Bn.), Horn (Hn.), Violin I (Vn. I), Violin II (Vn. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Bassoon/Contrabassoon (B.C.). The score is written in a key signature of two sharps (D major or F# minor) and a 4/2 time signature. The first two staves (Fl. and Ob.) have a dynamic marking of *f* and a slur over the first two measures. The Bassoon staff (Bn.) also has a dynamic marking of *f*. The Horn staff (Hn.) has a dynamic marking of *f*. The Violin I and Violin II staves (Vn. I and Vn. II) have dynamic markings of *f*, *ff*, and *pp*. The Viola and Violoncello staves (Vla. and Vc.) have dynamic markings of *f*, *ff*, and *pp*. The Bassoon/Contrabassoon staff (B.C.) has dynamic markings of *f*, *ff*, and *pp*, and includes the instruction "rasto" in the third measure. The score is divided into measures, with a 4/2 time signature indicated at the bottom left and a 6/2 time signature indicated at the bottom center.

The image displays a musical score for C. P. E. Bach's first Orchestral Symphony, measures 206-17. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with the following parts from top to bottom: Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Bassoon (Bn.), Horn (Hn.), Violin I (Vn. I), Violin II (Vn. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Bassoon/Contrabassoon (B.C.). The key signature is D major (two sharps), and the time signature is common time. The score shows a dramatic harmonic shift at the end of the movement, where the D major tonic dissolves into the dominant of E-flat major. The woodwinds and strings play sustained notes, while the strings have a more active, rhythmic part.

ex. 10-3c C. P. E. Bach, first Orchestral Symphony (Wotquenue. 183; 1776), mm. 206–17

The most spectacular display of harmonic instability comes at the very end of the movement (Ex. 10-3c), when the D major tonic suddenly dissolves without warning into the dominant of E-flat, the key of the next movement. It seems a radical, tonality-defying effect—so radical, in fact, that we might easily forget its many precedents. Those precedents are found in the opera, particularly the comic opera with its *introduzioni* and *finali*, long sections that depend for their continuity on the ability to make many kinds of transition—abrupt or graded, as the situation demands—between keys. In connection with C. P. E. Bach's symphony we might recall the end of the *Don Giovanni* overture, which dissolves in an almost identical way into the dominant of Leporello's first aria.

Thus the opera continues, even in the hands of a non-operatic composer like C. P. E. Bach, to provide the concert symphony with its most important precedents. In its most elaborated form, the new genre was a veritable—or better, a virtual—instrumental drama.

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Oxford History of Western Music: Richard Taruskin

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Franz Joseph Haydn

Haydn: Orchestral music

HAYDN

Chapter: CHAPTER 10 Instrumental Music Lifts Off

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

By far the most influential—and in that sense the most important—composer of symphonies in the mid-to-late eighteenth century was (Franz) Joseph Haydn (1732–1809), who in two momentous ways established the genre for posterity. First, by creating an unusually large and impressive body of works in the genre that became the object of widespread emulation, Haydn did more by his example than any other composer to standardize the “classical” symphony, as it has come to be called. And second, by once and for all taking the genre out of the aristocratic salon and into the public sphere, Haydn considerably enlarged both its dimensions and its cultural significance, and laid the foundation for the modern concert repertory, in which several of his symphonies are still staples.

He did not do these things singlehandedly, or by sheer force of will, or even intentionally, as the word is usually understood, but in miraculous symbiosis with his times—that is, by adapting with phenomenal success to the changing social conditions of his time, and the concomitantly changing social role of musicians. The word “miraculous” seems appropriate because Haydn’s great success seems to have been owed in equal measure to talent—for music, to be sure, but also for seizing opportunities—and to luck. The luck would not have done a less gifted and avid man any comparable good, but without it talent and productivity alone would never have sufficed. Haydn’s great good fortune has become ours, for we have inherited its results.

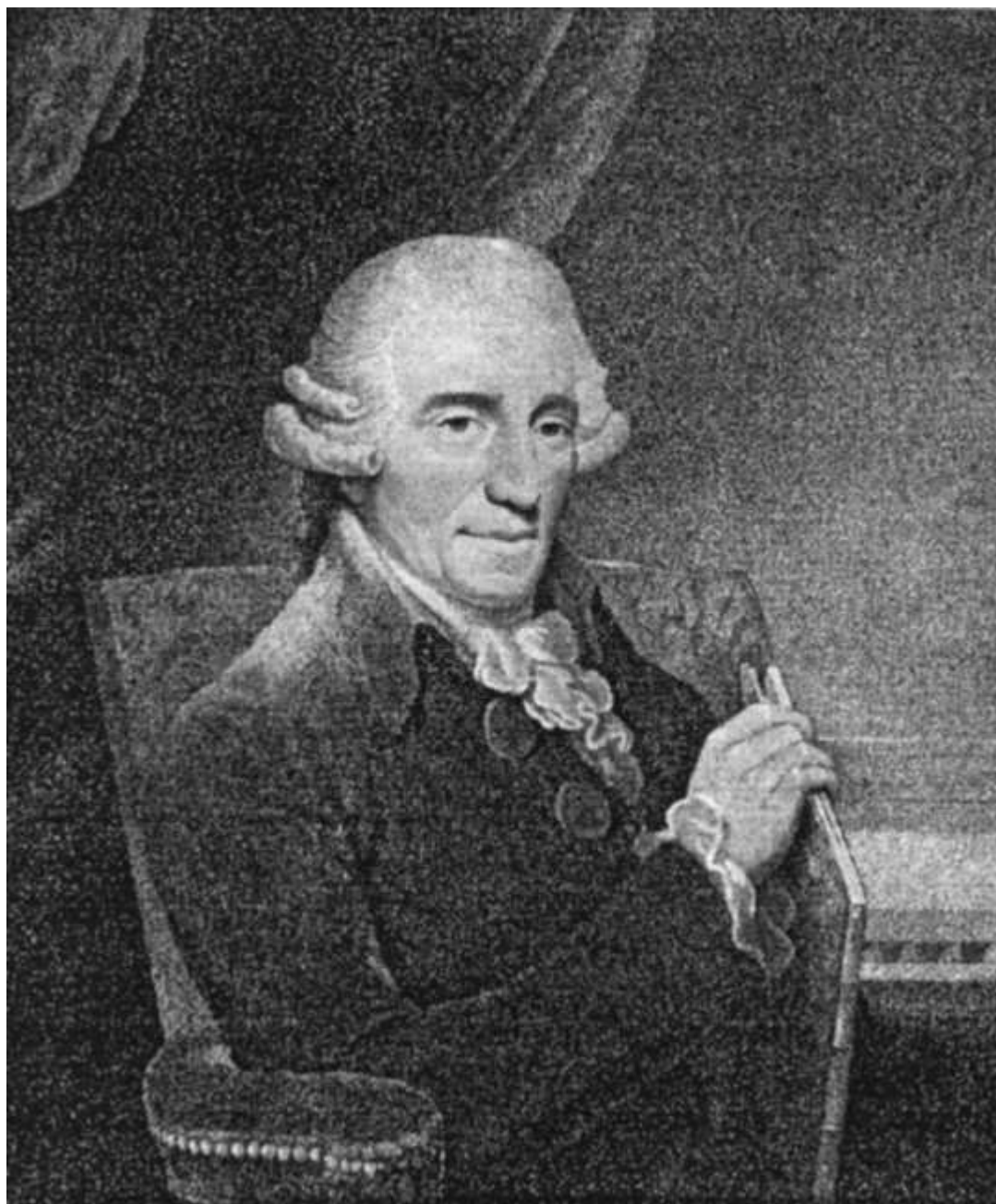


fig. 10-3 Franz Joseph Haydn at the height of his fame, engraved by Thomas Bush Hardy “from an Original Picture in the Possession of J. Bland” (i.e., John Bland, the London publisher).

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Haydn: Background, childhood, choirboy, 1732–c1749

Haydn: Vienna, c1750–61

THE PERFECT CAREER

Chapter: CHAPTER 10 Instrumental Music Lifts Off

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

Perhaps the most vivid measure of that synergy of capacity and contingency is the fact that Haydn was (like Handel) what we would now call a self-made man—a very modern sort of hero, the story of whose career reads a bit like an inspirational novel by Horatio Alger. Unlike the Bachs, unlike Mozart, and unlike Beethoven, Haydn was not born into an established musical family. His father was a village wheelwright in southeastern Austria near the border of what was then considered Hungary but is now Croatia. Though a master craftsman, the elder Haydn (unlike Handel's father, a prosperous surgeon) was neither a highly educated nor a particularly well-to-do man, and there was no way in the world that his son's future career could have been predicted. Haydn was acutely aware of the distance his talent and good fortune had taken him. To one of his several contemporary biographers, Albert Christoph Dies, the venerable composer offered himself as an inspiration to the young, "who may see from my example that something may indeed come from nothing."³ And his modern biographer, H. C. Robbins Landon, cast his whole enterprise as an enlargement of that remark, tracing "the life of a boy who began in abject poverty, half-trained and largely self-educated, who rose to be the leading musical figure of Europe by the 1790s and achieved greater popularity in his own lifetime than any composer before him," becoming in the process the wealthiest of all pre-twentieth-century professional musicians (Handel alone excepted), and an expert courtier, at home in high society and even "gently manipulating Princes of the Holy Roman Empire."⁴

The immediate result of Haydn's first sign of talent was his removal from his family. At the age of six he was sent to live with a cousin, Franck by name, who worked as a schoolmaster and church choirmaster in a neighboring town. There he had his only formal schooling—reading, writing, and catechism, besides the rudiments of music. By the age of eight he was earning his own keep as a musician, at first as a choirboy at St. Stephen's Cathedral, the main Viennese church, where he had been brought by a passing nobleman who had happened to hear him sing: his first stroke of luck. His solo singing brought Haydn while still a child to the attention of the Empress Maria Theresa, but his success as a church singer was short-lived. When his voice broke (not until the age of seventeen, as was usual in those days owing to a diet that would now be thought of as malnourishing), Haydn lost his place as soloist in the choir to his own younger brother Johann Michael (1737–1806), who also made a distinguished career as a composer, though nothing like Joseph's.



fig. 10-4 St. Stephen's cathedral, Vienna, in 1792.

A rather terrible time followed—years of near-starvation in Vienna, where Haydn studied voraciously, gave lessons to children, and took any musical odd job that came his way, like playing violin for a pittance in street-music entertainments—serenades, cassations, and the like. Among the books he studied were Fux's *Gradus ad Parnassum*, the bible of the *stile antico* (that is, strict counterpoint), and C. P. E. Bach's "Prussian" sonatas, which we sampled two chapters back (Ex. 8-3), and which had a decided influence on Haydn's style. He also apprenticed himself for a while to Nicola Porpora (1686–1768), a famous Italian opera composer and singing teacher, who lived in Vienna between 1753 and 1760. In return for instruction Haydn accompanied Porpora's pupils at their lessons and (as he told his biographers) shined his master's boots.

Haydn's earliest compositions date from this wretched period, and all of them, a few church pieces excepted, were merry entertainments composed for ready market consumption. They included singspiels of the most plebeian sort, roughly on the order of Punch-and-Judy skits (or Hanswurst—"Johnny Sausage"—shows, as they were known in Vienna). The music for these carnival frolics is lost, or perhaps preserved anonymously, but the titles of two of them are known: *Der krumme Teufel* ("The foxy devil") and *Der neue krumme Teufel* (roughly, "A new foxy-devil show"). First performed in 1753 and 1757 respectively in the Kärntnerthor Theater, the official German-language (i.e., lower-class) house, they became very popular and gave Haydn his first local celebrity.

Another early success came in the form of instrumental works that straddled the nebulous line between orchestral and chamber music, presaging that vast portion of Haydn's output on which his historical reputation now rests. At various times Haydn called them cassations, at other times nocturni, at still others divertimenti. Six were published with a title page that called them "Sinfonies ou Quatuors" (Symphonies or Quartets). The product of the years 1757–58, they are now classified in most lists of Haydn's works as his earliest string quartets (opus 1 and opus 2), because their four parts are earmarked for two violins, viola, and "basso," which could mean cello.

There is no reason why they could not be performed, like Stamitz's "orchestra-trios," with doubled parts, however; and the designation "basso" could certainly be read as implying the participation of a continuo. Nor is the addition of supplementary wind parts out of the question: manuscript sources of uncertain origin so equip some of them. The only thing one can say with certainty is that these works, along with a few others that are scored in three and five parts, stand at the beginning of Haydn's production of instrumental concert music, the field that he would decisively transform and standardize, in the process finally distinguishing between chamber and orchestral genres as we know them today.

Haydn's op. 1 and op. 2 must have been highly adaptable to varying combinations of instruments, because they were best sellers, circulating as far south as Naples and as far north (and east) as Königsberg (now the Russian city of Kaliningrad). They even found their way to North America when the Moravian composer Johann Friedrich Peter (1746–1813), who had copied them out, settled in Pennsylvania in 1770. (Peter himself would make a contribution to the chamber divertimento genre with a set of string quintets, composed in Salem, North Carolina in 1789: the first chamber music composed on American soil.)

Their symmetrical or palindromic sequence of five movements—fast "sonata form"/minuet-&-trio /slow/minuet-&-trio/fast finale—was typical of Viennese street music, but when performed by four solo strings the works were ideally suitable for home recreation as well. Haydn was again showing an understanding of the emergent music market, a business sense that would have marked him out for a successful freelance career if need be.

But he did not need it. On the strength of these early successes, Haydn found a permanent position as music director (Kapellmeister) in (or "to") a noble household. Such a position—essentially that of a highly regarded and somewhat privileged domestic servant—may appear demeaning to us, with our romantic notion of what an "artist" is. It was, however, the very best fate to which a professional musician in mid-eighteenth-century Vienna could aspire, unless, like Mozart, he was a performing virtuoso (as Haydn was not). In addition to a relatively high salary, a musician who landed such a post was given free lodging and board at the equivalent of an officers' mess. It was, especially by contrast with Haydn's former plight, a bountiful, carefree existence.

This stroke of good fortune befell Haydn in 1759, when he was hired by Count Karl Joseph Franz von Morzin (1717–83), a Bohemian aristocrat who maintained a huge residence in Vienna during the winters, as well as a family summer estate called Lukavec, near the Czech town of Plzen (Pilsen in German), famous for its breweries. The title of Kapellmeister originally meant "chapel master" (that is, choirmaster), but in secular courts and homes it meant director of musical entertainments. The post put Haydn in charge of an orchestra, and it was for this band that he wrote (or adapted) his first real symphonies.

There are seven such pieces dating from the Morzin period. They include the first five in the standard list of Haydn's symphonies, totaling 104, first drawn up early in the twentieth century, since which time two more have been unearthed. With two exceptions these early symphonies are three-movement works on the old *sinfonia avanti l'opera* model: a fast "symphonic binary" movement, a slow movement, and a dancelike finale, usually a gigue (less often a minuet). Of the two four-movement symphonies, one (no. 3 in G major) is cast in the format that Haydn would later establish as the norm: (1) symphonic binary, (2) slow, (3) minuet & trio, (4) fast finale. The other (no. 5 in A major) seems to be descended from the old church sonata. Its first movement is an Adagio, followed by an Allegro, both in binary form; then comes a minuet and trio; last a Presto finale in duple meter and binary form. Movement sequence was as yet a fluid affair.

What is already remarkably consistent, though, is Haydn's personal manner of inflecting the "symphonic binary" or "sonata" form: like the four-movement sequence of Symphony no. 3, it would eventually become standard practice thanks to his example. Let the first movement of Symphony "A" (Ex. 10-4), one of the recently discovered pieces and possibly the earliest of the lot, serve as prototype.

The special Haydnesque features are two. First, the movement's closing section, beginning with the "double return,"

closely parallels or recapitulates the whole opening section to the first double bar theme by theme, with only such truncations and adjustments as are necessary to keep the whole closing section in the tonic key rather than modulating again to the dominant. Second, the lengthy passage (Ex. 10-4a) extending from the first double bar to the double return, embodying the most radical tonal trajectory in the movement (from dominant to FOP to retransition), is quite rigorously, and very ingeniously, based melodically on motives drawn from the themes heard in the opening section. They are recombined, sequentially extended or otherwise paraphrased, using techniques collectively described in German by the term *thematische Arbeit* (“thematic work”), for which “development” is the word commonly employed in English.

43 Allegro

Ob.

Hn.
in B \flat

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.,
Cb.
Bn.

The image shows a musical score for measures 43-45, marked 'Allegro'. The score is for a symphony orchestra. The instruments listed are Oboe (Ob.), Horn in B-flat (Hn. in B \flat), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello/Double Bass (Vc., Cb., Bn.). The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into three measures. In measure 43, the Oboe and Horns are silent. The Violin I part begins with a quarter note G4, followed by eighth notes A4 and B4. The Violin II part is silent. The Viola and Violoncello/Double Bass parts play a steady eighth-note accompaniment. In measure 44, the Oboe and Horns remain silent. The Violin I part has a sixteenth-note triplet (C5, D5, E5) followed by a quarter rest. The Violin II part has a quarter note G4, followed by eighth notes A4 and B4. The Viola and Violoncello/Double Bass parts continue their accompaniment. In measure 45, the Oboe and Horns remain silent. The Violin I part has a quarter note G4, followed by eighth notes A4 and B4. The Violin II part has a sixteenth-note triplet (C5, D5, E5) followed by a quarter rest. The Viola and Violoncello/Double Bass parts continue their accompaniment.

The image displays a musical score for three systems, spanning measures 46 to 54. Each system consists of five staves: two vocal staves (Soprano and Alto) and three piano staves (Right Hand, Middle Bass, and Left Hand). The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and ornaments. Measure 46 shows the vocal staves with rests and the piano accompaniment beginning with a rhythmic pattern. Measure 50 features a vocal line with a slur and a fermata. Measure 54 includes a vocal line with a slur and a fermata, and a piano accompaniment with a complex rhythmic pattern.

The image displays a musical score for a piece in G minor, spanning measures 58 to 62. The score is arranged in a system with five staves. The top staff is the vocal line, followed by two staves for a string quartet (Violin I, Violin II, and Viola). The bottom two staves are for the piano accompaniment (Right and Left Hand). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). Measure 58 shows the vocal line with a melodic phrase, while the piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. Measure 61 includes a fermata over the vocal line, and measure 62 shows the vocal line with a final cadence. The piano accompaniment continues with a steady eighth-note pattern.

69

73

76

p

pp

ex. 10-4a Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony "A," I, mm. 43–79

Allegro

f

NB

ex. 10-4b Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony "A," I, mm. 1–4

ex. 10-4c Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony “A,” I, mm. 31–37

ex. 10-4d Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony “A,” I, mm. 23–27

Thus, to pick some examples, the figure tossed back and forth by the two violin parts in mm. 43–49 turns out to be a conflation of the first measure of the opening arpeggio or “rocket” (Ex. 10-4b) and a sixteenth-note turn from the quiet “second theme” in the dominant (Ex. 10-4c). The figure that elaborates the FOP (G minor or *vi*) in mm. 62–64 is drawn from the earlier transition to the dominant (Ex. 10-4d). The passage leading to the retransition (mm. 68–79) is a paraphrase of Ex. 10-4c.

In terms of its thematic or melodic content, then, Haydn’s version of the “symphonic binary” form is articulated in three distinct parts, the first coinciding with the first harmonic “paragraph” of the binary form (I→V), and the second and third Haydnesque parts together comprising the second binary paragraph (V→I). The first and the last parts being similar in thematic content and sequence, they are often termed the exposition and the recapitulation. The middle part, containing the redeployment of motives originally “exposed” (or is it expounded?) in the first part, is often termed the development section in English. (The corresponding term in German, *Mittelsatz*, although it simply means the “middle section,” carries the equivalent meaning when used in this context.)

This thematic structure—exposition, development, recapitulation—is obviously related to the old *da capo* aria form, from which it derives its very satisfying stability. What it amounts to is a sort of flexible “ternary” overlay coexisting with and reinforcing the binary harmonic structure. The relationship between the two elements—the three-part thematic structure and the two-part harmonic structure—could be endlessly varied. Its combination of flexibility and solidity, or (to put it another way) of complexity and clarity, made the resulting “sonata form” or “sonata-allegro form” or “first-movement form” (to give three terms now in common use to denote it) one of the most adaptable.

durable, and potentially eloquent formal procedures ever devised for instrumental music in all media, from solo sonata to orchestral symphony or overture. It was largely thanks to this happy synthesis—and to Haydn, the synthesizer in chief—that instrumental music would enjoy a triumphant (and unforeseen) career over the next two centuries that in a curiously fitting way paralleled the course of Haydn's own life: from poor relation to dominant force. It too was a sort of Horatio Alger tale.

Notes:

(3) A. C. Dies, interview with Haydn, 15 April 1805; in Dies, A. C. Dies: *Biographische Nachrichten von Joseph Haydn* (Vienna, 1810), p. 17.

(4) H. C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*, Vol. I (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), p. 11.

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Oxford History of Western Music: Richard Taruskin

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Haydn: Esterházy court, 1761–90

Esterházy

THE ESTERHÁZY YEARS

Chapter: CHAPTER 10 Instrumental Music Lifts Off

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

It might never have happened if Haydn had not had his next and biggest break, through which he was able to develop his gifts, and the media through which he exercised them, to the fullest. On 1 May 1761, still in his twenties, Haydn signed a contract as “Vice-Capellmeister in the service of his Serene Highness Paul Anton, Prince of the Holy Roman Empire, of Esterháza and Galantha, etc. etc.” The benevolent patronage Haydn thus secured would last nearly five decades, to the end of his life. Three of the five decades were spent in active, and well-nigh incredibly fertile, Kapellmeisterly duty, the remaining two as a pensioned, still tirelessly creative, world celebrity.

The Esterházy family was the foremost princely house of Hungary. Their preeminence went back about a century before Haydn went to work for them, to the grandfather of the Prince who signed Haydn on, also named Paul, who was elected to the office of Hungarian Palatine in 1681, distinguished himself in the defense of Vienna against the forces of Suleiman the Magnificent two years later, and led the ensuing reconquest of Hungary from the Ottoman Turks, for which he was created a hereditary Prince of the Holy Roman Empire in 1687. This was the highest rank to which a nonmember of the house of Hapsburg could be admitted. It thus placed the Esterházy Princes on a level exceeded within the Empire only by the Imperial family itself. Not even the Elector Palatine at Mannheim could compete with them in noble standing.

With that standing went a commensurately heroic standard of living, entailing a household and a court second only to the Emperor’s—or Empress’s, for throughout most of the years of Haydn’s active service the effective Austrian ruler was the dowager Empress Maria Theresa, who occasionally visited her near peer Prince Esterházy and thus got a Haydn symphony (no. 48 in C, with trumpets and drums) named after her. At the time of Haydn’s employment the Prince had two main residences, the Palais Esterházy in Vienna, and the ancestral estate at Eisenstadt (Kismarton in Hungarian), on the western shore of Lake Neusiedl in Burgenland, the easternmost province of present-day Austria.

The Esterházy musical establishment was huge, and almost immediately after Haydn’s employment was secured it grew beyond all imagining—not simply because of Haydn’s presence on the payroll but because Prince Paul Anton was succeeded in 1762 by his brother Nikolaus Joseph, known as *der Prachtliebende* (“The magnificent,” or more literally, “The ostentatious”), a fanatical music lover who built the gorgeous Eszterháza summer palace at the southern end of the lake, just where present-day Austria abuts present-day Hungary. Construction of this mini-Versailles was begun in 1766, just as Haydn acceded to the post of chief Kapellmeister for the Esterházy court on the death of his predecessor Gregor Joseph Werner. The whole estate, replete with parks, fountains, pleasure pavilions, and servant houses, was not completed until 1784, six years before Nikolaus’s death. Bombed out and rebuilt after the Second World War, it is now maintained as a museum by the Hungarian government (see Fig. 10-5).

The Eszterháza palace compound contained two theaters, one for opera and the other for marionette plays. In addition there were two concert rooms in the palace itself, a large hall that could accommodate an orchestra and an audience to match, and a smaller chamber for what is (yes, for that reason) known as chamber music. Haydn’s duties, reminiscent of Bach’s in Leipzig, included the supervision of a regular round of performances—one opera and two concerts a week, as specified by the contract, with additional major performances for important guests like the Empress, and daily chamber music at the Prince’s pleasure—as well as composition. It is no wonder that his output, like Bach’s, has proved to be literally innumerable.



fig. 10-5 Main gate of the summer palace at Eszterháza (now Fertőd, Hungary).

For the princely theaters Haydn composed some twenty Italian operas, mostly comic, and half a dozen singspiels for the puppet house. For the weekly musicales he composed at least seventy-five of his extant symphonies (a few of them reusing material from the operas) and dozens of divertimenti (mostly published as quartets). But the fairest measure of the pace Haydn had to keep as music-purveyor to his voracious patron would be the music that was ordered *à la carte*, so to speak, “at the Prince’s pleasure,” much of it for the Prince himself to play.



fig. 10-6 Prince Nikolaus Esterhazy's baryton.

Prince Nikolaus was an enthusiast of the baryton (or *viola paradon*), an unusual and unwieldy stringed instrument consisting of a bass viola da gamba with a widened neck that contained a set of wire “sympathetic strings” that mostly resonated with the bowed ones, creating a sort of shimmering harmonic aura surrounding the played melody, but that could also be plucked by the left thumb through a hole in the back of the neck, so that the instrument could provide its own rudimentary bass to accompany the bowed melody (Fig. 10-6). This contraption was used almost exclusively in Austria, where a few virtuosos lived, but it had no literature to speak of. So Haydn had to create one from scratch. Over a rough decade from 1765 to 1776, Haydn furnished Prince Nikolaus with upwards of 175 three-movement divertimenti scored for baryton solo, discreetly accompanied by viola and “basso” (cello). He also composed a quantity of duets for two barytons, which he himself played with the Prince, having learned the instrument on demand, and larger chamber works, many of them birthday serenades for eight instruments, with easy baryton parts for the honoree to play.

But the Prince was not only a ravenous consumer of music, and Haydn was not merely prolific. His employer was also a true *Kenner*, in C. P. E. Bach's phrase, who appreciated, as few of his contemporaries could, the specialness of Haydn's gifts. In what has become one of the most famous of the many reminiscences his biographers have recorded, Haydn reflected on the uniquely auspicious combination of circumstances that enabled his gifts—

particularly his gifts as a “symphonist”—to flourish in the relative isolation of Eisenstadt and Eszterháza. “My prince was content with all my works,” Haydn told Georg August Griesinger, a publisher’s representative, “I received approval for anything I did. As head of an orchestra, I could make experiments, observe what enhanced an effect, and what weakened it, thus improving, adding to it, taking away from it, and running risks. I was cut off from the world, there was nobody in my vicinity to make me unsure of myself or interfere with me in my course, and so I was forced to become original.”⁵

This testimony is an important document of the era of aristocratic patronage, because it attests to the symbiosis between talent and calling, between demand and supply, that could take effect when patronage operated to best advantage. The employer’s needs—whether measured in idealized terms of artistic satisfaction or in crasser terms of blue-blood exhibitionism (*Prachtlieb* or “quantitative luxury”)—were met. And the employee was liberated by his very exploitation, as it were, to develop his skills freely, knowing that the products of their free exercise would translate, from the employer’s standpoint, into uniquely distinguished and valuable possessions.

Haydn’s delight with his new working conditions is apparent in the very first symphonies he wrote for the Esterháazys: a trilogy (nos. 6–8) bearing the subtitles “Morning, Noon, and Night” (*Le Matin, Le Midi, Le Soir*), and overflowing with special instrumental effects that exploited the virtuoso soloists in the orchestra, including *concertante* solo strings. In other pieces, he was very likely stimulated by the actual physical conditions of the halls in which he was privileged to work. The larger concert room was of really exceptional size, with a lengthy reverberation time like that of a church. That may be one reason why early on Haydn began experimenting with augmented orchestras, particularly with a complement of four horns that shows up in several Esterházy symphonies (and is given virtuoso treatment in no. 31, subtitled “Hornsignal”), but did not become standard in orchestras until well into the nineteenth century.

Notes:

(5) Georg August Griesinger, *Biographische Notizen über Joseph Haydn* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1810), p. 17.

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Symphony: 18th century

Haydn: Orchestral music

NORMS AND DEVIATIONS: CREATING MUSICAL MEANING

Chapter: CHAPTER 10 Instrumental Music Lifts Off

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

For an idea of Haydn at his most “original,” and for a glimpse of that symbiosis between courtier-Kapellmeister and patron (leading to what Landon called the former’s “gentle manipulation” of the latter), we can turn to Symphony no. 45, first performed, under very unusual circumstances, at the summer palace in November 1772. November is obviously not a summer month. That is what was so unusual about the circumstances—and, as a result, about the symphony.

Its key alone—F# minor—makes it unique among Haydn’s symphonies and practically unique in the music of its time. (There is no other symphony in F# minor among the 16,000-odd entries in LaRue’s *Union Thematic Catalogue*.) The character of its first movement is worlds away from the “festive fanfare mood” that typified the early concert symphony in keeping with its usual function. In form, too, the movement is famously enigmatic. And the concluding movement is so outlandish that without knowledge of the circumstances of its composition it would be altogether baffling.

The strange and squally first movement, with its uniquely “remote” key and its consequently anomalous timbre (at least when played on the winds and horns of Haydn’s time), is the most extreme representative of a special group of symphonic compositions Haydn produced in the early 1770s, often associated with a similarly frenzied tendency in German drama and literature. The literary movement was known as *Sturm und Drang* (“Storm and stress”) after the subtitle of a sensational play—*Die Wirrwarr* (“Turmoil” or “Confusion,” 1776)—by F. M. von Klinger, a close friend of Goethe, whom he influenced with this work. With its glorification of the “state of nature,” its emphasis on subjective, often violent moods, and its portrayals of social alienation, *Sturm und Drang* (as observed in chapter 8) had obvious affinities with the *Empfindsamkeit* (“Sentimentality”) of earlier German poetry that was directly reflected in the music of C. P. E. Bach, who as we know had a formative influence on Haydn’s style. The *Sturm und Drang* movement also led, or fed, into the main stream of Romanticism that would soon engulf European art, and for the first time put German artists at the forefront of European culture.

Allegro assai

2 Ob.
Hn. in A
Hn. in E

Allegro assai

I
Vin.
II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.
Bn.

Piano

ex. 10-5a Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 45 in F-sharp minor (“Farewell”), I, mm. 1–16

Its actual connection with Haydn may be disputed; no direct evidence associates the composer with the actual products of the *Sturm und Drang* movement or its leaders. But the character of the opening movement of Symphony no. 45 is undeniably one of turmoil, and Haydn was clearly aiming to give something of the impression through it of a *Wirrwarr*, an emotional confusion. The unremitting syncopations in the accompaniment to the opening theme (Ex. 10-5a) are one symptom of this. A far more significant symptom, however, is the eccentric treatment given the sonata form. The contrasting second theme comes not before but after the double bar and is cast in neither the dominant nor the relative major, the “normal,” therefore expectable (hence expressively neutral), alternate keys in a minor-mode movement.

(Those keys had already had their own little drama in the movement. As a look at the score will confirm, the relative major was deliberately prepared and avoided in mm. 37–38 by a sudden feint: the substitution of C-natural for C-sharp, changing A major to A minor. The actual sectional cadence takes place in C-sharp minor, the “minor dominant,” but is contradicted on the other side of the double bar by another sudden feint: a switch to A major, the key originally expected and deferred.) The key of the lyrical “second theme” in this movement (Ex. 10-5b) is actually that of the FOP (D major, the submediant). This is perhaps the most serious departure from the conventions of sonata form as practiced (and established) by Haydn himself, according to which the FOP is to be reached through *thematische Arbeit* not suddenly introduced by way of arbitrarily invented material. (It is true, by the way, that the

theme in question bears some small if demonstrable resemblance to a motive in the exposition, and the resemblance has been cited by those who prefer to explain away its strangeness. But one has to hunt for it; the motivic relationship is only putative. By contrast, there is no need to hunt for the strangeness; it stares you challengingly in the face.)

The image displays a musical score for Franz Joseph Haydn's Symphony no. 45 in F-sharp minor, first movement, measures 108-15. The score is written for piano and consists of two systems of three staves each. The key signature is F-sharp minor (three sharps) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system shows the beginning of the theme in the first staff, marked 'p'. The second system shows the continuation of the theme, marked 'pp' in the first and second staves. The music is characterized by its 'bassless' initial scoring and its enigmatic, mirage-like quality.

ex. 10-5b Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 45 in F-sharp minor (“Farewell”), I, mm. 108–15

As if that were not enough, this placidly beautiful D-major theme is approached and left not by transitions but by pauses on either side. It has the air of an intrusion, not a development, further set off from its surroundings by its “bassless” initial scoring. And it comes to no cadence: rather, it seems (by the use of an arpeggiated diminished-seventh chord) to dissolve into thin air (like a mirage, as the Haydn specialist James Webster has suggested). There can be no question that this music is deliberately enigmatic. It is so because it departs for no apparent reason from what had become accepted norms of composition (that is, of behavior) by the time it was written—especially at the Esterházy court, where Haydn’s music was especially familiar. As the saying goes, Haydn was honoring the norms he had created “in the breach,” and could only have been expecting his audience to notice the fact and be bewildered.

Menuet
Allegretto

2 Ob. *f*

2 Hn. in Ft. *f*

Vln. I *f*

Vln. II *f*

Vla. *f*

Vc., Cb., Bn. *f*

f

p *f*

f

f

ex. 10-5c Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 45 in F-sharp minor (“Farewell”), III, mm. 1–12

From this example one might generalize further about the use and purposes of compositional “norms,” so many of which can be credited to Haydn. One of their main uses—and purposes—is revealed precisely in departures from them like this one. In other words, norms are not laws that must be adhered to simply for the sake of coherence or intelligibility, although that is their primary purpose. Absolutely unchallenged “normality” is perhaps the most boring mode of discourse. One rarely finds it in Haydn, or in any imaginative or interesting composer. Rather it is the existence of norms that allows departures to become meaningful—and thereby expressive. In that sense, rules are indeed made to be broken.

But expressive of what? That is often a teasing question in instrumental music, as we know. An answer must await knowledge of what follows. The idea of leaving a movement “hanging” expressively, to become meaningful only in retrospect, or in conjunction with the other movements, is to create the aspect of a narrative connecting all the movements in the symphony. It both introduces an “extramusical” presence into the content of the work and at the same time binds its constituent parts that much more compellingly into a coordinated, coherent whole. In both of these aspects, Haydn’s symphony was very much a harbinger of a new expressive range, and a new importance, that instrumental music would claim, especially in the German-speaking lands. This, too, was an aspect of German music that tied it to nascent Romanticism, and to Germany’s new position of leadership in European art.

The overall shape of Symphony no. 45 is as strange—and therefore as telling—as that of its first movement. For most of its duration it seems to follow what had for a dozen years been the standard procedure: a fast symphonic binary movement or “sonata allegro,” however eccentric; a slow movement, a minuet and trio, and a finale in Haydn’s favorite meter-tempo combination (Presto in or “cut time”). The keys are closely related to those of the first movement: slow movement in A (relative major); minuet in F# (parallel major), finale in the original key.

Score for strings and woodwinds. The score is written for Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vln. 3, Vln. 4, Vla., Vc., and Cb. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4. The woodwinds (Vln. 2, Vln. 4, Vla., Vc., Cb.) play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, while the violins (Vln. 1, Vln. 3) play a melodic line of quarter notes.

Score for woodwinds and strings. The score is written for Vln. 2, Vln. 4, Vla., Vc., and Cb. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4. The woodwinds (Vln. 2, Vln. 4, Vla., Vc.) play a melodic line of quarter notes, while the strings (Cb.) play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.

System 1: A six-staff musical score. The top two staves are treble clefs, the middle two are alto clefs, and the bottom two are bass clefs. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The music features a complex texture with many accidentals and ties.

System 2: A three-staff musical score. The top two staves are treble clefs and the bottom staff is a bass clef labeled 'Vc.'. The key signature has three sharps and the time signature is 3/4. The music continues with complex rhythmic patterns and accidentals.

System 3: A three-staff musical score. The top two staves are treble clefs and the bottom staff is a bass clef. The key signature has three sharps and the time signature is 3/4. The music continues with complex rhythmic patterns and accidentals.

First system of a musical score. It consists of four staves: a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and two individual staves (treble and bass clefs). The music is in a key with three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 3/4 time signature. The first two staves feature a complex, rhythmic melody with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The bottom two staves provide a harmonic accompaniment with simpler rhythmic patterns.

Second system of the musical score, continuing the piece. The notation and instrumentation remain consistent with the first system, showing further development of the melodic and harmonic lines.

Third system of the musical score. This system includes performance instructions: "con sordino" (with mutes) and "Solo" (solo). The top staff has a triplet of eighth notes marked with a "3" below it. The music continues with various rhythmic and melodic motifs across the four staves.

Fourth system of the musical score, concluding the piece. The notation continues across the four staves, showing the final melodic and harmonic resolutions of the piece.

ex. 10-5d Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 45 in F-sharp minor (“Farewell”), end of the symphony

One noteworthy harmonic touch, in view of what has gone before, occurs at the beginning of the minuet (Ex. 10-5c), where the first tutti blusters in on a boisterous chord of the flat submediant (D major), palpably intruding on the soft beginning of the tune. This, of course, is the key of the enigmatically intrusive “second theme” in the first movement. But where the D-major tonality had dissolved mysteriously in the first movement, here it is allowed to resolve in normal fashion to the dominant, as if to suggest that the wildness of the opening is in the process of being tamed.

The biggest surprise, however, comes midway through the finale, when the movement suddenly fizzles out on the dominant and is replaced, seemingly for no good reason, by what sounds like another minuet, as graceful as its predecessor had been blunt and very richly scored (four desks of violins, each with its own part), that enters in the key of the relative major, thus replaying the sudden harmonic succession—dominant to relative major—that had enigmatically surrounded the double bar in the first movement. It then proceeds, through a resumption of the dominant, to the parallel major (the rare and extravagant tonality of six sharps, at the farthest, i. e., diametrical, reach of the circle of fifths from C, the conventional starting point), where the symphony is finally allowed to end, in a quietly joyous mood uncannily similar to that of the first movement’s mysterious second theme.

Most enigmatic of all is the way in which this concluding dance proceeds through an inexorable composed diminuendo, the instruments of the orchestra dropping out one by one (including a bassoon, relegated in the three preceding movements to doubling the bass line, which enters briefly as a soloist, it seems, just so as to be able to

make an exit). Ex. 10-5d shows the end of the movement. Only the strings remain at this point, and then they too bow out: first the double bass (after an extravagant and virtually unprecedented solo turn) and the two “extra” violins, then the cello, eventually everybody. As an extra surprise, the “extra” violins return to finish the movement, having donned their mutes. Their softly beatific murmurings finally fade out into silence.

What can this strange “story” mean? It was a response to circumstances that have been recounted (after Haydn’s own recollections) by all of his biographers. This is Griesinger’s version, first published in 1810:

Among Prince Esterházy’s *Kapelle* [orchestra] there were several vigorous young married men who in summer, when the Prince stayed at Eszterháza, were obliged to leave their wives behind in Eisenstadt. Contrary to his custom, the Prince once extended his sojourn in Eszterháza by several weeks: the loving husbands, thoroughly dismayed over this news, went to Haydn and asked for his advice.

Haydn had the inspiration of writing a symphony (which is now known under the title of “Farewell” Symphony), in which one instrument after another is silent. This Symphony was performed as soon as possible in front of the Prince, and each of the musicians was instructed, as soon as his part was finished, to blow out his candle and to leave with his instrument under his arm.

The Prince now rose and said, “If they all leave, we must leave, too.” The musicians had meanwhile collected in the *antechamber*, where the Prince found them, and smiling said: “I understand, Haydn; tomorrow the men may all leave,” whereupon he gave the necessary order to have the princely horses and carriages made ready for the trip.⁶

This story has lent the name “Farewell” to Symphony no. 45 irrevocably, and probably accounts for its survival in active repertory long after most of Haydn’s Esterházy symphonies had been eclipsed by his later ones. Its fame is well deserved. It casts an appealing light on Haydn’s relationship with his patron, being the prime instance of the “gentle manipulation” to which Landon called admiring attention. Casting Haydn as one of those “self-made men” who could command the personal respect of the nobility by dint of their achievements, it is a model embodiment of the bourgeois work ethic. But there is nothing subversive about such a message: it is just as much a flattering reflection on the liberality of the Prince, who becomes through it a model of “enlightened despotism.”

Such stories about artists have a long history. They were not an eighteenth-century invention, whether enlightened or bourgeois. The one about the “Farewell” Symphony has a direct sixteenth-century precedent in a story, recounted by the theorist Glareanus in the sixteenth century, about Josquin des Prez, the greatest of the Netherlandish polyphonists, and King Louis XII of France, in which the composer gently manipulated his master, reminding him of a forgotten promise by setting some verses from Psalm 119 (“Remember Thy word unto Thy servant”) as a motet. There is an important difference between the stories, however, and one that does indeed set the time of Haydn decisively apart from the time of Josquin.

Notes:

(6) Griesinger, *Biographische Notizen*, p. 19; third paragraph follows Dies, *Biographische Nachrichten*, p. 48.

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Oxford History of Western Music: Richard Taruskin

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Haydn: Style, aesthetics, compositional method

Semiotics

SIGN SYSTEMS

Chapter: CHAPTER 10 Instrumental Music Lifts Off

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

That difference lies in the respective media employed. For Josquin, the primary means at his disposal was a vocal composition, in which it was actually the words that conveyed the message he wished to impart. For Haydn, a wordless instrumental composition was the preferred medium for a no less pointed message. Instrumental music was effectively displacing vocal music as the medium of greatest cultural prestige. That was already something unthinkable in Josquin's time. But even more important, instrumental music gained that prestige by developing what was previously an unthinkable precise and powerful expressive potential.

That potential was realized through a newly complex and versatile process of signification, made possible by the rise of harmonically governed forms articulated through *thematische Arbeit*. The conventions through which motives derived from themes now functioned dynamically in conjunction with the tonal trajectory opened up a whole new level of musical signification, giving instrumental music in effect a double sign system.

On the one hand there were the old conventions, inherited from earlier styles and repertoires, whereby music could represent the sights and sounds of the natural world and the moods and feelings of the human world: onomatopoeia, iconicity, metaphor, metonymy—all that can be subsumed under the general heading of *extroversive semiotics* (literally, “pointing outward”). For music this included the sounds of other music—hunting horns, courtly dances, quotations of famous pieces, whatever—and their built-in associations.

On the other hand there was the newly important domain of *introversive semiotics* (“pointing inward”)—a sign system made up of sounds that pointed to other sounds or musical events within the work itself. The most basic of these, perhaps, was the relationship of dominant and tonic—a normative relationship of two triads that marked them as signs of tension and repose, respectively. In a major key, the dominant triad is structurally and sonically indistinguishable from the tonic. It is only a convention set up by the context that marks the one as a pointer to the other. Similar conventions cause us to expect a modulation away from the tonic in the first half of a piece and a modulation back through a Far Out Point in the second half. Each event in the unfolding of the piece, then, carries implications for future unfolding, even as it seems to be a consequence of past unfolding. Thus everything that happens within the piece can be construed as a pointer toward some other thing—or better, toward all the other things—taking place within the piece.

The “Farewell” Symphony conveyed its meaning to the Prince through a unique interaction of introversive and extroversive signs. When its meaning is explained nowadays, it is apt to be the simplest extroversive signals that receive the emphasis: the musicians dropping out one by one from the last movement (and, as we know from the story, blowing out their reading candles and physically leaving the performing space as they did so). In the absence of all other factors, these gestures seem to be gestures of farewell to the Prince himself and to Eszterháza. But that does not tell the whole story; nor could it alone have conveyed the whole message of the symphony as the Prince successfully received it. As James Webster has pointed out, the whole symphony participates in the unfolding of the message, beginning with the very strangely shaped first movement.⁷ Its introversive semiotic requires a well-attuned perceiver; that is why it is not usually included in the story as adapted for “music appreciation” purposes. But that is precisely why it will repay our close attention here; it offers a matchless opportunity for attuning our ears to the introversive sign system on which Haydn relied.

As Landon reminds us in his account of the work, “Prince Esterházy was a trained and performing musician: he will have heard the very odd sound of this movement; and he will have noted that the subsidiary subject [or “second

theme”] appears only once, in D major, in the development section,” and so on.⁸ In other words, he will have noticed the many departures or deviations from established norms—that is, failures of conventional implication and consequence—that Haydn deliberately planted in the work to raise questions in a sophisticated listener’s mind.

But introversive and extroversive semiotics, while distinguishable, do not operate in mutual isolation. Just as potent a poser of questions is the radical contrast in “affect” (always an extroversive factor) between the movement’s two themes: the one of a theatrically exaggerated stressfulness and tonal “remoteness” (matching the physical remoteness of the summer palace from “civilization”), the other, coming out of nowhere and prematurely disappearing, of an equally exaggerated blissfulness and tonal repose. Its disruption of introversive norms marks its blissfulness as unreal, an uncanny dream.

And it remains an obsessive presence, an object of longing, as the dissonant recurrence of its keynote (D) in the minuet bears out. When the long minuetlike Adagio coda intrudes on the last movement, there is the same sense of tonal disruption, the same sense of an alternative reality, into which the members of the orchestra now disappear one by one. As they blow out their candles as if retiring for the night amid this ambience of unreal, longed-for bliss, the suggestion that the bliss in question is conjugal bliss becomes so palpable as to be, in the context of an eighteenth-century court soirée, practically lewd. (Another reason, perhaps, why the story, as adapted nowadays for students and kiddies, is apt to leave out the connections between the various movements.)

We are dealing, then, with a mode of instrumental discourse capable of very subtle shades of allusion and irony. Haydn does not normally draw as extensively on all of its representational resources as he does in the “Farewell” Symphony, nor does he often write a multimovement work in which the different movements are, semiotically or narratively speaking, so firmly and obviously linked. The work is a unique tour de force within his output. But the resources on which he drew so extravagantly in this one case were permanent and ubiquitous resources for his music—and, by dint of their widespread emulation, for all European instrumental music. Introversive semiotics, in particular, had been brought permanently to a new level of refinement and consequence.

More commonly, introversive semiotics became for Haydn a site for the virtuoso exercise of wit. His mature instrumental music is forever commenting ironically and amusingly on its own unfolding, making his art an unprecedentedly self-conscious one, and one that seems uncommonly given to complimenting the discernment of its listeners. These are all aspects of *politesse*, refined “company” behavior. The music of this lower-Austrian wheelwright’s son thus represents an epitome of aristocratic art.

Haydn’s maturest instrumental style is often said to date from the 1780s, when after a long interval Haydn resumed composing string quartets and thereafter concentrated on them to a remarkable degree, creating in the process what he himself saw fit to describe (in a couple of business letters written in December 1781) as “a new and special manner.” The phrase has been much debated. It has been suggested that Haydn was just trying to drum up commercial interest in his latest work at a time when his patron, in view of Haydn’s great and unanticipated celebrity, had at last granted him dispensation from the exclusivity clause in his contract, freeing him to conclude subsidiary deals with publishers and individual noble purchasers. And yet a new motivic tightness and intricacy in Haydn’s writing does emerge at this point, betokening a new fascination—first his, now ours—with introversive semiotics.

Unlike his symphonies, Haydn’s quartets carry opus numbers. This directly reflects his new circumstances; they were written for publication (i.e., for profit), and they bore dedications to other important aristocrats besides Prince Esterházy, for which an additional honorarium could be expected. The set of six issued as op. 33 in 1782 was the first set to be published by the Vienna house of Artaria, from then on Haydn’s main publisher. They bore dedication to the Grand Duke (later Tsar) Paul of Russia, for which reason they are sometimes called the “Russian” Quartets.

Perhaps most significant of all, they were the first quartets by Haydn that were not alternatively billed as *divertimentos*. Like the concert symphony, the quartet genre had solidified by then, in large part thanks to Haydn. The symphony and the quartet could be regarded by the 1780s, then, as two solid precipitates (one “public,” the other “private”) from the earlier all-purpose instrumental blend. The great distinguishing feature of op. 33, and possibly one of the elements that Haydn thought of as a “new and special” manner, was a newly versatile texture, no longer nearly so dominated by the first violin.



fig. 10-7 Tsar Paul I of Russia, to whom Haydn dedicated his “Russian” quartets.

It had been anticipated in the last set of “Divertimentos,” published as op. 20 in 1774; but there the liberation of the subordinate voices had come about largely as the by-product of an experimental, somewhat show-offy revival of archaic contrapuntal genres like double and triple fugues. In op. 33, the heightened contrapuntal interest was fully integrated into the taut motivic elaboration. In effect, there were henceforth two dimensions of introversive pointing: horizontal (“structural”) and vertical (“textural”). This supple warp and woof was indeed a new and special manner, and it was taken up with a will by all the other practitioners of what would be retrospectively and admiringly (if also misleadingly) dubbed *Wiener Klassik*—“Viennese classicism”—by the historians and pedagogues of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Haydn followed up on op. 33 with no fewer than five more quartet sets, each containing six: op. 50 (1787), opp. 54/55 (composed in 1788, split up into threes for publication in 1789 and 1790), op. 64 (1790, published 1791), opp. 71/74 (composed in 1793, published by threes in 1795 and 1796), and op. 76 (composed in 1797, published in 1799). There were also four odd items, one published as op. 42 in 1786, two as op. 77 in 1802, and one last unfinished quartet (two movements, evidently the middle ones) published as op. 103, Haydn’s swansong, in 1806. Haydn’s lifetime total of 68 quartets is exceeded only by his symphonies; and during his last decade of active creative life, from 1793, they were his primary interest.

Notes:

(7) J. Webster, *Haydn's "Farewell" Symphony and the Idea of Classical Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 45: "Since the [D-major] interlude remains unexplained, never returning, it too forms part of the 'problem' of the work. Its resolution can only come *elsewhere*—on a level which involves the entire symphony."

(8) H. C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*, Vol. II (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), p. 302.

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Haydn: Chamber music without keyboard

Scherzo

ANATOMY OF A JOKE

Chapter: CHAPTER 10 Instrumental Music Lifts Off

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

No single item from such a list could possibly be wholly representative, but for a look at the “new and special manner” and its implications, the Quartet in E-flat major, op. 33, no. 2 is a reasonable choice. It sports a rather coarse nickname, “The Joke,” in English; but since the joke in question is the quartet’s ending gesture, a particularly well-aimed stroke of wit based entirely on the sending of a false “introversive” signal, the nickname arises directly out of the compositional strategies that are of interest to us now. Observing them minutely for a while will amply repay the effort it will cost by heightening sensitivity to the kind of significant detail that *Kenner und Liebhaber* prize. The discussion that follows must be read with the score close at hand. The first movement’s exposition, which will be given an especially close analysis, is shown in Ex. 10-6a.

Allegro moderato, cantabile

Vln. I
mf

Vln. II
mf

Vla.
mf

Vc.
mf



Musical score system 1, measures 4-6. It features four staves: Treble, Violin, Bass, and Bass. The music is in a minor key and 3/4 time. Measures 4 and 5 contain a melodic line in the Treble staff with a *p* dynamic marking. The Violin and Bass staves have accompaniment with *p* dynamics. Measure 6 shows a continuation of the melodic line in the Treble staff.



Musical score system 2, measures 7-9. It features four staves: Treble, Violin, Bass, and Bass. Measure 7 begins with a *mf* dynamic marking. The Treble staff has a more active melodic line with sixteenth notes. The Violin and Bass staves provide accompaniment.



Musical score system 3, measures 10-12. It features four staves: Treble, Violin, Bass, and Bass. The Treble staff has a melodic line with some rests. The Violin and Bass staves have accompaniment.



Musical score system 4, measures 13-15. It features four staves: Treble, Violin, Bass, and Bass. Measures 13 and 14 have a *p* dynamic marking. The Treble staff has a melodic line with some rests. The Violin and Bass staves have accompaniment.

Musical score system 16-18. It consists of four staves (treble and bass clefs). The music is in a minor key. The first staff has a melodic line with eighth notes. The second and third staves have a harmonic accompaniment with quarter notes. The fourth staff has a bass line with quarter notes. The system is marked with a dynamic of *mf* and includes the instruction *ten.* above the first staff.

Musical score system 19-21. It consists of four staves. The first staff has a melodic line with eighth notes and some triplets. The second and third staves have a harmonic accompaniment. The fourth staff has a bass line. The system is marked with a dynamic of *mf* and includes the instruction *cresc.* above the first staff.

Musical score system 22-24. It consists of four staves. The first staff has a melodic line with eighth notes and some triplets. The second and third staves have a harmonic accompaniment. The fourth staff has a bass line. The system is marked with a dynamic of *f* and includes the instruction *p* above the first staff.

Musical score system 25-27. It consists of four staves. The first staff has a melodic line with eighth notes and some triplets. The second and third staves have a harmonic accompaniment. The fourth staff has a bass line. The system is marked with a dynamic of *f* and includes the instruction *f* above the first staff.

ex. 10-6a Franz Joseph Haydn, Quartet in E-flat, Op. 33, no. 2 (“The Joke”), I, mm. 1–32

Leaving the big titular joke for the end does not mean we will be deprived of humor till then. The first movement is inexhaustibly rife with little jokes of the same kind—or rather, little jolts of wit, which the dictionary defines as “the keen perception and cleverly apt expression of those connections between ideas which awaken pleasure and especially amusement.” Unexpected introversive connections are the key—and such connections, in Haydn’s music, consist preeminently of motivic relationships. The exploration of motivic relationships, and their shrewd recombination, has always been a feature of *thematische Arbeit*. Only now we will find such things happening not just in the designated development but from the word go, and pervading the whole texture besides.

The opening theme’s initial four-bar phrase, in which the first violin is straightforwardly accompanied by the rest of the band, already harbors a clever motivic transformation. The fourth eighth note of the second measure, the melodic high point, is unexpectedly, arbitrarily broken (or so it seems) into a pair of sixteenths, with the second of the pair descending a fourth to anticipate the note on the next strong beat. Compare the very beginning of the melody (the first violin’s anticipatory pickup to the first strong beat), and observe a neat motivic inversion (or—take your pick—a “crab” or mirror reversal).

Such a thing, done just for its own sake, would be as dull, ultimately, as a gratuitous pun: too much of that, and a conversationalist seems no longer witty but annoying. Haydn does not do it just for its own sake, though. First he redeems it by incorporating its rhythm into the fourth measure (the opening four-bar phrase now falling in retrospect into two rhythmically identical, balanced pairs). But then he derives the entire four-bar continuation (mm. 5–8) from varied recombinations of the three-note motive (two sixteenths anticipating an eighth) thus isolated. Its opening skip is progressively widened in the first violin from a fourth to a full octave. This is done in two stages, separated by pauses during which the second violin and viola add their two cents’ worth of motivic echo, substituting chromatic leading tones for the initial skip of a fourth. Then the first violin, having reached the octave by way of a sixth and a seventh, turns that progression around, still maintaining the rhythm of the opening motive and compressing it into a measure of continuous sixteenth notes to match a melodic climax with a rhythmic one.

The second phrase is followed by a repetition of the first (the only change being the addition of a grace note to the half note in m. 11, so that there will be a greater resemblance to the by now strongly “motivated” two-note pickup). The opening period having thus been closed off in a minuscule *da capo*, the transition to the dominant is due. Now for the first time we get a contrapuntal montage of motivically related phrases. The first violin begins at m. 13 with the same pickup as before, extended to a sixth. Meanwhile, the remaining three instruments, up to now discreet accompanists, have struck up a conversation among themselves, initiated by the cello’s immediate repetition of the first violin’s motivically saturated ending phrase in m. 12. The six-note fragment is tossed from cello to viola to second violin (supported by the cello again) until the first violin receives it like a pass in m. 14 and tosses it back and forth with the second violin. The first violin’s four-bar transitional passage from m. 15 to m. 18 is wholly derived from the same fragment, first repeated four-fold in the form received from the other instruments, and then in a rhythmic compression based entirely on the off-beat component, first heard as such in m. 2.

Measures 19–22 are saturated in all four parts with further reminiscences of the opening three-note pickup idea, sometimes in its leading-tone variant, sometimes in its reversed (“off-beat”) variant, and once, climactically, in its original form (pickup to m. 21) to zero in emphatically on the new tonic. The material from m. 23 to m. 28, which elaborates a cadence to establish the goal of the tonal trajectory from tonic to dominant (B-flat major), is not obviously related to the fund of motives we have been tracing. Neither is it particularly distinctive as thematic material. Its function is to provide some neutral space to support a harmonic close.

Harmonic closure having been achieved (on the third beat of m. 28), the old fund of motives is reasserted to provide a suitable melodic close. First the second violin enters with the original three-note group—on its original pitches, too (allowing for an octave transposition), only now functioning not as tonic but as subdominant. This is a typically ironic “introversive” reference: recalling the opening melodic phrase just to point up the changed harmonic context. Having been recalled, the three-note motive generates a four-beat phrase, answered by the first violin in m. 30 with a phrase reminiscent of its passage in mm. 17–18, itself derived originally from the phrase-closing motive in m. 4, which referred yet further back to the melodic peak in m. 2.

The exchange is repeated and “doubled”: viola and cello in m. 31 (the cello recalling the first violin’s octaves in mm. 6–7) and the two violins in m. 32. The last three notes of the first violin part before the double bar are nothing but a transposition to the dominant of its first three notes, the original “three-note anticipatory motive,” rounding off the whole exposition with an elegant show of symmetry—and some more “introversive irony,” the opening gesture now transformed into a closing gesture to give a foretaste of (or a precedent to) the ending “joke” after which the quartet as a whole was nicknamed.

That show of symmetry has a more immediate payoff when the exposition is repeated. After its second playing, the tonal trajectory goes into reverse, and the movement reaches that phase (the so-called development) most firmly associated with motivic derivations and recombinations, on the way to the FOP. It is precisely here that, in an ironic gesture of our own, we will stop tracing Haydn’s *thematische Arbeit*. It is not just that blow-by-blow verbal descriptions of musical processes are ultimately supererogatory (not to mention tedious). It is also apparent, or should be, that the “development section” has no special lock on motivic development. Motivic elaboration—a newly enriched elaborative process in which the whole texture participates—is a constant characteristic of Haydn’s “new and special manner.” What is distinctive about the section between the double bar and the double return is its harmonic instability, not its thematic or motivic content.

The second movement of the quartet is the minuet, placed ahead of the slow movement rather than afterwards. This is not all that unusual. The all-purpose divertimentos out of which the mature quartet genre “precipitated” often had two minuets, one before the slow movement, the other after; for Haydn it was just a choice, so to speak, of which minuet to drop. More unusual as of 1781 was the use of the word “scherzo” (or *scherzando*) to designate this one movement rather than the divertimento as a whole, for which the word was an occasional synonym.

Scherzo
Allegro

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with four staves (Violin I, Violin II, Bassoon/Cello, and Bass). The key signature is E-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system (measures 1-6) begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second system (measures 7-16) shows a ten-measure extension of the first phrase, with a piano (*p*) dynamic in the upper staves and forte (*f*) in the lower staves. The third system (measures 17-26) continues the development of the 'dominant ninth' (C-flat) with alternating piano and forte dynamics.

ex. 10-6b Franz Joseph Haydn, Quartet in E-flat, Op. 33, no. 2 (“The Joke”), II, mm. 1–10, 21–26

As we may recall from Monteverdi’s prior employment of the word (see chapter 1), its literal meaning is “joke” or “jest,” which might possibly seem to be the source of the quartet’s familiar nickname. But no, all the minuets in op. 33 sport the designation (and four out of six are placed like this one, as the second movement). The meaning might seem more a performance direction than a category: do the minuet a little faster than usual (hence the explicit instruction “allegro”), and do it playfully. Playfulness is built in, though: the eight-bar opening phrase is extended to an asymmetrical ten because of the stalling (or echo) tactics of the two violins in mm. 5–6. And then the silly wobble on the “dominant ninth” (C-flat) gets “developed” sequentially in mm. 21–24, dignifying it ironically by introversive recall (see Ex. 10-6b). A mock-silly piece, then?

Perhaps so, but with an important qualification. If we look at the scherzo with minuettish expectations, we immediately notice something “wrong.” The tonal trajectory is askew. The first strain never leaves the tonic. The modulation to the dominant takes place at the beginning of the second strain, and serves in lieu of a FOP. (To the extent that there is a FOP, it is just the little chromatic extension provided by the development of the “wobble,” as noted.) And the traditional final gesture, the double return, here amounts to a full, literal restatement of the first strain, pointless wobble and all. This impoverished sequence of events—failure to modulate before the double bar; the use of the dominant as FOP; full literal restatement of the first strain at the double return—is scrupulously reproduced in the Trio, marking it not as a casual departure from normal procedure, but as a sort of alternative normal procedure in its own right. The texture, too, now seems impoverished: it is just the sort of rigidly layered texture—first violin melody over second violin figuration over downbeat punctuations in the bass, the viola rendered altogether superfluous and dispensable—that one might have found in a “divertimento” before Haydn ever started fashioning his new and special manner of quartet writing (Ex. 10-6c).

ex. 10-6c Franz Joseph Haydn, Quartet in E-flat, Op. 33, no. 2 (“The Joke”), II, mm. 35–42 (first strain of the Trio)

What we are dealing with then, is not so much a mock-silly piece as a mock-primitive one—a highly sophisticated composer imitating (thus mocking) the efforts of uncouth village musicians. (For the ultimate in this sort of slumming spoof see Mozart’s hilarious if far from subtle Divertimento in F, K. 522, subtitled *Ein musikalischer Spass*, “A Musical Joke” [= scherzo].) In Haydn’s late symphonies, too, one often finds the evocation of folk or peasant styles in the minuets (there more as a matter of harmonic or “modal” color, often involving the raised or “Lydian” fourth degree over a bagpipelike drone bass). There is also a whole group of late symphonic minuets in which the first strain is recapitulated in the second; but in these the first strain had made its customary modulation, and so its “recapitulation” is adjusted to reaffirm the tonic, just as in the “sonata form.” The late symphonic minuet is thus a sonata hybrid, and extra sophisticated.

That cannot be said of the scherzi in op. 33. They are “extroversively ironic,” evoking a folkish or “country” style just to point up the distance from there to courtly perfection. Thus while Haydn is often applauded for his peasant origins

(even by himself in retrospect when talking to fawning biographers), it is evident that his artistic loyalties and sympathies were entirely aristocratic, and that his frequent evocations of peasant music were no manifestation of class solidarity, as they might have been in a nineteenth-century composer, but a bit of humorous rustic exoticism.

A folkish style, in any case, had only a “class” or “regional” connotation for a composer in eighteenth-century Austria, never a “national” one. Folkishness was marked as bumpkinry and regarded with condescension vis-à-vis the unmarked (cosmopolitan, aristocratic) default style of “quality.” That was only inevitable in Haydn’s time and place, especially in the multinational Hapsburg (“Holy Roman”) Empire, whose identity was associated not with any ethnicity, nor even with any place, but with an ancient dynasty. Haydn’s politics, like that of his patrons, was a dynastic politics, and nowhere is this more apparent than when he trades in “rustic” or “ethnic” stereotypes.

The quartet’s slow movement, as usual, is cast in the most “original,” least classifiable form; but (again as usual) that form is based on very familiar and intelligible procedures. The opening eight-bar duet (Ex. 10-6d), in which the viola, very strikingly, gets to enunciate the movement’s lyrical main theme (thus reasserting its courtly “emancipated” role after its rustic subordination), is repeated three more times in different instrumental pairings, with textural elaborations in the form of countermelodies, and with intervening episodes to provide tonal contrasts. That’s all there is to it; the charm of this movement lies in the detail work.

Largo sostenuto

ex. 10-6d Franz Joseph Haydn, Quartet in E-flat, Op. 33, no. 2 (“The Joke”), III, mm. 1–8

The four varied repetitions of the melody exhaust the “rational” pairs into which the four instruments in a string quartet can be grouped. After the unaccompanied duet for the two lower instruments, the first repetition, which takes place immediately, is scored for the “upper pair,” that is, the two violins, minimally accompanied by a murmur in the cello that bridges the caesura between the phrases in a manner that might recall (and thus restore to courtly grace) the rustic “wobble” from the preceding movement. After an episode in echo style that pulls the music out of its tonic and returns it (like a good “development section”) to its dominant, the theme returns in the “inner” pair (second violin and viola), while the first violin keeps up the cello’s “murmur” as a steady accompaniment of sixteenth notes.

Another echo episode, melodically similar to the first but harmonically different, leads the music on another wayward path to the dominant to prepare the final statement of the main theme, by the “outer pair” (first violin and cello, with the second violin occasionally taking the notes of the lower voice so as to free the cello to provide a better bass). Now the viola provides the running murmur and the second violin, when not spelling the cello, contributes a harmonic filler. The coda unites reminiscences of the theme with reminiscences of the episodes.

And now at last to the movement that gave the “Joke” Quartet its nickname. The theme of the finale is shaped exactly like those of the Scherzo and Trio: a repeated eight-bar strain that cadences in the tonic key (Ex. 10-6e), followed by a second strain that moves out to the dominant and ends there with a literal repeat of the first strain. Minus the repeats, this theme comes back literally halfway through the movement, marking the movement as a rondo and the material between the two statements of the theme as a motivically “developmental” episode. These are the internal relationships on which the movement’s “introversive” signaling will depend.

Finale
Presto

ex. 10-6e Franz Joseph Haydn, Quartet in E-flat, Op. 33, no. 2 (“The Joke”), IV, mm. 1–8

Several features of the theme are tailor-made for such treatment. For one thing, its first note, repeated over the bar for emphasis, is the third degree of the scale, expressed as the middle member of the tonic triad. That is no accident. It enables Haydn to precede each repetition (both of the whole theme and of its final “recapitulatory” strain) with a jolly maximum of pseudo-suspense, produced each time by a dominant-seventh chord with the dissonant tone exposed on top and followed by a rest to boost the sense of urgency toward predictable resolution on the first note of the theme. These chords all but palpably point at their successors: that is introversive semiotics at its rawest and bluntest—so much so that Haydn is moved to spoof the effect in mm. 137–40 with superfluous repetitions and fermatas (Ex. 10-6f).

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Franz Joseph Haydn's Quartet in E-flat, Op. 33, no. 2, IV, mm. 133-140. Each system consists of four staves: two treble clefs (Violin I and Violin II) and two bass clefs (Viola and Cello/Double Bass). The key signature is E-flat major (three flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system (mm. 133-137) features a melody in the first violin with dynamics *p* and *pp*. The second system (mm. 138-140) continues the melody, ending with a fermata on the final note in measure 140, marked *pp*.

ex. 10-6f Franz Joseph Haydn, Quartet in E-flat, Op. 33, no. 2 (“The Joke”), IV, mm. 133–140

Also deliberately blunt and stolid is the way the opening strain of the theme (Ex. 10-6e) ends in m. 8: right on the beat without the characteristic fall-off rhythm found at all analogous points in the tune (compare mm. 2 and 4). This too gets joshed with a fermata on its last repetition. But although brought about by the same stop-time effect, this spoof is the virtual opposite of the one that came before. What made the fermatas in Ex. 10-6f funny was absolute certainty as to what would have to follow. In m. 148, the premature closure of the phrase creates real doubt as to what will follow. Haydn has engineered a deliberate breakdown of the introversive signaling system.

He capitalizes on the breakdown by producing something utterly unexpected: a repetition of mm. 145–48 (the final phrase of the theme) in a ludicrous mock-tragic tone, produced by a switch to *adagio* tempo, heavy chords (one of them an extra-dissonant “dominant ninth”) marked *forte*, and a panting “speech rhythm” in the first violin (Ex. 10-6g). One last, hesitant, repetition of the rondo theme, all the phrases spaced out with “general pauses,” brings the movement to an embarrassed end (Ex. 10-6h). Or tries to. The stubbornly incomplete final phrase again proves inadequate. And so, after four measures of mock indecision, the first phrase gets pressed into duty as an emergency last phrase. It has the correct harmonic content and it has the correct rhythmic weight (with a proper at the end). Its fatal drawback, of course, is that it has been marked by many repetitions, each one setting an “introversive” precedent, as an opener, not a closer.

And so whenever this ending is performed, it takes the audience an extra second or so to recover its wits and realize that the piece is indeed over. The result is an inevitable giggle—the same giggle that overtakes a prestidigitator’s audience when it realizes that it has been “had.” Haydn’s titular joke is thus not an “anecdote” but a “practical joke,” the product of misdirection.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a string quartet. The first system, labeled "Adagio", consists of four staves (treble and bass clefs) in E-flat major, 2/4 time. It features a melodic line in the first violin with a forte (*f*) dynamic, and a bass line in the first bassoon with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system continues the piece, showing intricate rhythmic patterns and dynamic contrasts between *p* and *f* across all four staves.

ex. 10-6g Franz Joseph Haydn, Quartet in E-flat, Op. 33, no. 2 ("The Joke"), IV mm. 145–152

Presto

The image shows a musical score for the fourth movement of Franz Joseph Haydn's Quartet in E-flat, Op. 33, no. 2. The score is in E-flat major, 3/4 time, and consists of four systems of staves. The first system is marked 'Presto' and 'p'. The second system has a first ending bracket over the first two measures. The third system has a first ending bracket over the first two measures. The fourth system has a first ending bracket over the first two measures, followed by a 'pp' dynamic marking and a 'Fine' marking at the end.

**ex. 10-6h Franz Joseph Haydn, Quartet in E-flat, Op. 33, no. 2
("The Joke"), IV end**

Of course nothing so thoroughly spoils a good joke as an endeavor like the one now underway to explain it verbally. Like any attempt to manipulate an audience's expectations, this one succeeds unawares or not at all. But what Haydn did here for once broadly and obviously, he does subtly and artfully on every page of his mature instrumental music, as inspecting the first movement of this very quartet has already established for us. Like the "Farewell" Symphony, it illustrates the symbiosis that subsisted between a composer of superb self-consciousness and a correspondingly discerning patron. The prince's demands gave Haydn many specific projects into which he could channel the spontaneous promptings of his creative urge. As Jean-Jacques Rousseau might have said, the conditions of his existence, a bondage to many, paradoxically forced Haydn to be free.

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Oxford History of Western Music: Richard Taruskin

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Haydn: London, 1791–5

Johann Peter Salomon

THE LONDON TOURS

Chapter: CHAPTER 10 Instrumental Music Lifts Off

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

Haydn remained in active service to the Esterházy, and in full-time residence on their estates, until Prince Nikolaus's sudden death on 28 September 1790. The latter's son and successor, Prince Anton, uninterested in music, disbanded his father's orchestra and opera establishment. This was no disaster for Haydn but yet another stroke of good fortune. He remained, according to the terms of Prince Nikolaus's will, on full salary as titular Kapellmeister, and drew a pension on top of it, but was no longer under any actual obligation to his patron. He was able to settle in Vienna and pursue a fully subsidized life as a freelance artist. As things turned out, his new status made it possible for him to accept a fantastic offer that unexpectedly came his way and embark on what amounted to a new career as international celebrity under newly viable economic and social conditions.

At the time of Prince Nikolaus's death, a German-born violinist and minor composer named Johann Peter Salomon, who had moved to England and set himself up as a concert entrepreneur, happened to be in Cologne to recruit talent for his upcoming London season. Immediately on reading in the newspapers of the Prince's demise, he swooped down on Haydn in Vienna, barging in on the composer one evening with the announcement (as Haydn later punningly paraphrased it to his biographers), "I am Salomon of London and have come to fetch you. Tomorrow we will arrange an *accord*" (that is, sign a contract—or tune up a fiddle, play in tune, etc.).⁹



fig. 10-8 Johann Peter Salomon, Haydn's promoter, in a portrait by Thomas Hardy. This painting was then engraved by Hardy and hawked by the London publisher John Bland.

The contract was signed by 8 December. According to its terms, Salomon under-took to pay Haydn a huge fee in return for an opera, six symphonies, and some other miscellaneous pieces, all to be performed under Haydn's personal direction at a series of twelve London subscription concerts to be given at Salomon's risk at a public concert hall on Hanover Square that had formerly been used for the Bach-Abel concerts. It had a seating capacity of around eight hundred. When standees were present, the room could accommodate well over a thousand.

Salomon and Haydn crossed the English Channel together on New Year's Day, 1791, for what would prove to be for Haydn the first of two extended, acclaimed, and highly lucrative stays in the British capital. The first concert took place on Friday, 11 March, and the series continued on Fridays thereafter until 3 June. The first-night program was typical of the lot. As always, it was a miscellany. Although Haydn "presided at the harpsichord" as his contract stipulated, most of the music performed—various vocal and instrumental solos, including a "Concertante" for harp and piano by the Czech composer Jan Ladislav Dussek—was actually by other composers. The *pièce de resistance*, which occupied the place of honor at the opening of the concert's second half, was Haydn's "New Grand Overture," as the program put it. At all subsequent Salomon concerts the new Haydn piece would occupy this position in the

program. It was the favored place because it was only then that the whole audience could be reliably assumed to have assembled. As one member of the first-night public put it, “by the beginning of the second act we concluded that all had arrived who intended to come.”¹⁰ The “New Grand Overture” given its first performance at the first Haydn-Salomon concert was actually his Symphony no. 92 in G major, composed in 1789, not yet one of the new symphonies Salomon had commissioned, but new to London. (It is now nicknamed the “Oxford” Symphony because it was given again at a concert in July at the University of Oxford, where Haydn had been invited to receive an honorary Doctor of Music degree.) It was repeated a week later, at the second Salomon concert, before a much larger crowd, along with one of the quartets from Haydn’s op. 64. The first of Haydn’s actual “Salomon” Symphonies to be performed—that is, the first symphony actually composed in London for the Salomon series—was the one now known as No. 96 in D major. It was given for the first time at the fourth concert on Friday, 1 April. (It now has the nickname “Miracle” because according to Haydn’s biographer Dies, at a subsequent performance the audience is said to have arisen spontaneously at its conclusion and come forward toward the stage, thus evading a large chandelier that happened to fall at that moment.)

The next year, 1792, a new Haydn-Salomon Friday subscription series began on 17 February and lasted until 18 May. By now Haydn had had a chance to compose several major works on English soil, and his concerts contained many world premières of now-classic compositions. To choose one for a close look is as arbitrary and invidious an exercise as ever; but a special combination of typical and unique features recommends the symphony first performed on the evening of 23 March, shortly before Haydn’s sixtieth birthday.

Its typical features are those of what amounted to a new genre: what the English were calling the “Grand Overture,” and what we might half-facetiously call the Subscription Symphony—concert symphonies written not for aristocratic salons where the audience might number perhaps a hundred, but for big public halls where the audience might number a thousand. At the time of his London visit, Haydn already had some experience composing on this new “heroic” scale. He had been writing subscription symphonies since about 1785, when he received a commission from Paris for a set of six symphonies to be performed at a new concert series set up in competition with the venerable Concert Spirituel, where Haydn’s works had become popular.

The new sponsoring organization, called Le Concert de la Loge Olympique, was run by a Masonic lodge that included among its members many aristocratic amateurs. Its orchestra was huge; when playing at full strength it could draw on forty violins and ten double basses. Its chief patron, Claude-François-Marie Rigoley, the Count d’Ogny, offered Haydn a fee larger by orders of magnitude than any he had ever received, and which he at first did not believe. Under the circumstances, it is hardly surprising that Haydn’s “Paris” Symphonies—nos. 82–87 in the standard numbering—have a notably expanded format. His new, much grander style would henceforth be Haydn’s normal symphonic practice, since a composer of Haydn’s celebrity could now count on “subscription” performances for all his orchestral works.

Opening movements were now apt to be preceded by somewhat portentous slow introductions, sometimes soft and mysterious, more often in the manner of a fanfare. This was a practical move as much as an esthetic one: the dimming of lights in concert halls was something that electricity would not make possible for another hundred years or so; the audience needed a signal to pay attention. The inner movements grew significantly in dimensions. The minuets in particular took on girth, and this affected not only their duration but also their shape. As a way of controlling the longer duration, the use of a “double return” (or quasi-recapitulation) of the first strain at the end of the second became standard practice. (This is now often called the “rounded binary” form.) In addition, the trio was now apt to contrast decisively—in tempo, in scoring, often in mode or harmonic idiom—with the minuet that enclosed it. Finally, the concluding movements were apt to be cast in a fast meter derived from the contredanse (thus creating a dance pair with the minuet that actually reflected the contemporary ballroom repertoire); and their form was greatly expanded by putting “development sections,” full of harmonic adventure and motivic ingenuity, in place of the neutral “episodes” of the simpler rondo form.

Notes:

(9) Dies, *Biographische Nachrichten*, p. 80.

(10) Diary of Charlotte Papendiek, quoted in H. C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*, Vol. III (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), p. 52.

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Haydn: Orchestral music

ADDRESSING THRONGS

Chapter: CHAPTER 10 Instrumental Music Lifts Off

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin



fig. 10-9 Anonymous portrait of Haydn painted in 1795, showing the score of the “Surprise” Symphony open on the piano.

Every point made in the foregoing paragraph applies fully to the Symphony in G major (no. 94 in the standard

numbering), the one first given in London on 23 March 1792. Everything about it exemplifies the trend toward big public utterance. Most conspicuously, the London symphonies augment the sheer performing forces so that the normal Haydn orchestra now includes, as standard operating equipment, pairs of flutes, oboes, bassoons, trumpets, and horns, as well as kettledrums. A close look at the first movement of No. 94, moreover, will reveal another aspect of “Grand Overture” style—the rhetorical techniques by which Haydn now addressed large crowds. Again, having the score at hand is highly recommended.

The slow introduction (Ex. 10-7a) begins on a pastoral note, unmistakably sounded by the horn with its bagpiper drones on the tonic pitch. “Characteristic” or “topical” gestures like this were practically *de rigueur* in big public symphonies. The biggest success Haydn ever enjoyed with a London audience came with another G-major symphony (no. 100 in the standard numbering), first performed on 31 March 1794, during Haydn’s second London visit. Its slow movement featured unexpected solos for bass drum, triangle, and cymbal—marching-band percussion—for which reason the work became immediately famous as the “Military” Symphony. Like all symphonic slow introductions, the one in Symphony no. 94 proceeds through a FOP to a “half cadence” on the dominant: its essential function is to enable a running harmonic jump on the fast music to enhance the all-important rhythmic/tonal momentum that is the virtual *raison d’être* of a “subscription symphony’s” first movement.

Adagio

2 Fl.

Solo cantabile

I Ob. [p]

II Ob. [p] cantabile

2 Bn. [p]

2 Hn. in G p

Adagio

I Vln. p

II Vln. p

Vla.

Vc., Cb. p

The image displays a musical score for a piece in G major, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system includes a piano introduction with dynamic markings *[p]* and *[fz]*. The second system features a main section with various melodic and harmonic textures across multiple staves.

System 1: Piano Introduction

- Staff 1 (Treble Clef):** Starts with a piano (*p*) chord, followed by a forte (*fz*) chord. The melody consists of a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4, all beamed together. This is followed by a quarter rest and a quarter note G4.
- Staff 2 (Treble Clef):** Starts with a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4, all beamed together. This is followed by a quarter rest and a quarter note G4.
- Staff 3 (Treble Clef):** Starts with a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4, all beamed together. This is followed by a quarter rest and a quarter note G4.
- Staff 4 (Bass Clef):** Starts with a half note G3, a quarter note A3, and a quarter note B3, all beamed together. This is followed by a quarter rest and a quarter note G3.

System 2: Main Section

- Staff 1 (Bass Clef):** Features a long, sustained note G3 with a fermata, followed by a quarter rest and a quarter note G3.
- Staff 2 (Treble Clef):** Starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. This is followed by a quarter rest and a quarter note G4.
- Staff 3 (Treble Clef):** Starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. This is followed by a quarter rest and a quarter note G4.
- Staff 4 (Bass Clef):** Starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G3, a quarter note A3, and a quarter note B3. This is followed by a quarter rest and a quarter note G3.

The image displays a musical score for a piece in G major, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a rest in the first three measures, followed by a melodic phrase in the fourth measure marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a fingering of [a2]. The piano accompaniment features a solo in the bass line, starting in the second measure and marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system shows the piano accompaniment continuing with a crescendo (*cresc.*) in all parts, including the right-hand treble and bass staves and the left-hand bass and tenor staves.

The image displays a musical score for the slow introduction of Franz Joseph Haydn's Symphony no. 94 in G major. The score is written for a full orchestra, with staves for strings, woodwinds, and brass. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The first system shows the initial chords in the first four measures, with dynamics ranging from forte (f) to fortissimo (ff). The second system shows the beginning of the main theme, starting with a half note on G4, followed by a melodic line that moves stepwise through the scale. Dynamics include forte (f) and piano (p).

ex. 10-7a Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 94 in G (“Surprise”), I, slow introduction

Notice a trick already familiar from the “Joke” Quartet: Haydn leaves the slow introduction hanging on the seventh of the dominant-seventh chord, so as to “point” all the more urgently at the main body of the movement and produce a moment of “electric” silence, the silence of intense expectation. There will be a lot of electric silence in this movement, as in all of the “London” symphonies. Another thing that breaking off on the seventh of the chord mandates, of course, is that the first note of the main theme is going to have to be the third degree of the scale, the note to which the seventh has to resolve. This happens so often with Haydn that a theme beginning on the third degree is virtually his stylistic fingerprint.

The amazingly pliant theme that now begins in this way is novel in our experience: everything about it is geared toward momentum, with the result that it almost doesn’t register as a melody the way previous Haydn themes have done. It never has a chance. It is only four bars long—or not even that long, really, since (and this is the real point) it does not come to a proper end. Its interrupted cadence is the most significant and calculated thing about it (Ex. 10-7b).

Taking an even closer look, we see that the whole structure of this tiny theme is pointed ineluctably toward the cadence that never happens. The tune begins on the second half of the bar and unfolds sequentially, which means that every measure points rhythmically to the next—and harmonically, too, since the initial pickup is unexpectedly harmonized with a chromatic tone—G#, the leading tone of the “V of ii”—initiating a miniature tonal trajectory that proceeds by half measures through the circle of fifths, putting off the tonic demanded by the slow introduction for

another couple of measures. And when it comes, on the downbeat of the second full measure, that long-awaited tonic is immediately weakened by the use of contrapuntal sleight-of-hand: an accented passing tone in the first violin, followed by an inversion of the whole texture, the second violin entering in the second half of the bar with a rhythmically compressed imitation at the lower octave of the first violin's opening phrase, while the first violin immediately cancels the G with the second violin's old G#, thus initiating a replay of the whole circle-of-fifths trajectory.

Thus the downbeat of the fourth full measure has taken on a huge significance in advance: it has been multiply marked (by rhythm and harmony) as the defining cadence of the opening theme. What every musically sensitive ear now expects is a cadence note, a caesura (little rest to denote a phrase end), and then probably a repetition of the four bars (as in Ex. 10-7c), to form a "parallel period," presumably to be followed by some contrasting material and possibly a return to the opening to round things off.

And that is precisely what does not happen. Instead, the whole orchestra suddenly pounces on the moment that had been, so to speak, reserved for the thematic cadence, preempting it and (what is most startling) eliding the caesura, the expected moment of demarcative silence. This "elided cadence," as we may call it, introduced by an unanticipated loud tutti, is one of Haydn's trustiest devices to get the rhythmic and harmonic ball rolling at the beginning of a "subscription symphony." By the time one has heard a number of them, one anticipates the "unanticipated" tutti. But even if one has learned to expect it, its function as a disruptive event remains clear and potent.

The image displays a musical score for an orchestra, beginning with the tempo marking "Vivace assai". The score is written for several instruments: Flute (Fl.), Violin I (I), Violin II (II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello and Contrabass (Vc., Cb.), Horn (Hn.), Trumpet (Tpt.), and Timpani (Timp.). The music is in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 6/8 time signature. The initial measures are marked with a dynamic of *p* (piano). At the fourth measure, there is a dramatic shift to a loud tutti section, indicated by a large *f* (forte) dynamic and the marking "[Tutti]". This tutti section is characterized by a strong, rhythmic pattern across all instruments, with the woodwinds and strings playing a similar rhythmic motif. The first violin part shows a dynamic shift from *p* to *f* at the start of the tutti section.

ex. 10-7b Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 94 in G (“Surprise”), I, Vivace assai, mm. 1–5

The present case is an extreme one. Usually Haydn allows the equivalent of what is shown in Ex. 10-7c to take place before lopping off the ending with an elision and a tutti. Compare, for example, the analogous spot in Symphony no. 96, premiered during the 1791 season, where two phrases sound as antecedent and consequent before the Big Bang (Ex. 10-7d). The quicker progress toward the interrupted cadence in Symphony No. 94 only intensifies momentum, because the function of the passage the Big Bang introduces is to modulate to the secondary key. Thus the tonic is being abandoned here almost before it has had a chance to assert itself. The ratio between theme and transition in this movement is skewed heavily in favor of the latter. The emphasis, even more than usually, will be on process, not presentation. Tonally speaking, we are in for a roller-coaster ride.

antecedent caesura
V (half cadence)

consequent caesura
I (full cadence)

ex. 10-7c Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 94 in G (“Surprise”), hypothetical “symmetrical” version of Ex. 10-7b

antecedent
V (half cadence)

consequent
I (elided full cadence) (bridge) →

ex. 10-7d Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 96, I, mm. 18–26

And in this particular movement, as befits the truncated thematic presentation, the ride is going to be an

exceptionally twisty and angular one, fuller than ever of characteristically Haydnesque feints. The telltale moment in any tonal transition is the moment when the leading tone to the new tonic appears. This happens in m. 30, with the introduction (typically, smuggled in on the weaker beat of the bar) of the C \sharp , prefiguring a cadence on D, the dominant. But a scant three bars later the C \sharp is neutralized by a C-natural, and the harmony veers back unexpectedly to the starting point, the C-natural (the “seventh” of the dominant) getting its usual heavy emphasis (mm. 35–38) to heighten the expectation of the tonic’s return (Ex. 10-7e).

We seem to be back at the starting point; but this time the elided cadence (m. 43) does produce the inevitable modulation to the dominant. (And that is the purpose of the initial avoidance: to stave off the inevitable is the essence of suspense, as any dramatist knows.) Even this time, though, there is a feint: in m. 54 the opening themelet comes back in D minor, from which D major, the dominant, must be reapproached. Both the return of the theme and the key in which it is couched come off like impromptu diversionary tactics, an essential part of the movement’s highly calculated strategy.

The arrival of the dominant (m. 66) is marked by a slyly flatfooted vamp—an accompaniment in search of a tune. (The term “vamp,” while often used in connection with twentieth-century popular music, is not in fact an anachronism; its use can be traced as far back as the early eighteenth century, and it is found in Dr. Burney’s *History*.) What seems to be the awaited tune (m. 70) only prolongs the vamp with an aimless scale. But all at once the scale veers into a cadence (m. 77–79) that at last introduces what might be called a “second theme” (mm. 80–94) in the dominant, hardly less laconic than its predecessor in the tonic. It is quickly superseded by closing fanfares.

This musical score is for a symphony, likely from the 18th century, and is arranged for a full orchestra. The score is written in G major and 3/4 time. The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- Flute (Fl.):** Melodic line with eighth-note patterns.
- Oboe I (Ob. I):** Melodic line with eighth-note patterns.
- Oboe II (Ob. II):** Melodic line with eighth-note patterns.
- Bassoon (Bn.):** Bass line with eighth-note patterns.
- Horn (Hn.):** Harmonic accompaniment with notes marked *a2*.
- Trumpet (Tpt.):** Harmonic accompaniment with notes marked *a2*.
- Timpani (Timp.):** Bass line with eighth-note patterns.
- Violin I (Vln. I):** Melodic line with eighth-note patterns.
- Violin II (Vln. II):** Harmonic accompaniment with notes marked *fz*.
- Viola (Vla.):** Harmonic accompaniment with notes marked *[fz]*.
- Violoncello and Double Bass (Vc., Cb.):** Bass line with eighth-note patterns.

The image shows a musical score for Franz Joseph Haydn's Symphony no. 94 in G, I, mm. 30-38. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It features a piano solo in the bassoon part starting at measure 31. The first violin part has a 'vamp' of a repeated B note at the end. The score includes dynamics like 'p' and 'pizz.'

ex. 10-7e Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 94 in G (“Surprise”), I, mm. 30–38

The exposition’s final eccentricity is the way it ends (Ex. 10-7f), not on the expected D but on another suspenseful “vamp,” a repeated B in the first violins. This is the note with which the first theme began, of course, and it makes possible, first, a delightfully unpredictable lurch into the repeat and, second, an immediate point of departure into the tonal vagaries of the development.

As in the case of the “Joke” Quartet, it would be best to leave off the detailed descriptive commentary at this point, before the inevitable tedium of blow-by-blow description sets in. By now, in any case, the point has been made: the important matter in this symphonic “argument” is not the thematic content but the tonal trajectory, to which the themes are accessories. And yet Haydn remains sensitive enough to the need for thematic integrity that he builds the movement’s coda—unexpectedly, but very satisfyingly—into the originally expected “full statement” of the first theme as a balanced pair of cadenced phrases (compare Ex. 10-7g with Ex. 10-7c).

ex. 10-7f Franz Joseph Haydn, *Symphony no. 94 in G ("Surprise")*, I, mm. 101–107

There is a hint of a moral here, a gratifying sense that unfinished business has at last been attended to, giving the whole movement a sense of achieved and unified design in which the thematic content and the tonal trajectory have cooperated. And yet in a “subscription symphony,” there can be no doubt about priorities. The tonal trajectory is what finally counts. It has been turned into a very dramatic—that is, a highly “dramatized”—affair, in which harmonic and (especially) dynamic feints are the active ingredients, and in which the dual rhetorical strategy is that of building suspense, only to take the listener by surprise.

And that is why *Symphony no. 94* is in its way the quintessential Haydn “subscription symphony”: it is the one that is actually called the “Surprise” Symphony, a nickname that might have been applied to any or all of its counterparts. The reason why this particular symphony was so singled out has to do with the second movement, the *Andante*, which is cast as a set of variations on a theme in C major.

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Variations

Haydn: Orchestral music

VARIATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Chapter: CHAPTER 10 Instrumental Music Lifts Off

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

The theme is cast in as regular and symmetrical a binary structure as Haydn ever employed: thirty-two bars in all, cast in repeated parallel periods (the first eight bars reaching a half cadence and then repeated; the second eight, beginning similarly, achieving full closure and then repeated). Haydn actually sketched the theme out as a pair of eight-bar phrases with repeats (see Fig. 10-10). But then he got another idea (Ex. 10-8a), one of his most famous inspirations.

What throws all symmetry out of whack (and the word is chosen advisedly) is the big thump at the end of m. 16. It comes at the least expectable place, the off beat of the last bar of an eight-bar phrase. That beat is unaccented at no fewer than five metrical levels: the measure of which it is an unaccented part is the unaccented member of a pair with its predecessor; that pair of measures is the unaccented member of a pair with its two-bar predecessor; that group of four measures is the unaccented member of a pair with its four-bar predecessor; and the whole resultant eight-bar phrase is the unaccented repetition of the movement's opening eight-bar phrase. Haydn has bent even further over backward to lull the listener into a state of complacency by marking the repetition of the opening phrase at a softer dynamic level (*pianissimo*, a direction he used only for special effects), by removing the second violins from the melody line, and by having the three lower parts plucked rather than bowed, all of which made it necessary to write all sixteen bars out in full rather than relying on a repeat sign as in the first draft.

The image shows a page of a musical score for a symphony. The score is written for several instruments: Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.) I and II, Bassoon (Bn.), Violin (Vln.) I and II, Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello/Double Bass (Vc., Cb.). The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes Flute, Oboe I and II, and Bassoon. The second system includes Violin I and II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The Flute part has a [Solo] marking in the final measure. The Oboe I part has a [p] marking in the second measure and a [p] marking in the final measure. The Oboe II part has a [p] marking in the final measure. The Bassoon part has a [p] marking in the first measure and a [Solo] marking in the final measure. The Violin I part has a [fz] marking in the first measure and a [fz] marking in the second measure. The Violin II part has a [p] marking in the first measure. The Viola part has a [p] marking in the first measure. The Cello/Double Bass part has a [p] marking in the first measure. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings.

The image shows a musical score for Franz Joseph Haydn's Symphony no. 94 in G, I, mm. 218-228. The score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes the woodwind section: Flute (Fl.), Oboe I (Ob. I), Oboe II (Ob. II), and Bassoon (Bn.). The second system includes the string section: Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The woodwinds play a melodic line with a dynamic marking of [fz]. The strings play a rhythmic pattern, with the timpani part marked fortissimo. The score ends with a dynamic marking of p.

ex. 10-7g Franz Joseph Haydn, *Symphony no. 94 in G ("Surprise")*, I, mm. 218–228

The sudden blast is marked *forte* in the winds, *fortissimo* in the strings, and beefed up into “triple stops” (three-note chords) in the two violin parts. Most unusually, even recklessly, the timpani part is marked *fortissimo*, practically insuring that the drumbeat will drown all the other instruments out. And such seems to have been the calculation: the symphony is actually called *Symphonie mit dem Paukenschlag* (“Symphony with that kettledrum stroke”) in German. The English sobriquet was given it almost immediately after the first performance. The *Oracle*, a London newspaper, reported the next morning that

Act 2nd opened with a first performance of the GRAND OVERTURE composed by HAYDN for that evening. The Second Movement was equal to the happiest of this great Master’s conceptions. The surprise might not be unaptly likened to the situation of a beautiful Shepherdess who, lulled to slumber by the murmur of a distant Waterfall, starts alarmed by the unexpected firing of a fowling- piece.¹¹

It was Andrew Ashe, the first flutist in Salomon’s orchestra, who claimed responsibility for the actual nickname. In a memoir set down in 1803, he wrote of the symphony that “I christened it the *Surprise* when I announced it for my Benefit Concert & my valued friend Haydn thank’d me for giving it such an appropriate Name.”¹²

Handwritten musical score for the Andante of Symphony no. 94 by Haydn. The score is a sketch, indicated by a large diagonal line drawn across the entire page. The instruments listed on the left are: Flauto (Flute), Clarinetto (Clarinet), Tromba (Trumpet), Fagotto (Bassoon), Violino I (Violin I), Violino II (Violin II), Viola, Violoncello (Cello), and Contrabbasso (Double Bass). The tempo is marked 'Andante' at the top left. The score shows the beginning of the piece with various musical notations, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'p' (piano).

fig. 10-10 Haydn's surpriseless original sketch for the Andante of Symphony no. 94.

Printed musical score for the Andante of Symphony no. 94 by Haydn. The tempo is marked 'Andante' and the style is 'semplice'. The score shows the first few measures for Violins I and II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass. The Violin parts are marked 'p' (piano) and 'ten.' (tutti). The Viola and Cello/Double Bass parts are marked 'p' (piano). The time signature is 2/4.

The image shows a page of a musical score for Franz Joseph Haydn's Symphony no. 94 in G, II, mm. 1-16. The score is arranged in three systems. The first system includes Violin I and II, Viola, and Violoncello/Contrabasso. The second system includes Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, Horn, Trumpet, and Timpani. The third system includes Violin I and II, Viola, and Violoncello/Contrabasso. Dynamics include 'ten.' (tender), 'pp' (pianissimo), 'pizz.' (pizzicato), and 'ff' (fortissimo). Performance instructions include 'col' arco' (col legno arco) and 'a2' (second octave).

ex. 10-8a Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 94 in G (“Surprise”), II, mm. 1–16

People speculated wildly as to the reason for the strange event. There was certainly call for such speculation, since the big noise was (to put it mildly) “introversively underdetermined.” There was nothing to motivate it from within; it pointed to nothing else in the score (except, perhaps, ironically). And so an extroversive explanation was sought. The reviewer for the *Oracle* accounted for it, as we have seen, by inventing a story for it to “imitate.” A more general opinion was that it was meant to awaken sleepers in the hall. Dies, one of Haydn’s biographers, is probably responsible for its spread in subsequent accounts (including some versions in which it is old Prince Esterházy, two years dead by then, whom Haydn is supposedly nudging out of slumber). Griesinger, the competing biographer, put the matter to Haydn in an interview:

I asked him once in jest if it were true that he wrote the Andante with the kettledrum beat in order to waken the English public that had gone to sleep at his concert. “No,” he answered me. “Rather it was my wish to surprise the public with something new, and to make a *début* in a brilliant manner so as not to be outdone by my pupil [Ignaz] Pleyel, who at that time was engaged by an orchestra in London which had begun its concert series eight days before mine.”¹³

In this very plausible anecdote, the big surprise was motivated as a sort of practical joke, or what we would now call a

publicity stunt, to get people talking or (more likely) writing in the papers, and to outshine an upstart competitor. What makes the story plausible is the way it embodies a response to circumstances—for Haydn, new circumstances that would increasingly come to characterize the social and economic aspects of European music making in the new nineteenth century. Concert life—first of all in England, where in 1792 it was not at all a new thing, but everywhere soon enough—would henceforth function as something of a free market, in which composers had not only to address large crowds but to lure them, and in which professional reviewers acted as middlemen, mediating on behalf of artists (or against them!) and influencing public taste. The role and the function of arts criticism as we know it today were the creations of the English public and of the professional concert life that first got under way in England, and Haydn was one of the early objects of its ministrations. He was first of all its beneficiary, but he was not unaffected by its influence, since we are perhaps most easily influenced by those who praise us (and pay us).

Thus Haydn's "surprise" was an amiable early symptom of change to a new rhetorical manner that arose from a new musical ecosystem, conditioning a radical augmentation in the sheer dimensions of symphonic music and also a revolution in its content, which was increasingly likely to embody extroverted (or, in contemporary language, "characteristic") references.

As to the further progress of Haydn's slow movement, one particular variation should be singled out for the neat way it delineates the difference between "variation" and "development" as ways of elaborating on themes. That variation is the second, cast in the parallel minor. Despite the changed mode, the first half of it hardly differs from the preceding variation, wherein the theme, given to the second violin, had acted as a *cantus firmus* against which the first violin (doubled once at the octave by the flute) contributed a "division" or filigree counterpoint. That is an unusually simple and old-fashioned sort of variation, but in its simplicity it illustrates the essential characteristic of the variation genre, namely adherence to the basic shape—the phrase structure and the harmonic trajectory—of the theme.

Just so, the first half of the minor-mode variation hews closely to the rhythmic and tonal shape of the theme. It is the same eight bars in length; the caesuras come at the same place, and its cadential destination is the same, making allowance for the changed mode (III rather than V being the usual half-cadence point in the minor). The second half of the variation might have been written to the same prescription: it might have started on E \flat or its dominant, had a caesura after four measures on the dominant of C minor, and made full closure on the tonic in the eighth measure. That would have been the normal, predictable procedure.

Instead, Haydn begins the second half on E \flat , all right, but he aims it at the original dominant (G) rather than the tonic; and once having reached it, draws it out for its suspense value, as one might do in a "retransition" before a double return. Thus the whole variation is cast retrospectively as tonally "open" and unstable: it begins in one place and ends in another, on a note of unresolved tension that must await resolution in the next variation. The second half is unrepeatable and asymmetrical in phrase structure. With a length of eighteen measures, it can only be parsed into pairs once before hitting an unrepeatable (odd) number. It contains no regular caesuras; rather, its one caesura, separating the main body of the section from the single-line "drawing-out" of the dominant, divides its 18 bars into 13 + 5, two prime numbers. Above all, it does not reproduce the melody of the theme as such but rather plays upon a motive extracted from it, tossed sequentially between the bass and viola parts (see Ex. 10-8b) to sustain the harmonic momentum.

a. Variation III
Vln. I

b. "Development"

ex. 10-8b Comparison of the opening of Ex. 10-8a with its “development” in the minor variation

All of these traits—harmonic instability, asymmetry of phrase structure, *thematische Arbeit* (extraction and recombination of motives)—are traits that collectively describe the “development,” as opposed to the mere “variation,” of themes. Haydn certainly recognized this distinction and traded on it. The sudden introduction of restless and exciting developmental writing into the placid confines of a variations movement was another glorious surprise, no less worthy of immortality than the redoubtable kettledrum stroke. It serves further to “symphonize”—to make impressively public and rhetorical—the music of a “subscription symphony,” which was becoming an increasingly monumental genre.

Once the tonic is regained at m. 75 it is never again challenged; in compensation, however, the variations become ever quirkier and more “surprising.” The nattering oboe solo at m. 75, for example, holds good only for half of a binary half, so to speak: just the first “A” out of AABB. Instead of being repeated, it is replaced at m. 83 by another “cantus firmus” variation, in which the original theme is played by the violins to support a woodwind obbligato. That texture then holds good for both B phrases, getting us as far as m. 107, where a pair of “sandwich” variations begins. The big and brassy tutti, led by the violins in sextolets, is dropped after eight measures in favor of an utterly contrasting idea marked *pianissimo e dolce* (very soft and sweet). The soft and sweet idea continues into the B phrase, but the big and brassy tutti is resumed for conclusion, thus: *AabB*, where capital letters stand for big-and-brassy and small letters for soft-and-sweet. The coda, derived (that is, “developed”) from the “A” material, harbors one last surprise: the use of soft but very dissonant harmony (dominant-ninth chords on tonic and dominant over a tonic pedal) to lend an air of uncanny poignancy.

Notes:

(11) Quoted in Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*, Vol. III, p. 150.

(12) Quoted in Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*, Vol. III, p. 149.

(13) Griesinger, *Biographische Notizen*, p. 32.

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Waltz

Sonata form

MORE SURPRISES

Chapter: CHAPTER 10 Instrumental Music Lifts Off

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

No less surprising is this symphony's minuet, marked at an outlandish tempo (*allegro molto*) that turns it into another dance altogether: a *Deutscher* (or "Teitsch"), the "German dance" familiar to us from the ballroom scene in *Don Giovanni*, where it served to accompany the lubberly steps of that unlikeliest of couples, Leporello and Masetto. It comes (or at least begins) in Haydn replete with its traditional oom-pah-pah accompaniment. As danced in the Austrian countryside the *Deutscher* was known as the *Walzer* (from *wälzen*, "to roll") after its characteristic whirling step. Within a generation this adapted peasant dance, known variously as *valse* or *waltz*, would be the main high-society ballroom dance throughout Europe and in all its cultural colonies.

Haydn played an important role in this dissemination. His use of this exotic dance type in his Salomon symphonies was a novelty to the London audience and caused a sensation. Haydn responded to the demand thus created with a set of a dozen *Deutsche Tänze* set for a typical Viennese dance band (clarinets among the winds, no violas). What is of particular historical significance is the fact that the famous composer of concert music also considered it a part of his job description to furnish ballroom dances for the use of the same social set who attended his concerts. Thus, although the symphony and its performance occasions were becoming increasingly specialized, they were not as yet altogether cut off from more utilitarian genres, and neither was the composer. Haydn's concert audiences, both at home and abroad, thus heard actual ballroom dances in contemporary use (minuets, contredanses, waltzes) as part of the typical symphony. And thus, ineluctably, they had a different relationship to the genre, and a different attitude toward it, from any that we (for whom all its dances are obsolete "museum pieces") can have today. Concert music, however monumentalized or rarefied, still enjoyed some semblance of symbiosis with eighteenth-century daily life. The concert hall was not yet a museum.

This holds especially for the finale of the "Surprise" Symphony, which is cast in the meter and tempo of a perfectly recognizable (and danceable) contredanse—or "country dance," as the Londoners still knew it and danced it.

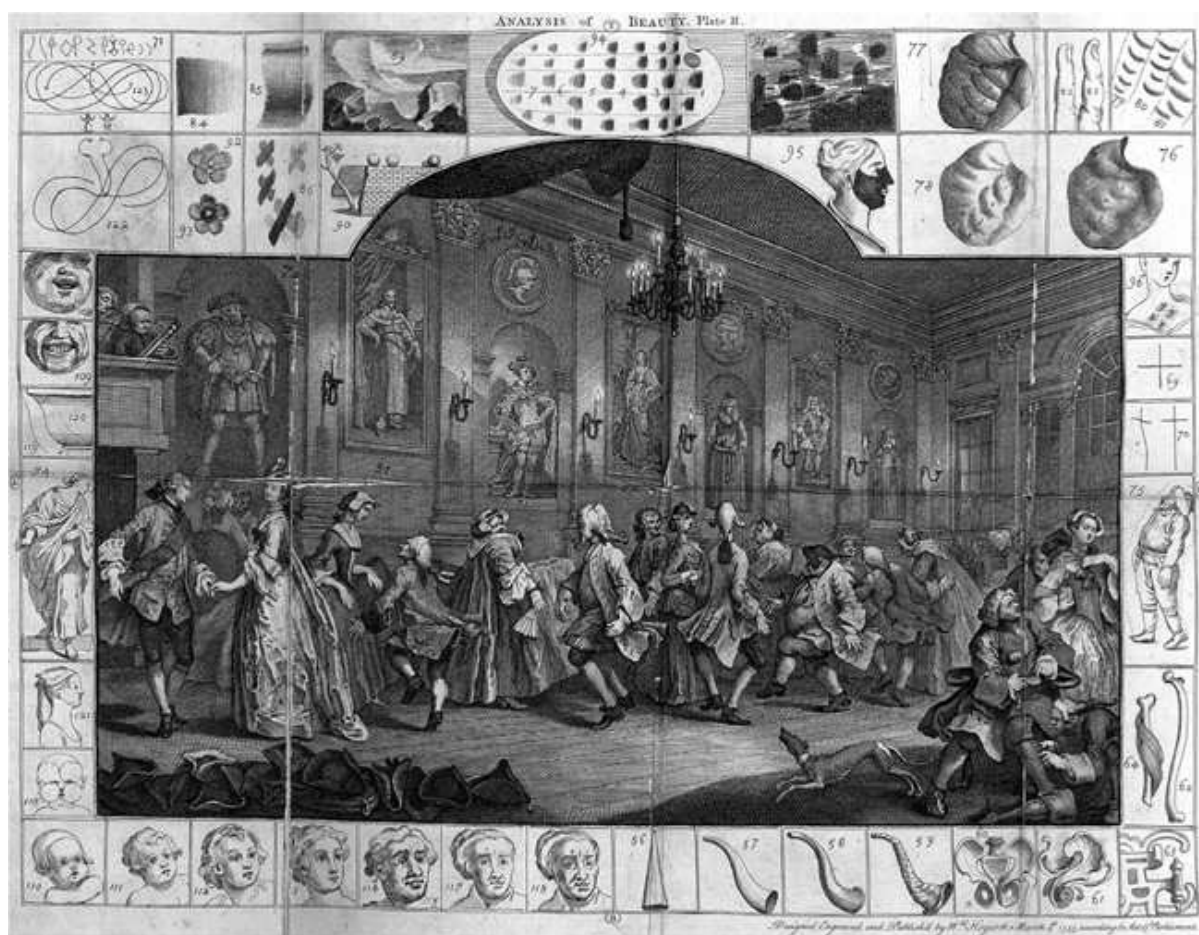


fig. 10-11 *Country Dance*, by Hogarth (*The Analysis of Beauty*, 1753).

Finale
Allegro di molto

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc., Cb.

p

p

p

p

ex. 10-9a Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 94 in G ("Surprise"), IV mm. 1–8

**ex. 10-9b Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 94 in G (“Surprise”),
IV, mm. 138–48**

This finale is a remarkable tour de force, one of Haydn’s most accomplished hybrids or syntheses of rondo and “sonata” forms. Its main theme, whose first pair of balanced phrases is given in Ex. 10-9a, is thirty-eight bars long and has a fully articulated and “closed” shape. In its self-sufficiency it contrasts starkly with the terse little phrase that gets the first movement going. Such structural self-sufficiency stamps it immediately as the theme of a rondo, not a “sonata-allegro.” But at its very conclusion the theme is cut off before its time by an elided cadence, dramatized by a sudden tutti attack—the “Big Bang” familiar to us from the first movement, and to Haydn’s London subscribers from just about every first and last movement they heard from his pen. This was the essential “subscription symphony” idea, and immediately stamps the movement as one that will emphasize the tonal trajectory. Unlike a simple rondo, it is to be a thing not of well-shaped themes but of departures, transitions, and arrivals in the manner of the “sonata” form.

That sudden tutti initiates the expected swing to the dominant, where a second theme awaits. In what by now seems a typical gesture, Haydn prolongs the wait with a bar of silence (m. 74) just to get the audience to sit up and beg. And if we may press the canine analogy just a bit farther, Haydn throws a bone to the *Kenner und Liebhaber* in the house by fashioning the accompaniment to the second theme out of the opening motive from the first theme. At m. 87

another tutti attack on an elided cadence reasserts the momentum of the tonal trajectory. The characteristically heavy insistence on the seventh of the dominant seventh (first presented as a brute unison in m. 100) unmistakably signals a return of the rondo theme in the tonic—something that would be unthinkable in “pure” sonata form. The heaviness of the insistence is a typically surprising yet communicative introversive sign, meant to give the audience a pleasurable jolt.

Note, by the way, that once again a main theme has been constructed with an emphasis on the third degree of the scale (in this case preceded by a two-note pickup, ubiquitous in Haydn finale themes). In fact, the whole formal strategy of the movement is implicit in the way that opening motive highlights the third degree, and might have been predicted. Its reprise halfway through the movement exhibits another typically Haydnesque touch: the doubling of the violins by the bassoon at the lower octave (for precedents within this very symphony, see the coda to the Andante and the trio section of the minuet). Here it is virtually mandated by the unison “middle Cs” in mm. 100–102: only a B in the bassoon register will give the C its proper resolution.

The tutti that next interrupts the rondo theme (m. 112) stands in for the sonata-form “development”—that is, the section that will arrive by dint of sustained *thematische Arbeit* at the FOP. And here Haydn pulls off a marvelous harmonic pun. The FOP is iii (B minor), the virtually inevitable choice given the way the note B has been spotlighted in so much of the symphony’s thematic content. The decisive cadence to B minor is initiated in m. 138 with the cadential harmony that promises a dominant/tonic follow-through. The importance and the finality of the cadential gesture are signaled by the motivic work: an arpeggio in the first violin that rides the opening motive of the main theme through almost two octaves.

And then the engine stalls. After a bit of coughing and knocking, the first violins are left alone with the opening motive, still implicitly harmonized by the cadential of B minor. And then, at the pickup to m. 146, the change of a single note (F# to G) allows the transformation of the stalled passage into the main rondo theme, and we’re off and running again (see Ex. 10-9b).

Virtually every late Haydn finale has a passage in which something far out hooks up “unexpectedly” with the pickup to the rondo theme—here too we learn to expect the “unexpected” and wait gleefully for it. But Haydn, knowing this, lets it happen again (at the upbeat to m. 182, made less predictable by modifying the pickup figure) so that he can truly take us by surprise. The version of the rondo theme thus initiated acts like the sonata-form “recapitulation,” bringing the second theme and a “developing” coda in tow, the harmonic surprise of the latter (m. 234) anticipated by another timpani shock to match (and recall) the one in the Andante.

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Sonata form

THE CULMINATING WORK

Chapter: CHAPTER 10 Instrumental Music Lifts Off

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

As Landon has noted, the “Surprise” Symphony “has justly become a symbol for all Haydn’s music.”¹⁴ That is not only because the symphony became the emblematic Haydn genre but also because of the way Haydn transformed the symphony, not only in style but above all in status. When Haydn found it the symphony was just a distinguished sort of party music. He left it a monumental genre that formed the cornerstone of a *canon*, a publically recognized body of works deemed by lovers of art to have universal or defining value within their culture—a value, be it noted, no longer associated exclusively with a single social class. In their public eloquence, Haydn’s late “subscription symphonies” thus symbolized the nascent democratization of high art. In this way this former retainer to a princely house became one of the emblematic figures of the Enlightenment.

Which is not to say that Haydn consciously thought of himself as a *philosophe*, an Enlightened thinker, still less that he harbored (any more than Mozart did) the sort of subversive or anti-aristocratic sentiments we now tend, rather romantically, to associate with the era in which he lived. Nowhere in Haydn’s works, his correspondence, or the vast posthumous biographical literature about him, for example, does he make any reference at all to the French Revolution, the most cataclysmic political event of the century. Indeed, his very late works give us reason to believe that he deplored the Revolution’s consequences. In a pair of monumental Masses—“In Time of War” (*In tempore belli*, 1796) and “In Distress” (*In angustiis*, 1798, dedicated to Lord Nelson, the British naval hero)—Haydn appeared as a kind of Official Austrian or composer laureate, giving voice to his Empire’s determined opposition to Napoleon. The same military “topic” that produced giggles in Symphony No. 100 produces shudders when it accompanies the prayer for peace at the end of the Mass in Time of War.

Even the London “public” to which Haydn’s subscription symphonies made their appeal, while broader than any cohort he had previously addressed with his music, remained a largely aristocratic (or at least propertied) “high society”; the advertisements for Salomon’s concerts were always pitched to “the Nobility and Gentry” (the latter term referring to property owners, noble or not). Haydn was privileged to move at the very highest levels of the notoriously class-conscious British society. He found his access to the high aristocracy highly agreeable and took very seriously King George III’s invitation to settle permanently as a free artist in England under crown patronage.

This invitation was issued during Haydn’s second stay in the English capital (1794–95), which was even more successful than the first. Haydn was received by the royal family on 1 February 1795, after which he wrote in his diary that “the King, who hitherto could or would only hear Handel’s music, was attentive to mine.”¹⁵ Indeed, the king’s evident intention in trying to secure Haydn’s permanent attachment to his court was to make another Handel of him, and to establish Haydn’s concerts as a national institution in perpetuity, like the Handel oratorio festivals given at Westminster Abbey every year, which Haydn found dazzlingly impressive and inspiring.

In addition to royal blandishments and bedazzlement with the magnificence of English performance traditions, Haydn faced other enticements as well. His diary following the concert of 4 May 1795 contains this entry:

A new Symphony in D, the twelfth and last of the English;...The whole company was thoroughly pleased and so was I. I made four thousand Gulden on this evening. Such a thing is only possible in England.¹⁶

The newspaper reviews were fulsome in their praise of the work, showing Haydn to be already a sort of national monument. “He rewarded the good intentions of his friends,” wrote one reviewer.

by writing a new Overture for the occasion, which for fullness, richness, and majesty, in all its parts, is thought by some of the best judges to surpass all his other compositions. A Gentleman, eminent for his musical knowledge, taste, and sound criticism, declared this to be his opinion, That, for fifty years to come Musical Composers would be little better than imitators of Haydn; and would do little more than pour water on his leaves. We hope the prophecy may prove false; but probability seems to confirm the prediction.¹⁷

In some ways the prediction was indeed borne out, because Haydn's London symphonies have never left the repertory, and all subsequent composers in the genre, up to our own time, have perforce had to compete with them. Haydn's quartets and symphonies, like Mozart's operas, became the first canonical works of their kind. The culminating symphony (no. 104 in the standard numbering), which bears the same nickname ("London") as the whole series of twelve, set a benchmark for structural efficiency toward which composers have ever afterward aspired. Its historical fame and its enormous authority demand that we inspect its first movement (preferably, as always, with score at the ready).

But before we do, it is important to understand why Haydn's structural efficiency came to command such authority. Haydn himself gave the reason for valuing it when he wrote of another composer's work in his diary that he flitted from idea to idea, made nothing of his themes, and so one was left "with nothing in one's heart."¹⁸ The economy and logic of thematic development for which Haydn became famous (and which is often—erroneously—looked upon as the "main point" or motivating idea of the sonata form) was valued not as a demonstration of technical virtuosity but as an intensifier, and a deepener, of sentiment. With this caveat in mind, we may indeed find Haydn's technical virtuosity as astounding as did his contemporaries, to say nothing of the generations of composers who have avidly studied and emulated his work.

The slow introduction (Ex. 10-10a) is proclamatory—the audience-summoning fanfare most typical of subscription symphonies. One lady in the first-night audience thought the rising fifth, dramatized by fermatas, was a recollection of a vendor's cry ("Fresh cod!") that Haydn heard in the market. (There was an old tradition of "Cryes" in English music, as we may recall from chapter 13.) Whatever its source, Haydn makes of the rising fifth and its immediate "tonal" inversion (falling fourth) the theme for one of the most compressed and concentrated symphonic structures ever composed.

Adagio

The musical score is for an Adagio movement. It features a woodwind section with Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), 2 Clarinets in A (2 Cl. in A), and Bassoon (Bn.), a brass section with 2 Horns in D (2 Hn. in D) and 2 Trumpets in C/D (2 Tpt. in C/D), and a string section with Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The woodwinds and strings play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents. The bassoon has a solo section starting in the third measure, marked with a piano (p) dynamic. The strings play a similar rhythmic pattern, with the first violin part featuring some dynamic changes to forte (f) and piano (p) in the later measures.

Fl. *ff* *a2*

Ob. *ff* *a2*

2 Cl. in A *ff*

Bn. *ff* *a2* Solo *p*

2 Hn. in D *ff*

2 Tpt. in C/D *ff*

Timp. in D-A *ff*

Adagio

Vln. I *ff* *fz* *p* *fz* *p*

Vln. II *ff* *p*

Vla. *ff* *p*

Vc., Cb. *ff* *p*

The first system of the musical score consists of five staves. The top two staves are for woodwinds (flute and oboe), both starting with a rest and then playing a melodic line marked *ff*. The third staff is for strings, starting with a rest and then playing a rhythmic pattern marked *ff*, with the instruction "Tutti" above it. The fourth staff is for the piano, starting with a rest and then playing a melodic line marked *ff*. The fifth staff is for the violin, starting with a rest and then playing a melodic line marked *p*, with the instruction "Solo" above it.

The second system of the musical score consists of five staves. The top staff is for woodwinds, starting with a rest and then playing a melodic line marked *p*, with the instruction "(Solo)" above it. The second staff is for strings, starting with a rest and then playing a rhythmic pattern marked *p*. The third staff is for the piano, starting with a rest and then playing a melodic line marked *p*. The fourth staff is for the violin, starting with a rest and then playing a melodic line marked *p*, with the instruction "Vlc." above it. The fifth staff is for strings, starting with a rest and then playing a rhythmic pattern marked *p*, with the instruction "Tutti" above it.

This musical score is for the slow introduction of the first movement of Franz Joseph Haydn's Symphony no. 104. It features a string quartet and a piano. The score is marked [Tutti] and begins with a forte (*ff*) dynamic. The strings play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, while the piano provides harmonic support. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The score includes dynamics such as *ff*, *pp*, and *(p)*, and features a *Tutti* marking. The piano part includes a melodic line with a slur and a *pp* dynamic marking.

ex. 10-10a Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 104 ("London"), I, slow introduction

This musical score is for the Allegro movement of the first movement of Franz Joseph Haydn's Symphony no. 104. It features a string quartet and a piano. The score is marked Allegro and begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The strings play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, while the piano provides harmonic support. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The score includes dynamics such as *p* and *(p)*, and features a *Tutti* marking. The piano part includes a melodic line with a slur and a *p* dynamic marking.

A musical score for piano, 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 key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The music begins with a grand staff of piano. The first two staves have a melody with a long note followed by a series of eighth notes. The third staff is mostly rests, with some notes in the final measure. The fourth staff has a bass line with long notes and some eighth notes.

ex. 10-10b Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 104 ("London"), I, beginning of the Allegro

A musical score for the beginning of the Allegro movement from Franz Joseph Haydn's Symphony no. 104, showing the orchestration. The score is in 3/4 time and one sharp (F#). It features a full orchestra. The woodwinds (Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon) and strings (Violins I and II, Viola, Violoncello and Double Bass) are all playing. The brass (Horn, Trumpet) are also present. The score is marked with a forte (f) dynamic. The woodwinds and strings play a melody with a long note followed by a series of eighth notes. The brass play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The strings play a bass line with long notes and some eighth notes. The word "Tutti" is written above the Bassoon staff.

ex. 10-10c Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 104 (“London”), I, mm. 32–7

In its scant sixteen-measure span the slow introduction encompasses a complete tonal trajectory, enunciated through a rigorous process of *thematische Arbeit*. It is, in short, a minuscule but a fully elaborated sonata form in its own right. Compare mm. 1–2 with mm. 7–8 and mm. 14–15, and you will see a progression from tonic (D minor) to relative major (F major) and back. The progression out is very direct, taking no more than four measures. The progression back (mm. 9–13) is, as always, more tortuous; it uses its extra measure to reach a FOP (actually a series of unstable diminished harmonies) and gains extra “psychological” length by doubling the harmonic rhythm and then doubling it again. Both the progression out and the progression back are carried by a clear motivic derivation from the theme: its rhythm is abstracted and applied to stepwise melodic motion, while the inversion contour is maintained by the use of a rhythmically compressed answer in the first violins that falls (usually a semitone, inflected in m. 5 to a whole tone to produce the marvelously pithy modulation to III) to counterbalance the rising bass. On regaining the tonic in m. 14–15, Haydn with equal economy of means inflects the inversion to a falling fifth in place of the original fourth, reaching IV (harmonized as a “Neapolitan sixth”) and thus preparing a half cadence on V, so that the slow introduction might properly provide the running leap into the tonic and the new tempo.

What is noteworthy about the diminutive “sonata form” thus constructed is that it has only one theme. That may not seem remarkable in a 16-measure composition, but it is certainly remarkable in the 277-measure Allegro that follows. This nearly monothematic symphonic movement, by so advertising its economy, looks like a deviation from a norm

if a bithematic exposition is taken as “normal” symphonic procedure. It is so taken in most descriptions—the same descriptions that usually describe the overall shape of the movement, with its exposition, development, and recapitulation, as “ternary” on the *da capo* model, rather than an expanded (“symphonic”) binary form.

This bithematic ternary model, still taught in most textbooks, originated not in compositional practice but in earlier textbooks written in the 1830s for use in conservatory and university courses at Paris and Berlin. And that is why the first movement of Haydn’s “London” Symphony is indispensable to any properly historical treatment of the composer and his musical accomplishments. The discrepancy between Haydn’s own culminating and epitomizing symphonic movement and the later academic description of “sonata form” is an integral part of the history of nineteenth-century music and music education, but it ought not color our understanding of eighteenth-century musical style. For Haydn and his audience, the sonata form was made intelligible through a tonal, not a thematic, contrast. The thematic requirement was not contrast but *Arbeit*. These were the musical events and processes that left one with “something in one’s heart.”

And that is what Haydn provided in this movement with such remarkable concentration. In contrast to the opening theme of the “Surprise” Symphony, the opening theme here consists of a full sixteen-bar parallel period, eight bars to a half cadence (as shown in Ex. 10-10b), and then a repetition to a full cadence. The elision of the full cadence by a dramatic tutti signals the first major step along the tonal trajectory: thirty-four measures without a caesura (as it were, without a gulp of air), ending on the “V of V” to prepare the arrival of the “tonicized” dominant.

A closer look at the transitional or modulatory passage shows its close rhythmic relationship to the theme, further evidence of deliberate frugality of means. The rhythm of the main melody in mm. 32–35 (Ex. 10-10c) reproduces and repeats the rhythm heard at the beginning of Ex. 10-10b. The rhythm of the first violins, flutes, and (especially) first oboe at mm. 50–51 (Ex. 10-10d) is distinctly related to both the rhythm and the pitch repetitions in mm. 3–4 of Ex. 10-10b. Once this point is noticed, one notices further that the four-note pitch repetition first heard in Ex. 10-10b is often reproduced and extended in the bass (cf. Ex. 10-10e).

The image shows a page of a musical score for Franz Joseph Haydn's Symphony no. 104, I, mm. 50-53. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It features a woodwind section (Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon), strings (Violins I and II, Viola, Violoncello, Contrabass), and Horns and Trumpets. The flute and oboe play a melodic line with slurs and accents. The bassoon plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The strings provide harmonic support with sustained notes and rhythmic patterns.

ex. 10-10d Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 104 ("London"), I, mm. 50-53

And so it may occasion in us a bit less anachronistic surprise when the first theme returns wholesale to express the secondary key. This time the transitional passage that interrupts it with an elided cadence makes reference to the theme's syncopated inner voice as well as to both of the motivic relationships already pointed out—more insistence on extreme thematic parsimony. Indeed, the only "new" thematic material in the exposition comes in the coda, though even here there are definite (if subtle) motivic correspondences with the main theme: those with score in hand will notice that the melodic figure in the first violins in mm. 104, 106, and (in other instruments) mm. 108 and 110 is the inversion of the opening figure in the theme (and we have encountered far too many important inversion relationships in the structure of this movement to regard this one as a happenstance).

After so much demonstrative economizing on thematic content in the exposition, one is ready for anything in the development, where motivic economy is always prized. But even so, one cannot fail to be impressed by the yield Haydn manages to harvest from the two-measure repeated-note idea first heard in the third and fourth measures of Ex. 10-10b. The first restatements of it after the double bar (mm. 124-127) are nearly literal ones, merely substituting a minor-inflected semitone for the original whole tone in the second measure. Thereafter, the idea is altered melodically in various ways over the invariant original rhythm: cf. the exchange for winds and bass in mm. 131-35 (Ex. 10-10f).

Musical score for Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 104 ("London"), I, mm. 58-60. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bn.), Horn (Hn.), Trumpet (Tpt.), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello/Double Bass (Vc., Cb.). The key signature is D major and the time signature is 3/4. The Oboe part has a dynamic marking of *a2*.

ex. 10-10e Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 104 ("London"), I, mm. 58-60

Musical score for Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 104 ("London"), I, mm. 58-60, focusing on the string parts. The score includes parts for Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello/Double Bass (Vc., Cb.). The key signature is D major and the time signature is 3/4. The string parts are marked with a dynamic of *p*.

Fl. Solo
(p)

Ob. Solo
(p)

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc., Cb.

ex. 10-10f Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 104 ("London"), I, mm. 124–35

It would be an instructive exercise to analyze this development section to see where (if anywhere) the motive extracted from Ex. 10-10b, or at least one of its constituent measures, does *not* figure in the melodic elaboration. Even where the principal melodic line seems to have another source (e.g., Ex. 10-10g, expressing the FOP through a recall of the coda or "closing theme" at mm. 104 ff), the chugging repeated quarters in the bass are still derived from the main motive (and the way they are spotlighted by the bassoon in mm. 150–55 leaves no doubt as to the purposefulness of the reference). But one could go much farther than that if one is willing to allow that the falling seconds in Ex. 10-10g and its counterparts in the coda is motivically related to the falling second in Ex. 10-10b and its many echoes in the development section. (Alternatively, one could describe the first-violin figure in the first, third, seventh, and ninth measures of Ex. 10-10g as the inversion of the first measure in Ex. 10-10b.) In that case one could describe Ex. 10-10g as a contrapuntal montage of the movement's two main motivic ideas.

Bn. Solo
(p)

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

ex. 10-10g Franz Joseph Haydn, Symphony no. 104 (“London”), I, mm. 146–55

Recalling that the main theme begins (as so often with Haydn) on the third degree of the scale, one might well predict the way in which the double return is prepared. The reassertion of the original key carries a heavier emotional payload than usual in this movement, since the development section had been confined so perspicuously (and so unexpectedly) to minor tonalities. Indeed, thanks to some particularly ingenious deceptive cadences, it is a wider range of minor tonalities than we have ever encountered before in direct succession, including two (C# and G# minor) that lack even a secondary function in the home key, making the passage in Ex. 10-10g a farther-out FOP than any previous Haydn symphony had reached.

To the very end, then, Haydn was expanding the horizons of his signature genre and enhancing its import in response to the new importance of the subscription public to his art. The radical economy of thematic content together with the generous expansion of the tonal trajectory combine vastly to enlarge the music’s “meaningfulness.” The apparent thematic miserliness makes introversive reference pervasive: that is its true purpose and achievement. In such a situation practically every phrase relates motivically to music previously heard and putatively forecasts the music to come. And projecting this network of introversive signaling over an enriched tonal compass has the effect of increasing the scope—one might almost say the spatial reach—of introversive resonance and allowing it to combine more freely with the traditional vocabulary of pathos. The more consistent and rigorous the thematic process, and the more adventurous the tonal range, the more one is left with in one’s heart.

Notes:

(14) Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*, Vol. III, p. 531.

(15) Quoted in Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*, Vol. III, p. 283.

(16) Quoted in Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*, Vol. III, p. 309.

(17) Quoted in Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*, Vol. III, p. 308.

(18) Griesinger, *Biographische Notizen*, p. 60.

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Oxford History of Western Music: Richard Taruskin

CHAPTER 11 The Composer's Voice

Mozart's Piano Concertos; His Last Symphonies; The Fantasia as Style and as Metaphor

Chapter: CHAPTER 11 The Composer's Voice

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

ART FOR ART'S SAKE?

To cap the point on which the previous chapter came to rest, and appreciate the range and depth to which subjective emotional declaration could now be brought within the reach of late eighteenth-century instrumental style, consider a symphonic movement by Mozart, Haydn's great contemporary, whose short life came to an end during Haydn's first London tour. Owing to the vastly different conditions of his career, symphonies and quartets were never as central to Mozart's output as they were to Haydn's—or rather, they attracted his intense interest only rather late in the game, not long before its premature termination. Until the mid-1780s, they remained for him light entertainment genres. For Mozart, the symphony, especially, remained close to its sources in the opera pit and its frequent garden-party function. One of his best-known symphonies, no. 35 in D, subtitled “Haffner,” was actually composed (as late as July 1782) as a serenade to entertain a party celebrating the ennoblement of a Mozart family friend, and became a concert symphony by losing its introductory march and its second minuet.

Mozart's instrumental style underwent an appreciable deepening after his move to Vienna in his late twenties and the start of a risky new life as a “free artist.” Meeting Haydn and playing quartets with him—Haydn on violin, Mozart on viola—was one of the catalysts. Mozart wrote a set of six quartets—“the fruits of long and laborious endeavor,” he called them—as if in direct response to Haydn's op. 33 (then Haydn's latest works) and published them in 1785 with a title page announcing that they were *Dedicati al Signor Giuseppe Haydn, Maestro di Cappella di S. A. il Principe d'Esterhazy &c &c, Dal Suo Amico W. A. Mozart, Opera X* (“Dedicated to Mr. Joseph Haydn, Music Director to His Highness the Prince of Esterhazy, etc. etc., by his friend W. A. Mozart, op. 10”).¹ The features of texture and motivic saturation that so distinguished Haydn's quartets were a powerful stimulus to Mozart's imagination, with results that caused an astonished Haydn to exclaim to Leopold Mozart (at another Vienna quartet party), “Before God, and as an honest man, I tell you that your son is the greatest composer known to me in person or by name. He has taste, and, what is more, the greatest knowledge of composition.”²



fig. 11-1 Five-octave piano customary in Mozart's time (Ferdinand Hoffman, Vienna).

What he did not have was a steady job. In the years following his boot from Salzburg, Mozart lived what was by comparison with Haydn, or even with his own father, the life of a veritable vagabond, enjoying a precarious love-hate relationship with a fickle public and its novel institutions of collective patronage. The very fact that Mozart dedicated his quartet volume to Haydn rather than to a prospective noble patron is an indication of his unusually autonomous, hazardous, and self-centered existence. For his livelihood he relied most on something Haydn did not have: surpassing performance skills. Mozart's most characteristic and important instrumental music, for that reason, usually involved the piano. Because they did not, symphonies and quartets had perforce to take a back seat.

But in the summer of 1788, in the happy aftermath of the Vienna première of *Don Giovanni*, Mozart composed the three symphonies that turned out to be his last: no. 39 in E \flat , K. 543 (finished 26 June); no. 40 in G minor, K. 550 (finished 25 July); no. 41 in C, K. 551 (known as "Jupiter," finished 10 August). They are not known to have been commissioned for any occasion; and while Mozart surely hoped to make money from them, either by putting on subscription concerts or selling them to a publisher, they seem (like the "Haydn" quartets) to have been written "on spec," as the saying now goes among professionals—without immediate prospects, on the composer's own impulse, at his own risk.

This was not then a “normal” *modus operandi* for musicians; in somewhat hyperbolic historical hindsight these works loom as the earliest symphonies to be composed as “art for art’s sake”—or, at the very least, for the sake of the composer’s own creative satisfaction. (This of course is not in the least to imply that other composers did not derive satisfaction from their achievements; only that under conditions of “daily business” such as eighteenth-century musicians thought normal, creative satisfaction was the result of their effort, not its driving force.) Is there anything about their style, craft, or content that reflects this unusual status?

An argument could certainly be made that they are more reflective than most “public” music of the kind of subjectivity associated—like the very act of composing “for no reason”—with romanticism. It is a point similar to one made in a previous chapter about Mozart’s operatic music and its emotional iconicity, its way of appearing, through the exact representation of “body language,” to offer an internal portrait of a character to which listeners could compare their own inner life. The difference, of course, is that in the case of a symphony there is no mediating, “objectively” rendered stage character; there is only the “subject persona” evoked by the sounds of the music, easily (and under romanticism, conventionally) associated with the composer’s own person. There is no hard evidence to support the view that Mozart’s music contains a Romantic emotional self-portrait; there is just the widespread opinion of his contemporaries, and the supposition that the composer, late in life, may have subscribed to what was fast becoming a conventional code.

The supposition is often supported by citing the virtually operatic first movement of the G-minor Symphony, with its atmosphere of pathos, so unlike the traditional affect of what was still regarded in Vienna as party (or at least as festive) music. That atmosphere is conjured up by two highly contrasted, lyrical themes, a wealth of melting chromaticism, and a high level of rhythmic agitation. As with Haydn’s extraordinary concision, Mozart’s lyrical profusion is perhaps his most conspicuous feature. And yet it would be a pity to overlook, in our fascination with Mozart’s prodigal outpouring of seemingly spontaneous emotion, the high technical craft with which a motive derived from the first three notes of the first theme—exactly as in Haydn’s “Joke” Quartet (Ex. 10-6)—is made to pervade the whole musical fabric, turning up in all kinds of shrewd variations and contrapuntal combinations. It is the balance between ingenious calculation and (seemingly) ingenuous spontaneity, and the way in which the former serves to engineer the latter, that can so astonish listeners in Mozart’s instrumental music.

Mozart was keenly aware of the relationship in his work between ingenuity of calculation and spontaneity of effect, and the special knack he had for pleasing the connoisseurs without diminishing the emotional impact of his music on the crowd. His letters are full of somewhat bumptious comments to the effect that (to quote one, to his father, from 1782): “there are passages here and there from which only *Kenner* can derive satisfaction; but these passages are written in such a way that the less learned (*nicht-kenner*) cannot fail to be pleased, though without knowing why.”³

Notes:

(1) Mozart, Dedication of “Six Quartets, op. 10” (Vienna: Artaria, 1785).

(2) Leopold Mozart to Maria Anna Mozart, February 1782; quoted in H. C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*, Vol. II (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), pp. 508–9.

(3) Mozart to his father, 28 December 1782; Eric Blom, ed., *Mozart’s Letters*, trans. Emily Anderson (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1956), p. 204.

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Oxford History of Western Music: Richard Taruskin

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Mozart: Works, 1781–8

PSYCHOANALYZING MUSIC

Chapter: CHAPTER 11 The Composer's Voice

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

So it is no exaggeration to claim that when Mozart is functioning at the top of his form, it is precisely the hidden craft that creates the impression of intense subjective emotion, and that without the concealed devices that only technical analysis can uncover, the emotion could never reach such intensity. A matchless case in point is the slow second movement of the Symphony no. 39 in E \flat , K. 543, the first of the “self-motivated” and possibly self-centered 1788 trilogy. What follows will be the closest technical analysis yet attempted in this book, focusing in as it will on the career of a single pitch over the course of the movement (so keep the score at hand). Ultimately, however, the object of analysis will be not so much the recondite technical means as the palpable expressive achievement.

The unfolding of this *Andante con moto* in A \flat major conforms to no established format. Attempts to pigeonhole the movement according to the forms that were later codified in textbooks result in clumsy circumlocutions that betray their anachronism. The Scottish composer Donald Francis Tovey, one of the great music analysts of the early twentieth century, once found himself in precisely this quandary, reduced to describing the movement chiefly in terms of what it did *not* contain:

The form of the whole is roughly that of a first movement [i.e., a “sonata form”] with no repeats (I am not considering the small repeats of the two portions of the “binary” first theme), and with no development section, but with a full recapitulation and a final return to the first theme by way of coda.⁴

Andante

Vln. I
p *sempre*

Vln. II
p

Vla.
p

Vc.
p

Cb.
p

The first system of the score consists of five staves. The top staff is for Violin I, featuring a melodic line with slurs and a *sempre* marking. The second staff is for Violin II, playing a rhythmic accompaniment. The third staff is for Viola, the fourth for Violoncello, and the fifth for Contrabass. All instruments are marked *p* (piano). The time signature is 2/4 and the key signature has three flats.

The second system continues the piece. Vln. I has a melodic line with slurs and a *sempre* marking. The other instruments continue their accompaniment. The time signature is 2/4 and the key signature has three flats.

ex. 11-1a W. A. Mozart, Symphony no. 39 in E-flat, II, opening

But no one ever listens to music like that. Any meaningful description of the movement will have to account for what it does contain, not what it doesn't, beginning with a main theme (Ex. 11-1a) that, as Tovey observed, is presented as a fully elaborated, closed binary structure. This, of course, is something that never happens in a "first-movement" form, where the whole chain of events is inevitably set in motion by the interruption or elision of the theme's final close. If we must pigeonhole, the category that is most likely to occur to us as a working hypothesis while listening is that of rondo. And there would be some corroboration for this conjecture later on, as we shall see, in the form of contrasting "episodes" (again reminiscent of those encountered in the slow movement of Haydn's "Joke" Quartet, to which the present Andante is formally related). But it would still be better to take things as they come and regard the form of the piece as a result or outcome of a sequence of meaningful acts or "gestures," some of them now and then recalling this or that familiar formal strategy.

The two halves of the opening theme are related in a way that recalls "sonata form," with the second half encompassing some motivic development, especially of the unaccompanied violin phrase first heard in mm. 2–3, and then a double return. That double return is tinged with irony, though, in the form of a modal mixture—the substitution of the parallel minor for the original tonic in mm. 22–25. The return is no return. You can't go back again. Experience has cast a pall. The inflection of C to C \flat , the tiniest inflection possible, makes a huge difference. Mozart was very fond of half-step adjustments that have outsized repercussions. Looking back at the first half of the

theme, for example, we notice how he has managed to reroute the second cadence to the dominant just by inflecting the signature $D \flat$, as heard in m. 3, to D natural in m. 7.

The inflection to $C \flat$ means a lot more. It bodes ill. As the music historian Leo Treitler memorably put it, the seemingly unmotivated modal mixture is “a signal of a coming complication, or perhaps it is better understood as a provocation—the injection without warning of an element, however small, that is uncongenial to the prevailing atmosphere and inevitably provokes trouble.”⁵ Indeed it will. And yet the theme’s final cadence puts the intruder out of mind as though nothing had happened. In psychological terms, the $C \flat$ and its troubling implications have been “repressed,” as one might repress a disagreeable passing thought. But as a result that cheery final cadence has an ironic tinge; it is covering something up. One has the uneasy feeling that “something” will be back.

And sure enough, a new intruder now bursts upon the scene: the wind instruments, silent up to now, enter on the dominant of F minor, the relative minor of the main key, and force the music into a new harmonic domain. The element of force is palpable, not only because of the peremptoriness of the winds’ maneuver, but because of the completely unexpected nature of the strings’ response: stormy, anguished, protesting (or, in “objective” musical terms, abruptly loud, syncopated, dissonant). Most significant of all, what finally forces the bass instruments off their *tremolando* F is the reappearance in m. 33, in a much more dissonant (diminished-seventh) context, of the repressed $C \flat$, now a far more active ingredient, harmonically speaking, than it had been before (Ex. 11-1b). The repressed has returned; and, as always, it has returned in a more threatening guise. In m. 35 it actually takes over briefly as harmonic root (of a “German sixth” chord) before resolving, its force spent, to the dominant of V .

The image displays a musical score for W. A. Mozart's Symphony no. 39 in E-flat, II, mm. 33-38. The score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes the Flute (FL.), Clarinet (Cl.), and Bassoon (Bn.) parts. The second system includes the Horn (Hn.), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.) parts. The key signature is E-flat major (three flats). The time signature is 3/4. The score shows the entry of wind instruments in m. 33, followed by a stormy and anguished response from the strings. Dynamic markings include 'p' (piano) and 'fp' (fortissimo piano). The score is written in a standard musical notation with various clefs and accidentals.

ex. 11-1b W. A. Mozart, Symphony no. 39 in E-flat, II, mm. 33-38

ex. 11-1c W. A. Mozart, Symphony no. 39 in E-flat, II, mm. 48–53

Again it has been repressed, but with much greater effort than before, and incompletely. In mm. 39–45 the winds and basses try to recover the poise of the motivic dialogue first heard in mm. 9–14, but the unremitting tremolo in the violins acts as a continuing irritant, and another anguished response bursts out at m. 46, leading to a recurrence of the repressed note in the bass (in its enharmonic variant, B natural) with gathering force (in m. 48 as a nonharmonic escape note, in m. 49 as the functional harmonic bass; see Ex. 11-1c). The first violins try to change the subject at m. 50, but they cannot shake the B natural; it keeps intruding in place of B ♭ (its trespass or forced entry underscored by its being sustained), and in m. 51 it is approached by a direct and highly disruptive leap of a tritone.

Now, ironically, it is the winds, the original disturbers of the peace, who intervene to calm things down. The long passage from m. 53 to m. 68, leading to a serenely harmonious reprise of the original theme in the original key, is dominated by two points of imitation in the winds, of which the subject is drawn from the first wind entrance at m. 28; an effort to “undo the damage” is perhaps connoted by the inversion of the sixteenth-note turn figure (compare m. 54 *et seq.* with the flute in m. 29). The whole passage that follows (through m. 90) sounds like a “recapitulation” of the original theme, with the strings and winds now cooperating amicably in bright and brainy counterpoints (some of them, particularly the winds’ staccato scales in mm. 77–82, in a distinctly *opera buffa* spirit).

But in m. 91 (Ex. 11-1d) the repressed again returns with a vengeance, abetted by a portentous four-note chromatic segment in the winds that ushers in a passage of bizarre, almost bewildering commotion. It is the old storm-and-stress material first brought on by the winds in m. 28, only now transposed to B minor, a key so “far out” with respect to the original tonic as to have no normal functional relationship with it at all. Its relationship to the original “storm-and-stress” key, however, has been prefigured by that violin leap, already characterized as “disruptive,” from F to B in m. 51. And of course its tonic pitch is none other than the foreign body the movement has been trying to eject since its first appearance in m. 24. The repressed thought has not only returned, it has become an anguished, controlling obsession.

The image displays a page of a musical score for the second movement of W. A. Mozart's Symphony no. 39 in E-flat major. The score is for measures 91 through 97. It features a full orchestral ensemble including Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bn.), Horn (Hn.), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The key signature is E-flat major (three flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The score shows a complex harmonic progression with various dynamics and articulations. The woodwinds and strings play intricate patterns, while the horns have a more sustained role. The overall texture is rich and detailed.

ex. 11-1d W. A. Mozart, Symphony no. 39 in E-flat, II, mm. 91–97

Now it can be ejected only by really drastic measures. To recount them briefly: after a first fitful attempt to dislodge the B-natural by chromatic steps, it returns (spelled $C \flat$) and is resolved in mm. 103–4 by treating it as a dominant to $F \flat$ (how many times could that note have functioned as a tonic in the eighteenth century?). In m. 105, the $F \flat$, by picking up an augmented sixth (D natural in the winds), is identified as the flat submediant of $A \flat$, the home key, and is finally resolved to $E \flat$, the dominant, in m. 106 (see Ex. 11-1e).

ex. 11-1e W. A. Mozart, *Symphony no. 39 in E-flat, II*, mm. 103–108

Still the repressed note does not give up without a fight. After one last resurgence of conflict (mm. 116–19), the first violins try to bridge the last gap to the tonic, but are stalled briefly (mm. 121–24) by a couple of “difficult” intervals—a diminished fifth, and finally a diminished seventh that softly insinuates the $C\flat$ for the last time before the final subsidence into the tonic (Ex. 11-1f). When the main theme comes back for the last time (m. 144), its cadence is at last purged of modal mixture, as if to say “I’m cured.” Even so, at m. 151 and again at m. 155 there are a couple of lingering, curiously nostalgic twinges (Ex. 11-1g). The $C\flat$ comes back as a decorative bass note, always in conjunction (at first direct, then oblique) with D natural, with which it forms a “pre-dominant” diminished seventh, directing the harmony securely back to a tonic cadence that is repeated four times, the last time suddenly loud. This overly insistent close seems to protest a bit too much, as if to say “I’m OK! Really!”

ex. 11-1f W. A. Mozart, *Symphony no. 39 in E-flat, II*, mm. 121–125

The image shows a page of a musical score for the second movement of Mozart's Symphony No. 39 in E-flat major. The score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bn.), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The second system includes parts for Horn (Hn.), Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The music is in E-flat major and 3/4 time. The score features elegant melodic lines and a steady rhythmic accompaniment. The second system begins with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

ex. 11-1g W. A. Mozart, Symphony no. 39 in E-flat, II, end

The use of words like “repression” and “obsession” might seem carelessly anachronistic. They are (or, at least, can often be used as) psychoanalytical terms—terms that had their main currency in the twentieth century. Obviously, Mozart could not have known them, just as he could not have known the work of Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), the main theorist of psychoanalysis, who was chiefly responsible for their vogue in twentieth-century parlance. But of course Freud knew Mozart, just as he knew the literary legacy of Romanticism, and repeatedly commented that his own contribution oftentimes amounted to no more than giving names and clinical interpretations to age-old psychological phenomena that poets (and, let us add, tone-poets) had long since portrayed artistically in their every detail.

Not only twentieth-century listeners, but Mozart’s own contemporaries recognized that his instrumental music was unusually rich—unprecedentedly rich, they thought—in “inner portraiture.” It was Mozart above all who prompted Wilhelm Wackenroder (1773–98), an early theorist of Romanticism whose life was even shorter than Mozart’s, to formulate the very influential idea that “music reveals all the thousandfold transitional motions of our soul,” and that symphonies, in particular, “present dramas such as no playwright can make,” because they deal with the inner impulses that we can subjectively experience but that we cannot paraphrase in words.⁶

It was because of this perceived “new art” of subjective expression, as E. T. A. Hoffmann dubbed it, that symphonies, like all instrumental music, achieved an esthetic status far beyond anything they had formerly known, to the point where the instrumental medium could rival and even outstrip the vocal as an embodiment of human feeling. Hoffmann made the point quite explicitly and related it to the historical development traced in chapter 10. “In earlier days,” Hoffmann wrote,

one regarded symphonies merely as introductory pieces to any larger production whatsoever; the opera overtures themselves mostly consisted of several movements and were entitled “sinfonia.” Since then our great masters of instrumental music have bestowed upon the symphony a tendency such that nowadays it has become an autonomous whole and, at the same time, the highest type of instrumental music.

And specifically about Mozart’s E ♭ -major Symphony, K. 543, which contains the movement we have just examined in detail, Hoffmann wrote:

Mozart leads us into the heart of the spirit realm. Fear takes us in its grasp, but without torturing us, so that it is more an intimation of the infinite. Love and melancholy call to us with lovely spirit voices; night comes on with a bright purple luster, and with inexpressible longing we follow those figures which, waving us familiarly into their train, soar through the clouds in eternal dances of the spheres.⁷

It is tempting to speculate that the novel impression of enhanced subjectivity in Mozart’s instrumental music, and its vaunted autonomy (leading eventually to the idea, prized in the nineteenth century, of “absolute music” as the highest-aspiring of all the arts), had something to do with Mozart’s own novel, relatively uncertain and stressful social situation, and the heightened sense that it might have entailed of himself as an autonomous individual subjectively registering an emotional (or “spiritual”) reaction to the vicissitudes of his existence.

A number of critics have pointed to Mozart as the earliest composer in whose music one can recognize what one of them, Rose Rosengard Subotnik, has called the “critical world view” associated with modernity.⁸ Such a view entails a sense of reality that is no longer fully supported by social norms accepted as universal, but that must be personally constructed and defended. Its ultimate reference point is subjective: not the Enlightenment’s universal (and therefore impersonal) standard of reason, but the individual sentient self.

It is a less happy, less confident sense of reality than the one vouchsafed by unquestioned social convention, and it points the way to the “existential loneliness” or alienation associated with romanticism. Hoffmann himself, perhaps somewhat irreverently paraphrasing the words of Jesus, averred that the “kingdom” of art was “not of this world.”⁹ Artists who see themselves in this way are the ones most inclined to create “art for art’s sake,” as Mozart may have done in the case of his last three symphonies.

And yet, of course, it was a change in the social and economic structures mediating the production and dissemination of art—the conditions, in short, “of this world”—that gave artists such an idea of themselves. Mozart was the first great musician to have tried to make a career within these new market structures. We shall see their effects most clearly by turning now to the works he composed for himself to perform, particularly his concertos.

Notes:

(4) Donald Francis Tovey, *Essays in Musical Analysis*, Vol. I (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), p. 189.

(5) Leo Treitler, “Mozart and the Idea of Absolute Music,” in *Music and the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 206.

(6) Wilhelm Wackenroder, *Phantasien über die Kunst, für Freunde der Kunst* (Hamburg, 1799); in Wackenroder, *Werke und Briefe* (Heidelberg, 1967), p. 254.

(7) E. T. A. Hoffmann, “Beethoven’s Instrumental Music” (1813), in Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History* (New York: Norton, 1950), p. 777.

(8) See R. R. Subotnik, “Evidence of a Critical World View in Mozart’s Last Three Symphonies,” in *Music and*

Civilisation: Essays in Honor of Paul Henry Lang, ed. E. Strainchamps, M. R. Maniates, and C. Hatch (New York: Norton, 1984), pp. 29–43.

(9) E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Kreisleriana* (1813), trans. Stephen Rumph in “A Kingdom Not of This World: The Political Context of E. T. A. Hoffmann’s Beethoven Criticism,” *19th Century Music* XIX (1995–96): 50.

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THE “SYMPHONIC” CONCERTO IS BORN

Chapter: CHAPTER 11 The Composer’s Voice

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

Despite Haydn’s unprecedented achievements in the realm of instrumental music, his catalogue contains a notable gap. His output of concertos is relatively insignificant. Only two or three dozen works of that kind are securely attributed to him, which may sound prolific enough until his hundred-plus symphonies and eighty-plus quartets are set beside them. Nor are they of a quality to stand comparison with those better-known works. Among them are a couple of perky little items that still figure occasionally on concert programs: a harpsichord concerto in D major and an unusual one in E \flat for “clarino” (that is, trumpet played high), composed in London in 1796.

His two cello concertos, especially the rather lengthy one in D major composed in 1783 for Anton Kraft, the solo cellist in Prince Esterházy’s orchestra (and once attributed to him), are played, some would suggest, more often than they deserve since today’s virtuoso cellists have hardly any “classical” concertos in their repertory. The D-major concerto originally won its place in the modern concert hall thanks to a modernized arrangement by the Belgian music scholar François-Auguste Gevaert; its only “classical” counterpart in the cello repertory, a concerto in B \flat by Luigi Boccherini (1743–1805), was likewise popularized in an arrangement by the cellist Friedrich Grützmacher. It says a lot about Haydn’s concertos that they have needed editorial modernization in order to reenter the modern repertory, while his late symphonies, never modernized, have never gone out of style.

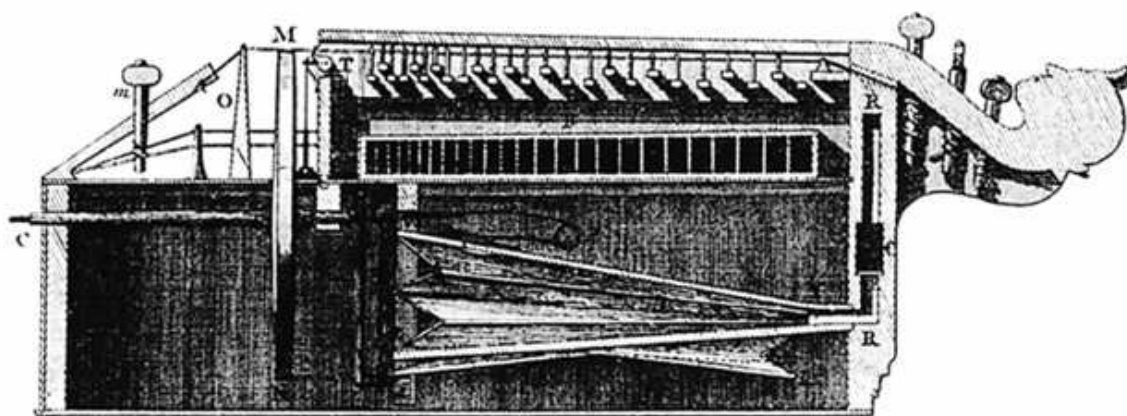
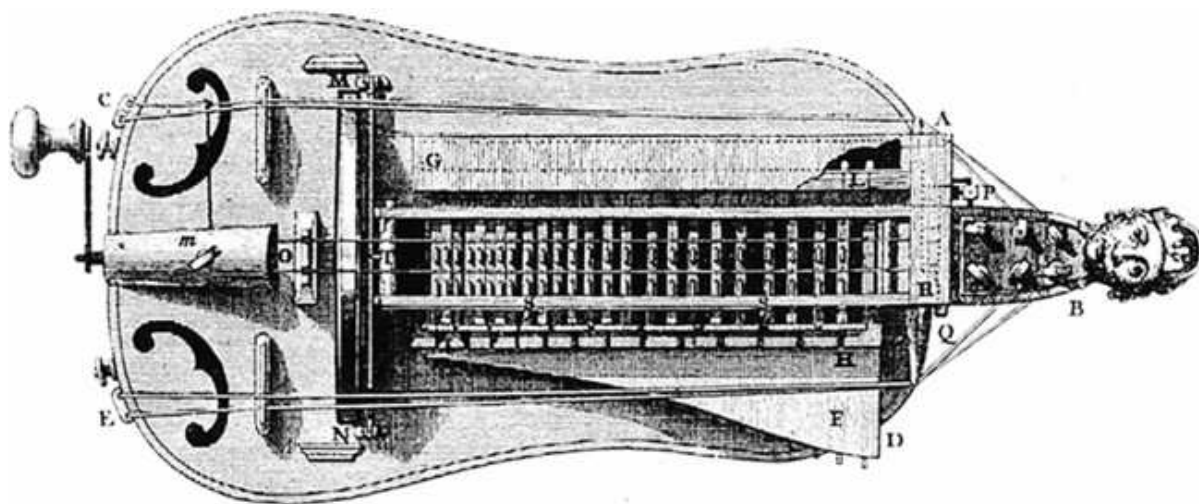


fig. 11-2 Lira organizzata, for which Haydn wrote a set of concertos (Bèdos de Celles, *L'art du facteur d'orgues*, 1778).

Few but students play Haydn's four violin concertos any more, and a fair number of Haydn concertos are for instruments that nobody (well, hardly anybody) plays at all any more. Besides two concertos for Prince Nikolaus Esterházy's beloved baryton, there are five for a pair of *lire organizzate*, weird hybrid instruments resembling hurdy-gurdies, activated by turning a crank but equipped on the inside with organ pipes and miniature bellows along with (or instead of) the usual violin strings. Haydn's output for *lira organizzata* (including several "notturmi" or serenades in addition to the concertos) were written quite late in his career, between 1786 and 1794, on commission from Ferdinand IV, King of Naples, an enthusiast of the improbable contraption.

From this inventory of miscellaneous and rather perfunctory minor works a couple of important facts emerge. As the baryton and lira items suggest, Haydn's concertos were written to order, as the sometimes unpredictable occasion arose, and had little or nothing to do with the composer's personal predilections. Never once, moreover, did Haydn envision himself as the soloist in any of his concertos. He was not a virtuoso on any instrument, although he could function creditably as an ensemble violinist or a keyboard accompanist.

The situation with Mozart could not have been more different. His concertos were arguably the most vital and important portion of his instrumental output. Not only do they bulk larger in his catalogue, their total roughly equaling that of the symphonies, they also include some of his most original and influential work. As a result, Mozart's standing as a concerto composer is comparable to Haydn's in the realm of the symphony: he completely transformed the genre and provided the model on which all future concerto-writing depended. And that is largely because Mozart, as celebrated a performing virtuoso as he was a creative artist, was his own intended soloist—not only in his twenty-seven piano concertos but in his half-dozen violin concertos as well.

Mozart's earliest concertos were written at the age of eleven (at Salzburg in the spring and summer of 1767), for use as display pieces in his early tours as a child prodigy. They are not entirely original works but arrangements for

harpsichord and small orchestra (oboes, horns, and strings) of sonata movements by several established composers including C. P. E. Bach and Hermann Friedrich Raupach, whom the seven-year-old Mozart had met in Paris during a five-month stay in 1763–64, his first tour abroad. A few years later, when he was sixteen, Mozart made similar touring arrangements of three sonatas by J. C. Bach, whom he had got to know well in London in 1765. These were scored for a really minimal band (two violins and bass) for which Mozart composed ritornellos to alternate phrase-by-phrase with the originals. These pieces may not amount to much, but they did set the tone for Mozart’s lifetime output of concertos written for his own concert use.

Mozart’s first entirely original piano concerto (now known as “No. 5” and listed in the Köchel catalogue as K. 175) was written back home in Salzburg in December 1773, shortly before the composer’s eighteenth birthday. (He was still playing it in 1782, when he furnished it with a new finale for a concert in Vienna.) For the next two years, however, Mozart concentrated on the violin. His father, himself a famous violinist, encouraged him with the promise that if he applied himself, he could become the greatest violinist in Europe. As if to give himself an incentive to practice, Mozart composed five violin concertos between April and December 1775, as well as a curious piece he called “Concertone” (an invented word meaning “great big concerto”) for two violins and orchestra, which he composed, perhaps to perform with his father, in May 1774.

Mozart never did become the greatest violinist in Europe, but his brash and entertaining violin concertos of 1775, composed at the age of nineteen, were nevertheless a watershed in his career. In them he began to combine the older ritornello form inherited from the concerto grosso with the idiosyncratic, highly contrasted thematic “dramaturgy” of the contemporary symphony, itself heavily indebted for its verve and variety to the comic opera. Out of this eclectic mixture came the concerto style that Mozart made his trademark.

The Salzburg violin concertos are light and witty works in the serenade or divertimento mold. The third (in G, K. 216) and fourth (in D, K. 218) are virtually identical in form. They begin with bright allegros in an expanded ritornello form; their middle movements are lyrical “arias” (actually marked *cantabile*—“songfully”—in no. 4) in which the soloist takes the lead throughout; and their finales, titled “rondeau” in the French manner, are dancelike compositions in which the most variegated episodes alternate playfully with a refrain. In no. 3 the refrain is in a lilting characteristic of the genre, but one of its episodes is a little march (preceded by an *Andante* in the minor). In no. 4 the recurrent tune itself alternates phrases in with phrases in . This prankishly exaggerated heterogeneity—a Mozartean trademark!—lends these concluding movements something resembling the character of an *opera buffa* finale.

Ob. Allegro aperto
TUTTI

Hn.

Solo vln.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

ex. 11-2a W. A. Mozart, Violin Concerto no. 5, K. 219, I, mm. 1–9

The fifth violin concerto (in A, K. 219) carries this comic opera effect to an extreme. Its finale, though not explicitly labeled “rondeau” since it has only one episode (resulting in the equally operatic *da capo* form), is an even wilder motley than its predecessors. The outer sections embody a gracious dancelike refrain in time marked “Tempo di Menuetto,” while the middle of the piece consists of a riotous march or “quick-step” in the parallel minor, cast unexpectedly in the “alla turca” or “janissary” mode we have already encountered in *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, Mozart’s boisterous singspiel of 1782. (Osmin’s rage aria from that opera, we may recall, is also in A minor, as is the famous “Rondo alla turca” finale from the piano sonata, K. 331; it was Mozart’s “Turkish” key, and the fifth violin concerto is sometimes called the “Turkish” concerto.) The concerto’s first movement opens with a droll sendup of the Mannheim orchestra’s flashy routines, which Mozart had not yet actually heard on location, but which were avidly imitated, as we have seen, at the Parisian Concert Spirituel, which he did most enthusiastically attend as a boy. After a cheeky *premier coup d’archet* (“first stroke of the bow”) comes a pair of “Mannheim rockets”—lithe arpeggios in the violins that rise to little sonic outbursts in mm. 5 and 9 (Ex. 11-2a). Thereafter the mood of this opening tutti seems to change like the weather, in a manner again recalling descriptions of the Mannheim orchestra and the showpieces composed for it: *pianissimos* alternating with *fortissimos*, chromatic harmonies with primary chords, marchlike rhythms with syncopations, all leading to a concluding “tag” or fanfare on the tonic triad, arpeggiated *all’unisono* (Ex. 11-2b).

And now the soloist enters—with an altogether unexpected lyrical *adagio* that proceeds through a really purple harmonic patch (a deceptive cadence to an augmented-sixth chord) and reaches yet another full stop on the tonic. Only now does the movement really seem to get under way, and very wittily, with the violin playing the main theme over a repetition by the orchestra of its opening Mannheim flourishes, now revealed as a mere accompaniment to the real substance of the movement (hence the implied satire on what for the Mannheimers was the main event).

Thereafter the whole opening tutti passes in review—with the very telling exception that it is now expanded by means of solo interpolations, and with the quietest passage from the opening tutti now transposed to the dominant, thus taking on the characteristics of a "second theme" in a "sonata-form" or symphonic exposition. More solo passagework intervenes between this transposed passage and the next theme recalled from the opening tutti, thus giving the latter the character of a codetta closing off the exposition and leading—through an unexpectedly "far-out" V of iii—into what is obviously going to be a "development" section.

Ob. "tag" Adagio. SOLO

Hn.

Solo vln.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

f *p* *p*

ex. 11-2b W. A. Mozart, Violin Concerto no. 5, K. 219, I, mm. 37-41

“tag” developed

Ob.
Hn.
Solo Vln.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.



Solo Vln.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

ex. 11-2c W. A. Mozart, Violin Concerto no. 5, K. 219, I, mm. 61–73

Of course there has already been a fair amount of thematic development in the exposition, chiefly involving the “tag,” which now comes twice—once in the tonic, to close off the “first theme,” and once in the dominant, to close off the “second.” The first time around (Ex. 11-2c), its final rising arpeggio is immediately appropriated by the soloist, who trades it off with the orchestral basses three times, after which it goes into the orchestral first and second violins to accompany the modulation to the dominant. This merry interplay actually performs a subtle structural role: by initiating the exchange, the first rising bass arpeggio is simultaneously an ending (of the “tag”) and a beginning (of the modulation). Its ambiguous status, in other words, provides the phrase elision or “elided cadence” traditionally invoked to cover the structural joint where theme gives way to “bridge” or transition.

Here, in embryo, we have the so-called “double exposition” technique through which the concerto form was modernized in the age of the symphony. The first compositions in which the technique can be identified are found in a set of six keyboard concertos by J. C. Bach, published in London as his opus 1 in 1763. These, possibly along with the unpublished but widely circulated concertos of C. P. E. Bach, may be regarded as Mozart’s models. But although pioneered by the Bach brothers, the technique was used so consistently (and more to the point, varied so imaginatively) by Mozart, and became through him so influential, that since the end of the eighteenth century it has been thought of as the foundation of the “Mozartean” concerto style.

According to Heinrich Christoph Koch, the most encyclopedic music theorist and critic of the late eighteenth century, if one considers "Mozart's masterpieces in this category of art works, one has an exact description of the characteristics of a good concerto."¹⁰ And according to Carl Czerny, a pupil of Beethoven, who wrote the most influential music textbooks of the early nineteenth century, the form of the solo concerto had been expressly established by Mozart as a vehicle for representing the same kind of intense subjective feeling we have already observed in his symphonies.¹¹ This simplified account of the concerto's genealogy is obviously colored by the mythology that grows up around any great creative figure, but (as in any myth) its departures from the literal truth give insight into cultural values. Like all the other genres of the late eighteenth century, the concerto was formally transformed in order to serve new social purposes and meet new expressive demands.

In the first movement of a modernized (or "symphonized," or "Mozartean") concerto, the opening or chrestal ritornello and the first solo episode contain the same thematic material, but with three significant differences the second time around. First, and most obviously, the themes are redistributed between the soloist and the band. Second, they are often augmented by passages and, occasionally, by whole themes newly contributed by the soloist, and thereafter reserved for the solo part. Third, and most important by far, the second statement (and only the second one) will make the intensifying modulation to the dominant without which there can be no properly symphonic form.

These modifications amount, in effect, to a way of "dynamizing" the statically sectional ritornello form in which concertos were formerly cast by adding to it the closed ("there and back") tonal trajectory of the symphonic binary form. It is true that even in a Vivaldi concerto the first ritornello stays in the tonic and the first solo moves out to the dominant (in the major). But the two sections in the earlier concerto did not share thematic material. It is the deployment of a similar melodic content toward crucially divergent ends that so dramatizes the symphonic concerto. By adding an element of overarching tonal drama to the form, Mozart's concertos serve further to dramatize the relationship between the soloist and the accompanying (or, as the case may be, dominating) group.

The technique was not christened "double-exposition" until the end of the nineteenth century. (The actual term was coined by Ebenezer Prout, a prolific British writer of conservatory textbooks, in 1895.)¹² But as early as 1793, only two years after Mozart's death, Koch described the contemporary concerto in terms of its relationship to the symphony, and so it is by no means anachronistic to view it so today. Indeed, there is no other way to account for the dynamic, dramatic, and expressive resources now employed by the composers (who were often also the performers) of concertos. They all had their origin in the symphony; but it could be argued that they reached their peak of development somewhat earlier, in Mozart's concertos.

Notes:

(10) Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Musikalisches Lexicon* (Frankfurt am Main: A. Hermann der junger, 1802), col. 354.

(11) C. Czerny, *Vollständiges Lehrbuch der musikalischen Composition*, Vol. I (Vienna, 1834), p. 159; see Jane R. Stevens, "Theme, Harmony, and Texture in Classic-Romantic Descriptions of Concerto First-Movement Form," *JAMS* XXVII (1974): 47.

(12) Ebenezer Prout, *Applied Forms* (London, 1895), pp. 203–4; quoted in Jane R. Stevens, "An Eighteenth-Century Description of Concerto First-Movement Form," *JAMS* XXIV (1971): 85.

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Oxford History of Western Music: Richard Taruskin

See also from Grove Music Online

Mozart: Vienna, 1784–8

Haydn: Career

MOZART IN THE MARKETPLACE

Chapter: CHAPTER 11 The Composer's Voice

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

The works in which that peak was scaled were the piano concertos Mozart wrote for himself to perform during his last decade, when he was living in Vienna and trying to support himself—like increasing numbers of musicians at a time of radical transition in the economy of European music-making—as a freelance artist. The conditions that had so favored Haydn's development and nurtured his gifts were drying up. Julia Moore, the outstanding economic historian of musical Vienna, has summarized the catastrophic institutional and commercial changes that were taking place, to which Mozart, like countless lesser contemporaries, had to adapt as best he could. Until the middle of the 1770s, she records, court musical establishments or *Kapellen* were maintained not only by emperors and kings but also by princes, counts, and men without important titles. But between 1780 and 1795, most of the *Kapellen* in the Habsburg Empire were disbanded, except those at a few important courts, causing widespread unemployment among musicians and a huge surge in freelance activities.

Haydn himself experienced this change in 1790, when his chief patron died and he was put out to pasture. But he had already made his fortune, enjoyed a pension, and was soon visited in any case by a crowning stroke of good fortune when Salomon brought him to London as a celebrity freelancer and guaranteed his earnings. After his return to Vienna, he was a world luminary and was showered with “windfall patronage,” aristocrats and wealthy merchants vying with one another to secure his prestigious and lavishly remunerated presence in their homes for an evening. At his death, Haydn left a net estate of over ten thousand florins, literally hundreds of times the median estate of a composer in late eighteenth-century Vienna, placing him solidly in the ranks of the upper middle class, otherwise populated by industrialists.

Mozart had traveled the length and breadth of Europe during the late 1770s in fruitless search of a *Kapelle* to direct. Once in Vienna, far from a world celebrity (except insofar as he was remembered from his childhood as a sort of freak), he had to rely on windfall patronage alone for his livelihood, which put him at the mercy of a notoriously fickle public.¹³ His appearances as virtuoso at “academies” (concerts he put on himself, for which he sold subscriptions) and aristocratic soirées were his primary source of income, and his vehicles at these occasions were his piano concertos. And so during his Vienna years he composed on average about two a year, from the Concerto in F major (K. 413), now known as no. 11, composed in the winter of 1782–83, to the Concerto in B ♭ major (K. 595), now known as no. 27, completed on 5 January 1791, shortly before his last birthday. These seventeen concertos, created over a period of less than nine years, were arguably Mozart's most important and characteristic instrumental compositions.

Yet they were not evenly spread out over the time in question. In fact, a chronology of Mozart's concertos turns into an index of his fortunes in the musical marketplace. At first, as a novel presence in Vienna, he was very fashionable and sought-after. Between 1782 and 1786 he was allowed to rent the court theater every year for a gala concert; he gave frequent well-attended subscription academies; and he received frequent invitations to perform at aristocratic salons. He lived high during this period, in a luxury apartment, and had many “status” possessions including a horse and carriage.

At the pinnacle of his early success he proudly sent his father a list of his concert engagements during the Lenten season of 1784. Lent, when theaters were closed by law, was always the busiest time of year for concerts, and Mozart had twenty-one engagements over the five weeks between late February and early April. Most were aristocratic soirées, including five appearances at the residence of Prince Dmitriy Mikhailovich Galitzin (or Golitsyn), the Russian ambassador, and no fewer than nine (twice a week, on Mondays and Fridays) at the home of Count Johann

(or János Nepomuk) Esterházy, a member of a lesser branch of the family that so famously patronized Haydn. Three were subscription concerts at the Trattnerhof Theater, and one, on the first of April, was an especially lucrative engagement at the court theater, where ticket prices could be set very high, and where Mozart could expect to net upwards of fifteen hundred florins.

All of these occasions undoubtedly included concerto performances, and so it is no wonder that Mozart completed no fewer than six concertos during the golden year of 1784, with three following in 1785 and another three in 1786. As Moore notes, however, the fact that Mozart never again secured the use of a court theater “indicates that he had become overexposed to the Viennese musical public by 1787.”¹⁴ His fortunes declined precipitously. By 1789 he could no longer subscribe academies to the point where they were profitable. “I circulated a subscription list for fourteen days,” he complained in a letter to a friend, “and the only name on it is Swieten!”¹⁵ He had to move to a smaller apartment, lost his status possessions, and, as all the world knows, went heavily into debt, so that at the time of his death his widow inherited liabilities totaling over a thousand florins (offset somewhat by the value of his clothing, a remnant from the fat years). The same ruinous decline is also reflected in his concerto output, with only two completed between the end of the year 1786 and his death five years later.

While it is no more realistic an endeavor to select a single “representative” Mozart concerto than it would be to select a single representative Haydn symphony, a combination of factors suggests the Concerto in G, K. 453, now known as no. 17, as a plausible candidate for the role. It was completed on 12 April 1784, immediately after the fabulous Lenten season described above, during Mozart’s most productive concerto year. It was ostensibly written not for Mozart himself to perform but for Barbara Ployer, a Salzburg pianist who had been his pupil, and who was the daughter of a wealthy Salzburg official, who commissioned it; and so it has an unusually complete and painstaking score. Probably for the same reason it is not one of Mozart’s most difficult concertos to perform; but as we shall see, the notated score of a Mozart concerto is by no means a reliable guide to its realization in performance. When Mozart himself played it, which he did often beginning in 1785, he surely embellished the rather modest solo part.

Like practically all solo concertos, still reflecting the century-old Vivaldian legacy, the work is cast in three movements, of which the first is in the “symphonized” or “sonatified” ritornello form described above. The two “expositions” are related according to a plan that was by 1784 habitual with Mozart. Comparing them from the moment of the piano’s first solo entry, which takes the form of a little *Eingang* or “intro” preceding the first theme, it appears that the soloist takes over all the early thematic material the second time around—or rather, the piano replaces the strings in dialogue with the wind instruments. When the crucial modulation to the dominant finally takes place, the piano gets to announce the new key with an unaccompanied solo that contains a theme that was not part of the opening ritornello. It will remain the pianist’s property to the end. The second theme from the opening orchestral ritornello, characteristically Mozartean in its operatic lyricism, eventually arrives in the dominant, with the pianist again replacing the strings in dialogue with the winds. The orchestral tutti that follows (and confirms) the piano’s cadential trill at the end of the second exposition corresponds in function to the second ritornello in older concertos.

The moment corresponding to the final cadence of the ritornello is replaced by a “deceptive” move to a B \flat major harmony that in the local context sounds like the flat submediant. (In terms of the once and future tonic, it is of course the mediant of the parallel minor.) This chromatic intrusion launches a long modulatory section that reaches a surprising FOP on the diatonic mediant (B natural) with a borrowed major third, turning it into the “V of vi.” A passage like this fulfills the structural function of a development section, finally enabling a satisfying resolution of tension in a “double return,” with the tension stretched out just a mite by a typical feint in the solo part: an *Eingang* (m. 224) that leads not to the by now urgently expected first theme in the tonic, but to a teasingly reiterated dominant seventh.

A sneaky little extra *Eingang* for the violins finally reintroduces the first theme, and we get a slightly truncated “compromise” or integrated version of the exposition, which might be likened to a sonata recapitulation in that it stays in the tonic, but which actually owes a greater historical debt to the older precedent of the *da capo* aria. This final major section of the movement has all the thematic material from the modulating exposition, including the pianist’s unaccompanied theme, and culminates in the solo cadenza. All of these details are summarized in Table 11-1.

The *cadenza*, another direct inheritance from the *da capo* aria, was literally an embellishment of the soloist’s final *cadence*, or trill, preceding the last ritornello. At the hands of successive generations of virtuosi it kept on growing until Koch (writing in 1790) had forgotten the etymological link that defined the cadenza’s initially rather modest

cadential function. Calling the traditional term a misnomer, he defined the cadenza instead as being in reality “either a free fantasy or a capriccio”—that is, a fairly lengthy piece-within-a-piece to be improvised by the soloist on the spot.¹⁶ According

11-1 Mozart, Concerto no. 17 in G, K. 453, Movement I (Allegro)

1. *TUTTI* (“1st exposition”)

- mm. 1–15 1st theme (I)
 16–34 bridge (I)
 35–48 2nd theme (I)
 49–56 chromatic excursion
 57–69 closing th. (I)
 69–74 cadential flourish

2. *SOLO* (“2nd exposition”)

- m. 74 *Eingang* for piano
 75–93 1st theme (I)
 94–109 bridge (I–V)
 110–25 “piano theme” (V)
 126–38 bridge
 139–53 2nd theme (V)
 154–70 passagework
 171–78 closing theme (V)
 178–83 cadential flourish, interrupted by:

3. *CENTRAL PASSAGE WORK* (cf. development)

- mm. 184–207 modulation to FOP
 208–26 retransition (to V), using a motive derived from the “piano theme” (compare mm. 112, 120), leading to:

4. *INTEGRATED SOLO* (cf. recapitulation)

- m. 226 *Eingang* for vlins.
 227–41 1st theme (I)
 242–56 bridge (I)
-

- 257–76 “piano theme” (I)
- 277–89 bridge
- 290–304 2nd theme (I)
- 304–27 passagework, leading to $I^6/4$ to introduce
- 327 CADENZA
- 328–40 closing theme (I)
- 340–49 cadential flourish (I!)

to the terms by which Koch designated it, the cadenza in his day was a piece in which the usual forms and rules of composition were in abeyance (as suggested by *capriccio*, “caprice”) and in which the soloist could concentrate entirely on pursuing an untrammelled train of idiosyncratic musical thought (*fantasia*, “vagary”), as we may remember from the *empfindsamer Stil* compositions of C. P. E. Bach, the genre’s pioneer (see Ex. 8-4).

Notes:

(13) Julia Moore, “Mozart in the Market-Place,” *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* CXIV (1989): 22.

(14) Moore, “Mozart in the Market-Place,” p. 23.

(15) Mozart to Michael Puchberg, 12–14 July 1789; *Mozart’s Letters*, p. 242.

(16) H. C. Koch, *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition*, Vol. III (Leipzig, 1793), p. 339; quoted in Stevens, “An Eighteenth-Century Description,” p. 91.

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Concerto: Mozart

Cadenza

COMPOSING AND PERFORMING

Chapter: CHAPTER 11 The Composer's Voice

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

It is hard to tell just what these descriptions had to do with what Mozart himself might have played at the point marked "cadenza" in his concerto scores, since like all true virtuosos in his day he was an expert improviser, and played impromptu with the same mastery as when playing prepared compositions. Nor were the two styles completely separate. When playing a previously composed piece from memory, Mozart (as many earwitnesses report) felt completely free to reembrace or even recompose it on the spot. Only when he composed his concertos for others to perform (as in Concerto no. 17) did he even write out the solo part in full. Most of the existing manuscripts contain sections of sketchy writing that served as a blueprint for impromptu realization. (Nowadays such passages are all too often rendered literally by pianists who have been trained to play only what is written.) When playing a newly finished concerto for the first time, Mozart usually "improvised" the whole piano part from blank staves or a bass line (playing it, that is, half spontaneously, half from memory). For an idea of what he could do, compare the autograph of the opening of the second movement from his "Coronation" Concerto, K. 537, with the first published edition, issued three years after Mozart's death with a piano part supplied by an unidentified arranger (Fig. 11-3a, b).

fig. 11-3a Autograph page from Mozart, Concerto no. 26 in D, K. 537.

Nor was any public concert or salon complete without an “ex tempore” performance, often on themes submitted by the audience to make sure that what was billed as improvisation was truly that. Mozart was famous for his ability to improvise not only free fantasias or capriccios on such submitted themes but even sonatas and fugues. “Indeed,” wrote an awestruck member of one of the largest audiences Mozart ever played to (in Prague, on 19 January 1787),

we did not know what to admire the more—the extraordinary composition, or the extraordinary playing; both together made a total impression on our souls that could only be compared to sweet enchantment! But at the end of the concert, when Mozart extemporized alone for more than half an hour at the fortepiano, raising our delight to the highest degree, our enchantment dissolved into loud, overwhelming applause. And indeed, this extemporization exceeded anything normally understood by fortepiano playing, as the highest excellence in the art of composition was combined with the most perfect accomplishment in execution.¹⁷



fig. 11-3b The same passage from Mozart, Concerto no. 26 in D, K. 5, that was shown in Fig. 11-3A, as posthumously edited and printed

From accounts like this, we may conclude that for Mozart, at any rate, the acts or professions of composing and performing were not nearly as separate as they have since become in the sphere of “classical” music. They are more reminiscent of the relationship that the two phases of musical creation have in the realms of jazz and non music

today. And so is the brisk interaction Mozart enjoyed with his audiences. The spontaneity of the Prague audience's reaction, as described in the extract above, applied not only to solo recitals, or concerto performances, but even to the performances of symphonies. After the first performance of his Symphony in D Major, K. 297 (now known as Symphony no. 31), one of his most orchestrally brilliant scores, which took place in Paris before the most sophisticated paying public in Europe in June of 1778, Mozart wrote home exultantly:

Just in the middle of the first Allegro there was a Passage I was sure would please. All the listeners went into raptures over it—applauded heartily. But as, when I wrote it, I was quite aware of its Effect, I introduced it once more towards the end—and it was applauded all over again.... I had heard that final Allegros, here, must begin in the same way as the first ones, all the instruments playing together, mostly in unison. I began mine with nothing but the 1st and 2nd violins playing softly for 8 bars—then there is a sudden *forte*. Consequently, the listeners (just as I had anticipated) all went “Sh!” in the soft passage—then came the sudden *forte*—and no sooner did they hear the *forte* than they all clapped their hands.¹⁸

Such behavior would be inconceivable today at any concert where Mozart's music is played. And yet in Mozart's day it was considered normal, as this very letter reveals. Mozart expected the audience's spontaneous response and predicted it—or rather, knowing that it would be the sign of his success, he angled for it. Now only pop performers do that. Such reactions and such angling are now *déclassé* (debased, regarded as uncouth) in the “classical” concert hall. The story of how that change came about is one of the most important stories in the history of nineteenth-century music, but Mozart had no part of that.

Notes:

(17) Quoted by Neal Zaslaw in “Mozart: Piano Concertos K. 456 and 459,” booklet notes accompanying Archiv Produktion CD 415 111–2 (Hamburg: Polydor International, 1986).

(18) Mozart to his father, 3 July 1778; *Mozart's Letters*, pp. 107–8.

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Performance

Cadenza

PERFORMANCE AS SELF-DRAMATIZATION

Chapter: CHAPTER 11 The Composer's Voice

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

When writing music out for others to perform, Mozart did occasionally provide cadenzas in advance to make the recipients look good, especially his sister Maria Anna ("Nannerl"), known in Salzburg as an excellent pianist in her own right, but not a composer. For the Concerto in G major, K. 453, composed for Barbara Ployer but also sent to Nannerl, he wrote out two different cadenzas for the first movement, and, rather unusually, for the second one as well—but that second movement is a rather unusual movement, as we shall see. The beginnings of the two first-movement cadenzas are set out for inspection in Ex. 11-3.

Like these, Mozart's written-out cadenzas usually took the form of short fantasias based more or less consistently on themes from the exposition. In the present case the first cadenza to the opening movement exemplifies the "thematic" style ("more consistently based"), the second the "passagework" style ("less consistently based"). In the latest and biggest concertos the thematic style predominates, often broken down into motivic work that begins to resemble "development." But whether these written cadenzas truly resemble anything Mozart would himself have played is difficult to guess. It seems unlikely that the pianist known among his fellow pianists as the greatest improviser of his time would have hewn so closely to the thematic content of the composed sections of the piece, or stayed so closely within the orbit of the original tonic. All the less likely does it seem if one considers Mozart's predilection for infusing his instrumental works with "personality"—creating, as we have already seen, the impression of spontaneous subjective expression. This histrionic posture could only have been heightened when he was taking an active part in the performance.

So let us imagine Mozart, not Barbara Ployer, as the soloist in the slow middle movement of the Concerto in G major, K. 453. The form of the piece is unusual on two counts. First, because it has a true symphonic binary shape, rarely found in a slow movement; and second, because that shape is complemented by a striking "motto" or ritornello idea.

The piece may be broken down into four large sections, each of them introduced by a strangely off-center phrase consisting of a single five-bar idea—or half idea, since it ends inconclusively, with a half cadence. The odd phrase length is achieved by drawing out a conventional four-bar phrase with a cadential embellishment that dramatizes its nonfinality, and then really insisting on its suspenseful nature with a rest that is further enhanced by a fermata. The phrase is almost literally a question—to which the ensuing music provides a provisional answer. In contour it strikingly resembles the beginning of the lyrical second theme from the first movement (see Ex. 11-4), and can probably be regarded as a conscious derivation from it (since anything that is likely to occur to us so readily is likely to have occurred just as readily to the composer).

The image displays five systems of musical notation for a piano piece. Each system consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is common time (C). The first system includes trills (tr) in the treble staff and a 'legato' marking in the bass staff. The second system features a long slur over the treble staff. The third system has trills (tr) in the treble staff. The fourth system has a long slur over the treble staff. The fifth system has a long slur over the treble staff. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and articulation marks.

ex. 11-3 W. A. Mozart, Concerto in G major, K. 453, I: beginnings of two different cadenzas

The image displays a six-system musical score for piano. Each system consists of two staves (treble and bass clef). The music is written in a key with one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The score features intricate melodic lines with many slurs and ornaments, as well as complex rhythmic patterns. Dynamics such as *p* (piano) are indicated. The piece concludes with a fermata over the final note.

ex. 11-3 Beginning of second *cadenza*

A single-line musical notation in 3/4 time. It begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The melody consists of a series of eighth and quarter notes, ending with a fermata over the final note.

ex. 11-4a W. A. Mozart, Concerto in G major, K. 453, II, mm. 1–5

A single-line musical notation in G major. It starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The melody is composed of quarter and eighth notes, with a fermata over the final note.

ex. 11-4b W. A. Mozart, Concerto in G major, K. 453, I, mm. 35–38

The four sections this motto phrase so suspensefully introduces could be described as corresponding, respectively, to an opening ritornello (or nonmodulating exposition), an opening solo (or modulating exposition), a development

section, and a recapitulation. The coda, or closing segment following the cadenza, begins with what sounds like another repetition of the motto; but it differs very tellingly from the others, as we shall see.

Precisely because it does not come to a full stop but demands continuation, the prefatory motto lends the material that follows it a heightened air of expressive moment. That sense of poetic gravity is more than corroborated by the emotionally demonstrative behavior of the solo part. Once past the preliminaries, the first solo starts right off with an impetuous turn to the parallel minor (Ex. 11-5a)—always a sign of emotional combustion—reinforced by a sudden loudening of the volume and a thickening of the piano texture beyond anything heard in the first movement. The modulation to the dominant is accompanied by some very purple harmonies—Neapolitan sixth, diminished seventh—of a kind also largely avoided (or rather, unwanted) in the sunny first movement.

The image shows a musical score for W. A. Mozart's Concerto no. 17 in G major, K. 453, II, mm. 35-41. The score is for Piano (Pno.), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), and Cello (Cb.). The piano part features a complex texture with many chords and rapid passages. The strings play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, with dynamic markings of forte (f) and piano (p).

ex. 11-5a W. A. Mozart, Concerto no. 17 in G major, K. 453, II, mm. 35-41

69 Perc.

74 Fl.
Ob.
Perc.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Cb.

78 Perc.

ex. 11-5b W. A. Mozart, Concerto no. 17 in G major, K. 453, II, mm. 69–86

The temperature has cooled and the skies have lightened by the time the final cadence on the dominant is made and the next incantation of the motto begins. But as soon as the soloist returns (Ex. 11-5b), the mood becomes restless again. Another sudden shift to the parallel minor (this time on D, the root of the half cadence in the dominant) is followed by a fairly gruesome passage in which the harmony is violently forced backward along the circle of fifths through successive cadences on A minor, E minor, B minor, and even F# minor—all the way to C# minor, the tritone antipode of G, the concerto's nominal tonic. These cadence points are all introduced by disruptive applied dominants, and the last of them is followed by an augmented sixth (A-natural *vs.* F-double-sharp) that sets up a half cadence on its dominant, the almost unheard-of FOP of G# major.

What follows now is a tour de force of harmonic legerdemain. In a mere four bars, as if solving a chess problem in four moves, the orchestra moves in (mm. 86–89) and leads the G# major harmony through its parallel minor (altering one note), to a dominant seventh on E (achieved by splitting the D#, so speak, into E and D, again altering a single note), thence to a dominant seventh on G (inflecting the G# to G and the E to F), the whole thus functioning as an incredibly rapid yet smooth retransition to the original tonic, C major (Ex. 11-5c). Its arrival, signaled by the motto phrase, provides an appropriately dramatic “double return.” From this point to the end the accent is on progressive reconciliation and accommodation. The pianist gets one more outburst to parallel the one in m. 35; but although it still invokes a darkling minor coloration, it is the tonic minor that is invoked, and the cloud is that much more easily dispelled. Although, presumably, Mozart at the keyboard might have let loose a few more harmonic vagaries during the cadenza, the cadence thus embellished prepares the ultimate reconciliation of harmonic conflicts. Mutual adjustment and cooperation is beautifully symbolized by the final orchestral statement of the motto phrase (mm. 123 ff), which this time lacks its embellished half cadence and suspenseful fermata, but rather hooks up with a balancing phrase in the solo part to bring things back, peacefully and on harmonic schedule, to the tonic. Just as in the slow movement from Symphony no. 39 (Ex. 11-1), there are a few chromatic twinges in the closing bars to recall old aches, but the end comes quietly, with gracious resignation.

The image shows a page of a musical score for W. A. Mozart's Concerto no. 17 in G major, K. 453, II, mm. 86-94. The score is divided into two sections: 'TUTTI' and 'SOLO'. The instruments listed are Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Bassoon (Bn.), Horn in C (Hn. in C), Piano (Pno.), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), and Cello (Cb.). The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (pp, cresc., f), articulation (accents), and phrasing (slurs). The piano part (Pno.) is particularly prominent, showing a complex texture with many notes and chords. The strings (Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., Cb.) provide a rhythmic and harmonic foundation. The woodwinds (Fl., Ob., Bn., Hn. in C) have more melodic and harmonic roles. The 'SOLO' section begins with a change in dynamics and phrasing, indicating a shift in the musical focus.

ex. 11-5c W. A. Mozart, Concerto no. 17 in G major, K. 453, II, mm. 86–94

Again, as in the symphony, we have a kind of emotional diary in sound, but this time there is the complicating factor of the dual medium: piano plus (or, possibly, versus) orchestra. The heightened caprice and dynamism that Mozart (and before him, C. P. E. Bach) brought to the concerto genre caused a heightened awareness of its potentially symbolic or metaphorical aspect, its possible reading as a social paradigm or a venue for social commentary. Artists imbued with the individualistic spirit of Romanticism interpreted the paradigm as one of social opposition, of the One against the Many, with an outcome that could be either triumphant (if the One emerged victorious) or tragic (if the decision went the other way).

The interaction of the soloist and the orchestra in the slow movement of Concerto No. 17 has been splendid grist for such readings, including a vivid one by the feminist musicologist Susan McClary (whose social interpretation of Bach's Fifth Brandenburg Concerto was discussed in chapter 6). She reads the piece as a narrative of increasingly fraught contention between the orchestra and the defiant soloist, with that egregious FOP on a G# major triad signaling an impasse. "From the point of view of tonal norms," she writes (having already characterized tonal norms as a metaphor for social norms), "the piano has retreated to a position of the most extreme irrationality, and normal tonal logic cannot really be marshaled to salvage it."¹⁹ And yet the orchestra, as we have already seen, succeeds in salvaging the tonic in a mere four bars. Such a quick victory, McClary argues, is itself "irrational," defiant of "the pure pristine logic of conventional tonality." Both the soloist and the orchestra have exhibited startling, not to say deviant, behavior—and deviance requires explanation. The explanation one chooses will reveal one's social attitudes. Does it seem that "the collective suddenly enters and saves the day"? If so, then one has confessed one's allegiance to the communal order. (McClary identifies this as the "Enlightened" position.) Or, conversely, does it seem that the "necessities of the individual are blatantly sacrificed to the overpowering requirements of social convention"?²⁰ This would betray one's identification with "the social protagonist," and cast the orchestra's behavior as exemplifying "the

authoritarian force that social convention will draw upon if confronted by recalcitrant nonconformity.”

In such a reading, a painful irony colors the final repetition of the opening motto, in which, we recall, the piano and the orchestra finally cooperate in a way that “delivers the long-awaited consequent phrase” that answers the motto’s persistent question. The appearance of concord, McClary suggests, masks oppression and social alienation.

It is not difficult to raise objections to this reading, if one insists that a reading of a work of art directly represent or realize the author’s intentions, and that those intentions are “immanent”—that is, inherent—in the work itself. One can cite biographical counterevidence: in 1784, the year in which Mozart composed this concerto, he was at the very peak of his early Viennese prosperity and showed few signs of alienation from the public whose favor he was then so successfully courting. (A possible rejoinder: we know, nevertheless, that the success was short-lived; and while Mozart could not know that, he did know very well that his freelance activity was risky and that his affluent lifestyle was precarious. This consciousness might well indeed have colored his attitude toward the society in which he was functioning, and made him anxious or mistrustful.) One may also doubt whether either the piano’s tonal behavior or the orchestra’s can really be classified as “irrational” within the listening conventions Mozart shared with his audience. Every symphonic composition reached a FOP, sometimes a very distant one (though, admittedly, rarely so distant as here). Mozart’s techniques for achieving it in the present instance, while extreme in their result, were fully intelligible in their method. Quick chromatic or enharmonic returns to the tonic from distant points are something we have observed long ago in Scarlatti, after all, for whom it was sooner an amusing gesture than a troubling one.



fig. 11-4 A Mozart family portrait, ca. 1780, by Johann Nepomuk della Croce. W. A. Mozart and his sister Maria Anna (“Nannerl”) are at the keyboard; their father Leopold holds a violin; the portrait on the wall shows the composer’s mother, who had died in 1778 in Paris while accompanying him on tour (Mozart House, Salzburg).

Then too, the quick resolution of a seemingly hopeless imbroglio was the hallmark of the comic opera in which Mozart so excelled, and which (as we have seen) so informed the style of his concerto writing. Another music historian, Wye J. Allanbrook, calls the device the “comic closure,” and maintains that the quicker and smoother the unexpected reconciliation, and the greater the harmonic distance covered by it, the more it reflected Mozart’s essentially optimistic outlook on the workings of his society.²¹ In this, Allanbrook concludes, Mozart was acting in a

manner typical of eighteenth-century dramatists and, like them, expressing an ingenuous commitment to the social ideals of the Enlightenment.

Indeed, the interpretive descriptions of the concerto that have come down to us from the eighteenth century tend to place emphasis on a kind of co-participation in an expressive enterprise, rather than on social conflict. “I imagine the concerto,” wrote Koch, “to be somewhat like the tragedy of the ancients, where the actor expressed his feelings not to the audience but to the chorus, which was involved most sparingly in the action, and at the same time was entitled to participate in the expression of the feelings.”²² Thus, in Koch’s view, there is indeed an “emotive relationship” between the soloist and the orchestra. “To it,” Koch writes (meaning the orchestra), “he displays his feelings, while it now beckons approval to him with short interspersed phrases, now affirms, as it were, his expression; now it tries in the Allegro to stir up his exalted feelings still more; now it pities him in the Adagio, now it consoles him.” As Jane R. Stevens, the translator of this passage from Koch, comments, “instead of antagonists or simply cooperating partners, the solo and tutti are semi-independent, interacting elements in a sort of dramatic intercourse”—one designed not merely to represent a mode of interaction but to achieve a heightened expressive intensity for the audience to contemplate.²³

And yet, even if it can be demonstrated conclusively that the idea of concerto as social paradigm was not the dominant view of Mozart’s time, that does not by any means preclude or invalidate social or biographical readings of his contributions to the genre. The view of the concerto as a critical social microcosm seems to have come later than Mozart’s time, but not much later. And when it came, it had surely been influenced by Mozart’s example. Koch himself is a case in point. His remarks on the expressive meaning of the concerto are from his textbook, *An Essay in Composition Instruction (Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition)*, published in 1793. In this book, C. P. E. Bach is named as the exemplary concerto composer; Mozart’s name is absent. Nine years later, in 1802, Koch published a *Musical Dictionary*, in which many of the same points are made, but now with Mozart as the prime example.

It was, in other words, only after Mozart’s death that his concertos began to circulate outside of the narrow Vienna-Salzburg corridor and have a wider resonance. By then, Romanticism was burgeoning. The meanings and feelings that were drawn out of Mozart’s music by his later interpreters probably no longer corresponded exactly with those that Mozart was aware of depositing there, so to speak. But a message received is just as much a message as a message sent. In this as in so many ways, Mozart—perhaps unwittingly, but no less powerfully—fostered the growth of musical Romanticism, and became its posthumous standard-bearer.

Whatever we may make of the closing bars of the middle movement, the finale of the Concerto in G, K. 453, like practically all of Mozart’s concerto finales, is cast in the cheerful, conciliatory spirit of an *opera buffa* finale. While the rondo form remained the most popular framework for such pieces, a significant minority of concertos, including this one, used the theme and variation technique. In either case, the object was the same: to put a fetchingly contrasted cast of characters on stage and finally submerge their differences in conviviality. Mozart’s stock of variational characters is replete, on the happy end, with jig rhythms for the piano and gossipy contrapuntal conversation for the winds; and, on the gloomy end, with mysterious syncopations in the parallel minor, all awaiting reconciliation in the coda.

That coda, when it comes, is even more *buffa*-like than most, thanks to its length and extraordinary precipitateness. With its bristling new tempo (“*Presto. Finale.*”), it takes the place of the *strepitoso* or *molto stretto* at the end of an operatic act, which (recalling Lorenzo Da Ponte’s words) “always closes in an uproar” with every character cavorting on stage. Here all is given up to fanfares and madcap arpeggios (as Da Ponte would put it, to “noise, noise, noise!”), the texture teeming with rapid antiphonal exchanges and with muttered Leporelloish asides like the strange minor-mode string ostinato in whole notes that frames the frenetic last statement of the theme by the piano in characteristic dialogue with the winds (Ex. 11-6). The result, in the enthusiastic words of Donald Francis Tovey, the greatest of all program annotators, is “a comic wind-up big enough for *Figaro*.”

Notes:

(19) Susan McClary, “A Musical Dialectic from the Enlightenment: Mozart’s *Piano Concerto in G Major, K. 453, Movement 2*,” *Cultural Critique* 4 (Fall 1986): 149.

(20) McClary, “A Musical Dialectic,” p. 151.

- (21) Wye J. Allanbrook, *The Secular Commedia* (forthcoming, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press).
- (22) Koch, *Versuch einer Anleitung*, Vol. III, p. 332; quoted in Stevens, "An Eighteenth-Century Description," p. 94.
- (23) Stevens, "An Eighteenth-Century Description," p. 94.

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THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG

Chapter: CHAPTER 11 The Composer's Voice

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

The image displays a page of a musical score for the third movement of Mozart's Concerto no. 17 in G major, K. 453, measures 218-29. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with multiple staves. At the top, the word "TUTTI" is written above the first staff (Flute), and "SOLO" is written above the second staff (Oboe). The score includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Bassoon (Bn.), Horn in G (Hn. in G), Piano (Pno.), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), and Cello (Cb.). Dynamics are indicated by "f" (fortissimo) and "p" (piano). The piano part features a prominent arpeggiated figure in the right hand and a more active bass line. The string parts provide a rhythmic and harmonic foundation, with the violins and violas playing sixteenth-note patterns.

ex. 11-6 W. A. Mozart, Concerto no. 17 in G major, K. 453, III, mm. 218–29

Andante

Adagio

ex. 11-7a W. A. Mozart, *Fantasia in D minor*, K. 397, mm. 1–22

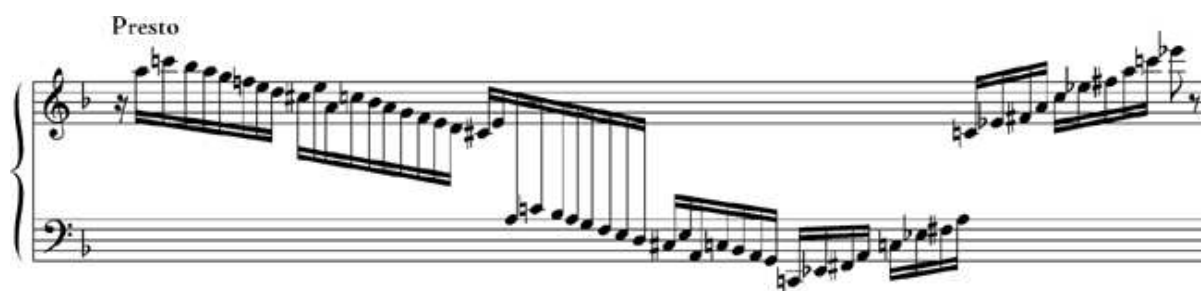
Mozart’s concertos, for all their superb originality, show him most clearly in a line of succession from the Bach sons—and, in particular, show him as the heir to C. P. E. Bach’s proto-Romantic *empfindsamer Stil*. Mozart’s keyboard fantasias are even better evidence of this important line of descent. There are only four of them, representing the tip of a huge iceberg of improvised music making for which they are, along with the concerto

cadenzas, our sole precious written remains. The one in D minor, K. 397, composed early in Mozart's Vienna period, might almost have been conceived in emulation of C. P. E. Bach's C-minor fantasia (Ex. 8-4). Like it, the work begins with inchoate exploratory strummings (Ex. 11-7a) reminiscent of the old lute "ricercars", alternatively known, even in the sixteenth century, as "fantasias"—the remote but nevertheless direct ancestors of Mozart's keyboard improvisations.

Where the marking "Adagio" replaces the opening Andante, the music settles down into a recognizable thematic shape: four bars that break down two by two with complementary harmonies. A contrasting four bars lengthens the emergent theme to a full eight-bar period, ending on a half cadence. The expectation thus raised, of course, is that a parallel eight-bar period will follow, bringing things home with a full cadence on the tonic. Instead, this being a fantasia (rather than, say, a sonata), three chromatic bars ensue that take the harmony from the dominant to *its* dominant—i.e., farther away from closure: a deliberately puzzling effect. And puzzlement is compounded when that secondary dominant is resolved, through some suddenly agitated passagework, to the minor V, only to break off on a diminished harmony, followed by a rest-cum-fermata, the very emblem of suspense.

In other words, Mozart is doing everything he can to avoid the "logic" of functional harmony (everything, that is, short of denying the functions altogether and producing an uninteresting chaos) the more convincingly to suggest a spontaneous train of musical thought, triggered on the spur of the moment by the player's actual feelings in all their changeability.

From there on, interruption is the order of the day, with each thematic return—the main theme in A minor and then in D minor, the "agitated passagework" in G minor, producing an unusual FOP—halted in mid-career by some sort of rhythmically unmeasured "outside event," be it a *presto* flourish or a diminished-seventh arpeggio to a fermata. The two *presto* passages, interestingly, have opposite structural (or "syntactic") functions. The second of them, which precedes a "recapitulatory" idea (the main theme in the original key), is an *Eingang* or "lead-in," similar to what one finds in the concertos, if more intense. The first one, however, which breaks off on a diminished-seventh arpeggio to a time-out, could be called an *Abgang*. It "leads away" from the thematic material to points unknown (Ex. 11-7b).



ex. 11-7b W. A. Mozart, *Fantasia in D minor*, K. 397, m. 34

And then, just when interruption is becoming "normal" for this piece, and therefore the expected thing, Mozart switches modes, ups the tempo to *allegretto*, and throws in a fully shaped and rounded theme of a sort that could easily serve for variation or rondo treatment. In the present context, where nothing can be taken for granted, the very regularity of the theme is a source of suspense (will it last? will the cadence come?). The continuation again seems regularity itself, until Mozart breaks it off on a diminished-seventh chord and follows through with a veritable spoof of a cadenza, replete with an inordinately prolonged cadential trill that never gets to make the cadence, followed by two attempts (the second of them successful) to bring the *allegretto* melody, and with it the entire piece, to a close.

The D-minor Fantasia, while typical of the genre, is mild. It was probably meant as practice material for one of Mozart's aristocratic pupils. For an idea of what a real Mozartean improvisation might have been like, we must turn to another piece, and a justly famous one: the C-minor Fantasia, K. 475. According to Mozart's own handwritten catalogue of his works, it was completed in Vienna on 20 May 1785 and was published later that year (as "opus 11") together with a piano sonata in the same key (K. 457), completed the year before.

The fantasia is designated as being in C minor, and it does begin on C, but to find an actual cadence in the titular key one must go to m. 173, only eight bars before the end of the piece, for only there is the tonality fully confirmed. Ex. 11-8 shows part of the opening section of the fantasia, and the parallel passage that closes the work. The opening section is harmonically one of the most unconvincing compositions of its time, and it is in this, particularly, that it may

be presumed to transmit the true style of a Mozartean improvisation, if earwitnesses are to be believed.

Adagio

The image shows a musical score for piano, marked 'Adagio'. It consists of five systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The score is marked with dynamics: *f* (forte), *p* (piano), and *pp* (pianissimo). Measure numbers 1, 5, 8, 11, and 14 are indicated at the start of their respective systems. The music features a mix of melodic lines and dense chordal textures, with some passages involving rapid sixteenth-note patterns in the right hand.

ex. 11-8a W. A. Mozart, Fantasia in C minor, K. 475, mm. 1–22

The opening octave C in Ex. 11-8a is followed by an E \flat that seems to promise a (typical) tonic arpeggio; but the very next note (F \sharp), coming as it does in a rhythmically strong position, is profoundly disconfirming and destabilizing. (The off-beat G that follows it can only be heard now as a passing tone, not as the completion of the promised tonic arpeggio.) When compounded with the submediant A \flat at the peak of the phrase, the strong F \sharp produces a disturbing diminished third—or rather, an inverted augmented sixth, an interval that ineluctably calls for a resolution to the dominant. The call is duly met in m. 2, the dominant thus being firmly established dozens of measures before the tonic.

Now of course it may be argued that to establish the dominant is to establish the tonic as well, since both terms describe not things in themselves but participants in a reciprocal relationship. And that is true—but only momentarily. The fleeting reference to the dominant is disconfirmed and destabilized in the very next measure, by the downbeat B \flat , which is voiced exactly like the downbeat C and B-natural in the preceding measures, and seems all at once to be continuing a chromatic descent that they had (as if) surreptitiously begun.

Once we have noted the descending chromatic bass, we may be reminded (especially if we are eighteenth-century listeners by birth or education) of the old *passus duriusculus*, the “hard way down” from tonic to dominant, so familiar from the vocal and keyboard compositions of the seventeenth century and their myriad eighteenth-century progeny. Having recognized it, we are led to expect the dominant once more—to expect it, indeed, in the bass and in root position. And of course (this being a fantasia) we are in for a shocking surprise; for the bass gets stalled in the process of its descent, never making G (the dominant) at all, but coming prematurely to a most uneasy rest on A \flat . From there it proceeds *up* by half steps, thus canceling the *passus duriusculus* and with it, all expectation of a dominant destination.

Will it perhaps, then, lead back to the tonic, establishing it at last? Not a chance. Again the bass stalls one degree short of the goal, on B-natural, and turns downward once more, this time with a greatly lessened sense of an implied goal, if indeed any is left at all. Since one of the notes the bass will now pass through is the G so spectacularly avoided the first time around, Mozart goes to amazing lengths not only to frustrate but actually to cancel the note’s resolution tendency, finally dissolving the listener’s tonal orientation once and (it could seem) for all. A new way of harmonizing the chromatic bass descent is introduced, now based on an older—indeed, “pre-tonal”—concept of

harmony: the suspension chain, whereby sevenths resolve not as dominants, along the circle of fifths, but purely “intervallically,” to sixths (see Ex. 11-8b).

ex. 11-8b W. A. Mozart, Fantasia in C minor, K. 475, mm. 10–6 in harmonic reduction

By the time the G is reached, there has been a precedent for the 7–6 suspension resolution, and so the dominant seventh on G resolves not to the root-position triad on C that we have been waiting for, but resolves instead, hair-raisingly (if only apparently), to an inverted chord of E ♭ minor. And now the best, most sophisticated feint of all: that chord, with G ♭ in the bass, proceeds enharmonically to the dominant of B major. There has been a *passus duriusculus* after all, but it has gone from B down to F ♯, not C to G. Mozart has misled our ears into accepting the wrong dominant. You might even say that he has transposed our hearing down a half step.

By now it may be needless to add that this ersatz dominant will no more likely achieve a normal resolution than any of the others. In mm. 16–17 resolution comes only on the weak beats, which makes the tonic so easy to trump by the deceptive cadence in m. 18. That deceptive cadence is to G major, of course, which is the original (long-expected) dominant. It comes in “tonicized” form, however, alternating with its own dominant, and devoid of any tendency to move on to C. On the contrary, in m. 21 the chord picks up an augmented sixth (E ♯) that forces it back whence it sprang, to the dominant of B, thus turning the whole passage into a tease.

The tease continues past the end of Ex. 11-8a. The F ♯ major triad alternates with the awaited B for awhile, but its persisting rhythmic advantage continues to hold off any real sense of closure. Then, almost sadistically, Mozart reiterates the ostensible dominant in the soprano no fewer than six times before failing yet again to resolve it. This particular failure is especially noteworthy: a rare form of deceptive cadence in which the dominant root is held but re-identified as a third, producing an unusual “flat mediant” progression with respect to the anticipated tonic.

This unexpected and remote key, D major, is—perversely!—then given the full functional treatment so conspicuously withheld from the tonic. It is made the bearer of a full-fledged theme (the first in the piece), replete with parallel-period structure and contrasting consequent. It almost comes to a full stop, but in m. 42 its subdominant is suddenly replaced by a replay of the progression that gave access to the key of D in the first place. A dominant on B picks up the circle of fifths left hanging in m. 25, a circle that in the ensuing *allegro* will go through six more progressions in rapid succession, until the key of F major is reached, and another seemingly random pause is made amid the harmonic flux to accommodate a new theme, unexpected and unrelated to what has gone before.

Tempo primo

167

Musical score for measures 167-168. The piece is in common time (C) and begins with a treble clef. Measure 167 features a melody in the treble clef starting on G4, moving to A4, B4, and C5, with dynamics *f* and *p*. The bass clef accompaniment consists of chords: G2-B2-D3, A2-C3-E3, and B2-D3-F3. Measure 168 continues the melody in the treble clef with notes G4, F4, E4, and D4, with dynamics *(pp)*. The bass clef accompaniment continues with chords: G2-B2-D3, A2-C3-E3, and B2-D3-F3.

169

Musical score for measures 169-170. Measure 169 features a melody in the treble clef starting on G4, moving to A4, B4, and C5, with dynamics *f* and *p*. The bass clef accompaniment consists of chords: G2-B2-D3, A2-C3-E3, and B2-D3-F3. Measure 170 continues the melody in the treble clef with notes G4, F4, E4, and D4, with dynamics *(pp)*. The bass clef accompaniment continues with chords: G2-B2-D3, A2-C3-E3, and B2-D3-F3. A first ending bracket is shown above the treble clef staff for measure 169, with a second ending bracket below it.

171

Musical score for measures 171-173. Measure 171 features a melody in the treble clef starting on G4, moving to A4, B4, and C5, with dynamics *f* and *p*. The bass clef accompaniment consists of chords: G2-B2-D3, A2-C3-E3, and B2-D3-F3. Measure 172 continues the melody in the treble clef with notes G4, F4, E4, and D4, with dynamics *f* and *p*. The bass clef accompaniment continues with chords: G2-B2-D3, A2-C3-E3, and B2-D3-F3. Measure 173 features a melody in the treble clef starting on G4, moving to A4, B4, and C5, with dynamics *p*. The bass clef accompaniment consists of chords: G2-B2-D3, A2-C3-E3, and B2-D3-F3.

The image shows a musical score for W. A. Mozart's Fantasia in C minor, K. 475, measures 167-182. The score is in C minor and 3/4 time. It features a complex texture with rapid sixteenth-note passages in both hands. Dynamic markings include *f*, *p*, and *cresc.* There are also fermatas and repeat signs with first and second endings indicated by circled numbers 1 and 2.

ex. 11-8c W. A. Mozart, Fantasia in C minor, K. 475, mm. 167–182

To describe these events, as always, takes much longer than it does to experience them. Suffice it then to announce that there will be another pause along the way for a new theme in B \flat major (Andantino) and a stormy quasi-development beginning in G minor that will eventually refocus on the original dominant to make a retransition to the opening material at m. 167, as shown in Ex. 11-8c. This is in fact the first thematic reprise in the composition, and it cleverly redirects the opening sequential ideas so as to lead back to, and finally confirm, the tonic. An especially effective touch, both witty and poignant, is the abandonment of melody altogether in m. 173, leaving only a bare accompaniment figure to make the long-awaited cadential connection between dominant and tonic in a manner suggesting exhaustion.

To sum up this remarkable composition-in-the-form-of-an-improvisation, or improvisation-in-the-form-of-a-composition: its technique, basically, is that of withholding precisely what a sonata or symphonic exposition establishes, proceeding from key to key and theme to theme not by any predefined process of “logic,” but in a “locally associative” process that at every turn (or, at any rate, until the retransition and recapitulation signal the approaching end) defies prediction. In place of a reassuring sense of order, the composer establishes a thrilling sense of danger—of imminent disintegration or collapse, to be averted only by an unending supply of delightfully surprising ideas such as only a Mozartean imagination can sustain. That sense of risks successfully negotiated is the same awareness that makes a virtuoso performance thrilling. In the fantasia, as in the improvisations it anec

composing and performing were one.

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Oxford History of Western Music: Richard Taruskin

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Mozart: Works, 1781–8

Fantasia

Haydn: Sacred vocal music

FANTASIA AS METAPHOR

Chapter: CHAPTER 11 The Composer's Voice

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

Sometimes Mozart allowed the exploratory, improvisatory spirit of his keyboard fantasias to invade other genres. One of the most celebrated instances is the slow introduction to the first movement of Mozart's String Quartet in C major, K. 465, composed in Vienna just a few months before the keyboard fantasia in C minor. It was finished on 14 January 1785, and published later that year as the sixth and last in the set of quartets dedicated to Haydn.

One youthful experiment apart (K. 171, composed at the age of seventeen), this is the only one of Mozart's twenty-three quartets to begin with a slow introduction. It is clear that this little essay in uncanny chromaticism (thanks to which the whole work is now known as the "Dissonance" Quartet) was an import from another genre, a virtual keyboard improvisation set for four stringed instruments (Fig. 11-5).

The dissonance to which the quartet owes its nickname is the glaringly exposed cross relation, A \flat vs. A, that occurs between viola and first violin at their respective entrances. (The effect is repeated four bars later a whole step lower; there are also many more-or-less concealed cross relations in the introduction, for example between cello and second violin in mm. 2–3 and 6–7). The harmony implied by this chromatic inflection suggests a move to the dominant (the A \flat being part of a Neapolitan sixth in the key of G, the A-natural the fifth of a in the same key), and that is indeed the overall trajectory, as it is in all slow introductions. But, just as in the C-minor Fantasia, a *passus duriusculus* intervenes, falling by semitones in the bass and giving rise to a whole series of fugitive shadow-"keys" (B \flat minor, F major, C minor) along the way.

So eerie and bizarre is the effect of this seemingly wayward (but actually so unerringly calculated) little passage, that it became a *cause célèbre*. The first to attack it was Giuseppe Sarti, Mozart's older contemporary, whose opera *Fra i due litiganti* Mozart quoted in the banquet scene from *Don Giovanni* as a token of friendship. Sarti's essay, "Osservazioni critiche sopra un quartetto di Mozart" ("Carping comments about a Mozart quartet"), shows a far less friendly attitude toward Mozart, whom he dismisses as an upstart piano player with "spoiled ears."²⁴ As for cross relations, Sarti declared gruffly that there were only two kinds: those that should be avoided and those that were intolerable.



fig. 11-5 Mozart, autograph score of String Quartet in C major, K. 465 (“Dissonance”), showing the celebrated slow introduction to the first movement and the beginning of the Allegro.

Probably written in St. Petersburg, Russia, where Sarti served the court of the Empress Catherine the Great, the essay did not see print in full until 1832, more than four decades after Mozart’s death (and three after Sarti’s own). When it did, it prompted several attempts to “correct” Mozart’s writing. The most interesting of these was by the Belgian scholar-critic François-Joseph Fétis, who changed no notes, only rhythms, but managed to avoid all the direct cross relations—an achievement as clever and skillful from the technical point of view as it was esthetically obtuse (Ex. 11-9).

This image shows a printed musical score for François-Joseph Fétis's rewrite of the slow introduction to Mozart's K. 465, measures 1-5. The score is arranged in four staves: Vn. 1 (Violin I), Vn. 2 (Violin II), Vla. (Viola), and Vlc. (Violoncello). The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The notation is clean and formal, showing the rhythmic changes Fétis made to the original manuscript.

ex. 11-9 François-Joseph Fétis, rewrite of slow introduction to K. 465, I, mm. 1–5

In a way both Sarti and Fétis were correct: the former in recognizing that the style of the introduction was that of a “piano player,” the latter in normalizing it according to the rules of formal composition customarily employed when

writing “in parts,” as one does in a proper string quartet. But that only serves to confirm the surmise that the origins of Mozart’s harmonic boldness lay in the unwritten traditions of free improvisation. His boldness consisted not so much in the harmonic transgressions his critics sought to eliminate, but, more basically by far, in the substitution of one set of generic norms for another.

One who mistook neither Mozart’s purpose nor the effect of his achievement was the man to whom the quartet was dedicated. Haydn heard the piece the very day after it was completed, at a quartet evening in Vienna on 15 January 1785; it was then and there that he exclaimed to Leopold Mozart that the latter’s son was the greatest musician of the age. He confessed his astonishment and admiration not only in words but also, later, in exquisite musical deed. More than a decade later, undoubtedly prompted and emboldened by the teasing memory of Mozart’s little fantasia for quartet, Haydn wrote a magnificent full-length fantasia for orchestra, perhaps his most amazing composition and certainly his most unexpected one.

While in England with Salomon in 1791, Haydn had attended the great Handel Festival in Westminster Abbey. He immediately perceived something we have long since observed—that Handel’s sacred oratorios, rendered in monumental performances, were for the British a symbol of nationhood, the first truly *nationalistic* musical genre in our modern sense of the word. Haydn wanted to offer something similar to the Austrian nation: a sacred oratorio with text not in Latin but in the language of the people, for performance not in a Catholic worship service but under secular auspices, as a unifier not of a religious body but of a body politic, to reinforce the Austrian nation in its loyalty not only to a dynastic crown but to a common soil.

When Thomas Linley, the director of the Drury Lane Oratorio Concerts, offered Haydn *The Creation*, a libretto based on Milton’s *Paradise Lost* that had been prepared for Handel but never set, Haydn leapt at the chance. He took the text home with him to Vienna, had it translated (as *Die Schöpfung*) by Baron van Swieten, and began setting it to music in 1796. The resulting oratorio was very much in the Handelian tradition, including *da capo* arias and old-fashioned contrapuntal choruses. Its popularity in Austria following its 1798 première fulfilled Haydn’s ambition for the work and sparked the composition of a sequel, an oratorio called *The Seasons (Die Jahreszeiten)*, to a libretto by James Thomson, also revised and translated by van Swieten. First performed in Vienna in April 1801, it was Haydn’s last major work (followed only by two Masses, one of them drawing on the music for *The Creation*).

One part of *The Creation*, however, had no Handelian counterpart and was anything but old-fashioned in conception. That was the very opening of the oratorio, the Introduction (*Einleitung*). Subtitled *Vorstellung des Chaos*—“The Representation of Chaos”—it was an unprecedented attempt to depict in music the disorder that preceded the biblical Beginning. Yet while the illustrative endeavor as such may have been unprecedented, the musical means by which it was accomplished had a precedent, and that precedent was the keyboard fantasia.

It has been suggested, by Donald Francis Tovey and others, that Haydn’s pious depiction of Chaos and the formation of the Cosmos was influenced by what was then in fact the most advanced scientific theory of the origin of the universe: the so-called nebular hypothesis, first proposed by Immanuel Kant in 1755 and popularized by the French astronomer Pierre Simon, Marquis de Laplace, in his *Exposition du système du monde*, published in 1796, the very year in which Haydn began work on *The Creation*. According to the nebular hypothesis, the solar system originated as a nebula, an immense body of rarefied gas and dust swirling in space, that gradually cooled, contracted, and condensed to form the sun and the planets. Or, as the Bible put it, in the beginning “the earth was without form and void” until God gave the Word; whereupon the processes described in the nebular hypothesis commenced. Haydn’s Representation of Chaos, then, was a representation of a process of Becoming, through which what was without form took shape.

“Here is your infinite empty space!” Tovey declared, referring to the sublimely hollow opening sonority (Ex. 11-10a), a gaping orchestral unison on the note C that discloses neither mode nor key.²⁵ It was an inspired interpretation, for it identified the crucial representational device: the functional degree relationships of tonality, or rather their anomalous withholding and gradual reassertion. A cadence identifying the tonic and dominant, normally given at the outset of a composition to set up the structural norms that will govern it, is deliberately suppressed. The expected thing is normally so routinely supplied by the opening thematic material as to be taken for granted, hardly noticed as such. Its suppression, repeatedly and teasingly replayed, is bizarre, making Haydn’s Representation unique among his orchestral compositions and singularly memorable.

What Haydn did, in effect, was to turn the techniques of fantasia writing as we have observed them in Mozart into a metaphor “Tonality” as Tovey brilliantly observed “is Haydn’s musical Cosmos.” As inchoate matter strives

according to the nebular hypothesis, toward shape and differentiation, so the music strives toward the emergence of its tonic triad and all of the attendant degree functions. The means by which Haydn realized this metaphor, expertly prolonging and delaying the process of tonal clarification, strikingly parallels the harmonic vagaries we have observed both in Mozart's C-minor Fantasy and in the Adagio from the "Dissonance" Quartet.

As in both Mozartean precedents, so here, a bare C, tentatively identifiable as the tonic (and eventually established as such), is initially disconfirmed by an A-flat that turns it perceptually into the third of VI (or of a Neapolitan to V) rather than the root of I (compare Ex. 11-10a with Exx. 11-8 and 11-9).

ex. 11-10a Franz Joseph Haydn, *Creation, Vorstellung g des Chaos* in piano reduction, mm. 1–10

Haydn dramatizes the frustration of his music's "will to form" with special rigor and emphasis. He follows the unison C in Ex. 11-10a, like Mozart in Ex. 11-8a, with an E ♭ that at first appears to signal a gradual building-up of the full C-minor triad. That process is then explicitly contradicted by the A ♭ contributed by the second violins. Once sounded, that disruptive note is held while the C and E ♭ both slip down a half step and are joined by the first violins' F to form a classically ambiguous diminished-seventh chord. Only then does the A ♭ move down to G; but the delayed resolution produces not a tonic triad but a dominant seventh, the opposite member of the awaited cadential pair. The resolution to the by now even more urgently expected tonic is deferred while the violins decorate the dominant function with a chromatic ascent—F ♯, G, A ♭—that might well have been copied right out of the opening phrase of Mozart's *Fantasia*. But when the resolution comes, on the downbeat of m. 4, it is once again sullied by the A ♭ in place of G—once again a dull deceptive cadence has left the Cosmos "without form and void."

Now the whole opening gesture is replayed and intensified by compression. The first violins' F is pinched up to an F ♯ in m. 6, producing a chromatically altered chord devoid of clear harmonic purpose. (Its reappearance decades later in the prelude to Richard Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* will only confirm its tonally suspensive bent.) The chord gives way to the same diminished seventh as before, only now accompanied by a G in the bass that turns the harmony into an especially tense version of the dominant (the "dominant ninth"); but when the bass arpeggiation moves to a member of the tonic triad (E ♭) in m. 7, the rest of the chord stays put, producing a wildly dissonant suspension. An unconventional resolution gets us closer to the tonic, increasing our agitated suspense. But the inverted tonic triad, rhythmically unstable, gives way in m. 8 to the submediant, which, having gained an augmented sixth (F ♯), is now redirected, more powerfully than ever, to the dominant.

Yet that dominant never materializes, and of course neither does the tonic. At the downbeat of m. 9 the expected G in the bass is altogether confoundingly re-identified (or misidentified) as the third of the mediant triad, and all sense of propulsion toward C minor is lost. Not until m. 21 will any decisive cadence produce a strongly voiced triad in root position, and that triad will be rooted on D ♭, a note not even found in the scale of C minor, the long-foreshadowed but now seemingly lost-forever tonic. Before the tonic has even been fairly established, in other words, Haydn (like Mozart in his *Fantasia*) has arrived at a FOP.

ex. 11-10b Franz Joseph Haydn, *Creation, Vorstellung des Chaos* in piano reduction, mm. 37–44

ex. 11-10c Franz Joseph Haydn, *Creation, Vorstellung des Chaos* in piano reduction, mm. 48–59

A fairly extended passage (mm. 26–30) that seems to stalk a cadence on $E\flat$ major, the normal subsidiary region of a

C-minor binary structure, suggests that Haydn's overall plan follows the broad outlines of "sonata form." That impression is strengthened by the passage beginning in m. 37 (Ex. 11-10b), which has all the earmarks of a retransition. But when the moment of truth arrives (m. 40), in place of the full tonic triad the hollow unison C returns, now hammered out seven times for emphasis. We are still lost in "infinite empty space."

Only on the last forlorn try, beginning at m. 48 (Ex. 11-10c), does Haydn allow a full cadence on C minor to occur, *pianissimo*. What normally happens at the beginning—again compare Mozart's C-minor Fantasia—only gets to happen at the end. And here, too, there is an added metaphorical dimension, quickly made explicit by the entry of a bass singer impersonating the angel Raphael, who intones the opening words of the Book of Genesis: "In the Beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The imminence of Creation has been announced. But its first forecast was not the Angel's speech; it came wordlessly, in the soft C-minor triad played by the strings in mm. 58–59, finally fulfilling, in a whisper, the promise of form.

The familiar biblical account now continues in a remarkable recitative in which the chorus, which alone may impersonally represent the voice of God, takes part. Of the suddenly radiant passage (Ex. 11-11) that follows the first act of Creation ("... and there was LIGHT"), Haydn once exclaimed, "It was not I who wrote that, but some higher power that guided my hand." All it is, though, is an ordinary (if unusually assertive) authentic cadence on C, of a kind that not only Haydn but every composer alive at the time, whether great or mediocre, wrote every single day. It is the very special context that creates its overwhelmingly fraught significance, reminding us that what freights any utterance with meaning is never confined to its bare immanent "content," but is the product of an interaction between sender, context, and receiver(s).

Of course the role of orchestration (that is, tone color) in producing the stunning effect of the passage should not be underestimated. Indeed, orchestration has been playing an almost unprecedented role throughout the Representation of Chaos as a "nebular" metaphor. Swirling figures in the woodwinds, including a couple of spectacular runs for the flute and for the still-novel clarinet, contribute tellingly to the uncanny effect of the whole, and it is the woodwinds and brass, entering suddenly *en masse* after a long silence, that produce the sublime and somewhat terrifying radiance at the appearance of God's light. The poetic art of orchestration, seemingly "created" here before our ears (but in fact prefigured in the opera house, as we know full well from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*), would reach an unimagined peak at the hands of the increasingly metaphor-minded composers of the incipient nineteenth century.

Nor is that all that Haydn bequeathed to them in the astounding Introduction to *The Creation*. Its tonal trajectory, too, from a dark and murky "unformed" C minor to a radiantly triumphant C major, became a *topos*—a narrative archetype—that would be replayed again and again in many expressive and dramatic contexts.

Notes:

(24) Quoted in Julie Anne Vertrees, "Mozart's String Quartet K. 465: The History of a Controversy," *Current Musicology* 17 (1974): 97.

(25) Donald Francis Tovey, *Essays in Musical Analysis*, Vol.V (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 115.

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Musical Canon

Ludwig van Beethoven

THE COMING OF MUSEUM CULTURE

Chapter: CHAPTER 11 The Composer's Voice

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

And that is because Mozart and Haydn's progeny, far more than any previous generation of musicians, thought of themselves as just that—progeny. A sense of heirship, of tradition, of obligation to illustrious forebears and their great works becomes in the nineteenth century a stronger force in the history of musical composition than ever before. The reasons, as always, are many, but one of the most important is the growing sense of *canon*, of an accumulating body of permanent masterworks that never go out of style but form the bedrock of an everlasting and immutable repertory that alone can validate contemporary composers with its authority.

The image shows a page of a musical score for Franz Joseph Haydn's 'Creation, recitative with chorus in full score'. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It features a full orchestra including Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bn.), Horn (Hn.), Trumpet (Tr.), Timpani (Timp.), Trombone (Tbn.), Cymbal (Cbn.), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Via.), Cello (Cb.), and Double Bass (B.). The vocal parts include a Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B) chorus. The lyrics are: 'Es wer-de Licht, und es ward Licht. Let there be light, and there was Light.' The score includes various performance instructions such as 'pizz.', 'arco', 'senza Sordino', and 'ff'.

ex. 11-11 Franz Joseph Haydn, *Creation*, recitative with chorus in full score

The reasons for the emergence of this canon had to do with the same new economic conditions in which Mozart and Haydn worked at the ends of their lives. The prime venue of musical performance became the public subscription concert rather than the aristocratic salon. Not the needs of a patron but the communal judgment of a public (as arbitrated by a new class of public critics) now defined values.

And those values were defined in accordance with a new concept of the artistic masterwork—a consummate, inviolable, even sacred musical text that contained and transmitted the permanently valuable achievements of a master creator. Thanks to this new concept, the art of music now possessed artifacts of permanent value like the painter's colored canvas or the architect's solid edifice. And like paintings, stored increasingly in public museums, musical masterworks were now worshiped in public temples of art—that is, in modern concert halls, which took on more and more the aspect of museums.

Mozart and Haydn (with Handel a singular local prototype) were the first inhabitants of that museum, of which the first examples were figuratively "erected" in Handel's adopted city, London, with the institution of public concert series, like the so-called Academy of Antient [Ancient] Musick, devoted predominantly to the work of dead

composers. That was the birth of “classical music,” essentially a nineteenth-century invention. And that was what killed off the busy music marketplace, with its premium on spontaneous public invention, replacing it with our familiar “classical” curatorial function—faultless reproduction, heavy sense of obligation to texts, radical differentiation of creative and performing roles, the elevation of the literate tradition and the denigration of the oral one.

Although the process of its formation was well underway by the turn of the nineteenth century, the new museum-culture of “classical music” was much abetted by the advent of a powerful catalyst. His name was Beethoven. It is clear that the museum-culture would have prevailed in the long run even without Beethoven, since it was impelled by social and economic forces much more powerful than any individual artist’s efforts could be. And it is equally clear that Beethoven would have become a greatly influential figure in nineteenth-century culture even without the force of the emergent museum-culture behind him. And yet neither the authority of the one nor the greatness of the other would have attained such a speedy elevation without their symbiosis. The museum culture helped create Beethoven, and he helped create it. That momentous story now lies directly in our path.

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Oxford History of Western Music: Richard Taruskin

CHAPTER 12 The First Romantics

Late Eighteenth-century Music Esthetics; Beethoven's Career and His Posthumous Legend

Chapter: CHAPTER 12 The First Romantics

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

THE BEAUTIFUL AND THE SUBLIME

The earliest public critics were motivated by a concept or ideal called romanticism—an easy thing to spot in a writer or an artist, but notoriously difficult to define. And that is because romanticism was (and is) no single idea but a whole heap of ideas, some of them quite irreconcilable. Yet if it has a kernel, that kernel can be found in the opening paragraphs of a remarkable book that appeared in Paris in 1782 under the title *Confessions*—the last and (he thought) crowning work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. “I am commencing an undertaking,” he wrote,

hitherto without precedent, and which will never find an imitator. I desire to set before my fellows the likeness of a man in all the truth of nature, and that man myself.

Myself alone! I know the feelings of my heart, and I know men. I am not made like any of those I have seen; I venture to believe that I am not made like any of those who are in existence. If I am not better, at least I am different. Whether Nature has acted rightly or wrongly in destroying the mould in which she cast me, can only be decided after I have been read.¹

To be romantic meant valuing difference and seeking one's uniqueness. It meant a life devoted to self-realization. It meant believing that the purpose of art was the expression of one's unique self, one's “original genius,” a reality that only existed within. The purpose of such self-expression was the calling forth of a sympathetic response; but it had to be done “disinterestedly,” for its own sake, out of an inner urge to communicate devoid of ulterior motive. It was that, and that alone, that could provide a truly “esthetic” experience (as defined by the philosopher Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, who coined the term in his treatise *Aesthetica* of 1750), as distinct from an intellectual or an ethical one. The only musical works we have encountered so far that could conceivably satisfy these requirements were the late symphonies of Mozart, described in the previous chapter. Not coincidentally, then, Mozart became for the critics of his own time and shortly thereafter the first and quintessential romantic artist, the more so since music was widely regarded as the most essentially romantic of all the arts.



fig. 12-1 E. T. A. Hoffmann, self-portrait (ca. 1822).

What made it so, according to E. T. A. Hoffmann (1776–1822), the most influential music critic of the early nineteenth century, was not merely the power of music to engage the emotions, but rather the “fact” (as Hoffmann felt it to be) that “its sole subject is the infinite.”² Precisely because music, unlike painting or poetry, has no necessary model in nature, it “discloses to man an unknown realm, a world that has nothing in common with the external sensual world that surrounds him, a world in which he leaves behind him all definite feelings to surrender himself to an inexpressible longing.” In opposition to “the external sensual world,” then, music provides access to the inner spiritual world—but only if it resists all temptation to represent the outer world.

Thus, for romantics, instrumental music was an altogether more exalted art than vocal. This, too, was a novel idea, perhaps only even thinkable since Haydn’s time. Rousseau himself, as we know, was of the opposite view, quoting Fontanelle’s exasperated cry—“Sonate, que me veuxtú?” (“Sonata, what do you want from me?”)—with approval, and adding that a taste for “purely harmonic” (i.e., instrumental) music was an “unnatural” taste. Even Kant, the greatest early theorizer of esthetics, thought instrumental music at once the pleasantest art and the least “cultured,” since “it merely plays with sensations.”³ For Hoffmann, though, writing in 1813, the shoe was on the other foot. Words, for him, were the inferior element—by nature representational, hence merely “external.” They pointed outside themselves, while music pointed within. Music, he allowed, definitely improved a text—“clothing it with the purple

luster of romanticism”—but that was only because its inherently spiritual quality rendered our souls more susceptible to the externally motivated (hence, more ordinary, less artistic) emotions named by the poem.⁴ The poem was transformed by union with music, but the music was inhibited by the poem. Eventually, wrote Hoffmann, music “had to break each chain that bound it to another art,” leaving the other arts bereft and aspiring, in the words of Walter Pater, a latter-day romantic critic, “towards the condition of music.”⁵

That condition is the condition of autonomous, “absolute” spirituality and expressivity. The whole history of music, as Hoffmann viewed it, was one of progressive emancipation of music from all bonds that compromised the autonomy and absoluteness of expression that Hoffmann took to be its essence. “That gifted composers have raised instrumental music to its present high estate,” he wrote, is due not to the superior quality of modern instruments or the superior virtuosity of modern performers.⁶ It is due solely to modern composers’ “more profound, more intimate recognition of music’s specific nature.” The composer and the performing virtuoso were henceforth cast in opposition; virtuosity was just one more bond, one more tie to the external world, from which true music had to be emancipated.

All of this was utterly contrary to earlier notions of musical expression, which were founded staunchly on the ancient doctrine (stated most comprehensively by Aristotle) that art imitates nature. That doctrine had itself brought about a revolution in musical expression in its time, the sixteenth century, when musicians discovered the writings of ancient Greece and began, in madrigals and (later) in opera, to devise the “representational style” (*stile rappresentativo*) so as directly to imitate speech and, through it, the emotions expressed by speech. Like the later doctrine of affections, the *stile rappresentativo* was at the opposite pole from romantic notions of untrammelled musical expressivity.

For one thing, it depended on alliance with words—another art. For another, it expressed not the unique feelings of the composer but the archetypal feelings of characters, and hence emphasized general “human nature” as an object of *representation*, not the uniqueness of an individual self as an object of *expression*. For a third, it dealt with particular objectified categories of feeling that had names, that could be (and were) classified and catalogued, that were the common property of humanity. It was powerless to summon up the verbally inexpressible, the ineffable, the metaphysical or “infinite.” Hence, it could communicate only through a repeatable process of objective intellectual cognition (or recognition), not transcendent subjective inspiration. It was not an absolute art, let alone an autonomous or emancipated one. It dealt in the common coin of shared humanity, not the elite currency of genius.

The “gifted composers” or geniuses to whom music owed its emancipation, Hoffmann declared, were Mozart and Haydn, the first true romantics. As “the creators of our present instrumental music,” they were “the first to show us the art in its full glory.”⁷ But whereas Haydn “grasps romantically what is human in human life,” Mozart reveals “the wondrous element that abides in inner being.” Haydn, albeit with unique aptitude and empathy, manifests a general humanity, what Kant called the *sensus communis*—thoughts and feelings common to all (“all men,” as people put it then), thus capable of fostering social union. Haydn is therefore “more commensurable” with ordinary folk, “more comprehensible for the majority.” His art is democratic, in the spirit of Enlightenment.

Mozart, by contrast, expresses for Hoffmann something essential, ineffable, unique. His music “leads us into the heart of the spirit realm”—or those of “us,” anyway, who are equipped (like Tamino, the hero of *The Magic Flute*) to make a spiritual journey. It springs, like all true romantic art, from an “attempt to transcend the sphere of cognition, to experience higher, more spiritual things, and to sense the presence of the ineffable.”⁸ That is the definition of romanticism given around 1835 by Gustav Schilling (1803–81), a German lexicographer.

For all these reasons Mozart’s music, unlike Haydn’s, gives rise not only to bliss but to fear and trembling, and to melancholy as well. To sum it all up in a single pair of opposing words, it was Mozart, according to Hoffmann and his contemporaries, who made the crucial romantic breakthrough—from the (merely) *beautiful* to the *sublime*.



fig. 12-2 Caspar David Friedrich, *Moonrise on an Empty Shore* (1839). Friedrich’s eerily lit landscapes often summon up moods of sublime immensity comparable to the “infinite longing” Hoffmann named as the latent subject matter of romantic art.

We are perhaps no longer as sensitive to this distinction as were the theorists of romanticism. We may tend nowadays to interchange the words “beautiful” and “sublime” in our everyday language, perhaps even in our critical vocabulary. To say “Haydn’s music is beautiful” may not seem to us to be very different in meaning or intent from saying “Mozart’s music is sublime.” It may even seem to us like a way of pairing or equating the two. But to a romantic, it meant radically distinguishing them. And that is because, from about the middle of the eighteenth century to about the middle of the nineteenth, the words were held to be virtual opposites.

For the English philosopher and statesman Edmund Burke (1729–97), writing in 1757 under the influence of Kant (whom he influenced in turn), they presented “a remarkable contrast,” which he detailed as follows:

Sublime objects are vast in their dimensions, beautiful ones comparatively small: beauty should be smooth and polished; the great is rugged and negligent; ... beauty should not be obscure; the great ought to be dark and even gloomy: beauty should be light and delicate; the great ought to be solid and even massive. They are indeed ideas of a very different nature, one being founded on pain, the other on pleasure.⁹

This was, indeed, if not something new then at least something so old and forgotten as to seem new again: art founded on pain. Not since J. S. Bach have we encountered any notion that music should be anything but beautiful, and never have we encountered such a notion with reference to secular music. It implies an enormous change in the artist’s attitude toward his audience; and this, too, is a crucial component in any adequate definition of romanticism. The history of music in the nineteenth century—at any rate, of a very significant portion of it—could be written in terms of the encroachment of the sublime upon the domain of the beautiful, of the “great” upon the pleasant. And the process of encroachment applies to retrospective evaluation as well, as we are in the process of discovering where Mozart is concerned.

By characterizing Mozart’s art as being “more an intimation of the infinite” than Haydn’s, moreover, Hoffmann was implying (and claiming as one of its values) that it was inaccessible to the many. Romanticism, at least Hoffmann’s brand of it, was profoundly elitist and anti-egalitarian. It was an agonized reaction to the “universalist” ideals of the Enlightenment, a recoil by thinkers (especially in England and Germany) who viewed the French Revolution and the disasters that ensued—regicide, mob rule, terror, mass executions, wars of Napoleonic conquest—as the bitter

harvest of an arrogant Utopian dream. Indeed, the man who gave this opinion its most memorably eloquent expression was none other than Edmund Burke, our erstwhile theorist of the sublime, in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, published in 1790, and the even more embittered *Letters on a Regicidal Peace* of 1795–97.

Examples of “painful” music are common enough in opera. The second-act finale of Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* will surely come to mind in this connection, with its “devastating opening chords” that (in the words of Elaine Sisman, a perceptive writer on the musical sublime) “intensify almost unbearably the music of the overture by substituting the chord on which the Commendatore had been mortally wounded in the [Act I] duel.”¹⁰ The graveyard scene from the same opera had inspired actual “horror” in a contemporary reviewer, who commented that “Mozart seems to have learned the language of ghosts from Shakespeare.”¹¹ Interestingly enough, Mozart, while working on *Idomeneo*, his most unremittingly serious opera, found fault with that very aspect of Shakespeare, commenting that “if the speech of the ghost in Hamlet were not so long it would be more effective.”¹² He twice revised the trombone-laden music representing the terrifying subterranean voice of Neptune in *Idomeneo*—from seventy measures, to thirty-one, all the way down to nine—so as to achieve a proper sense of awe-inspiring shock, or (in a single word) sublimity.

But these were not the passages in Mozart that inspired Hoffmann to call him romantic, nor did even Haydn’s overwhelming Representation of Chaos in *The Creation*, culminating in the famous burst of divine illumination, qualify for that honor. The latter was undeniably a sublime achievement. Schilling, the lexicographer, actually referred to it in his definition of *das Erhabene* (the sublime) in music, although that may have been because the opening words of the Book of Genesis were themselves often cited as the greatest of all models for sublime rhetoric.¹³

But there was a crucial difference between the sublime as represented in *The Creation* and the sublime as prized by romantics. Haydn’s representation, like any representation, had a cognizable object, a fixed content that emanated from words, not music. Hence it was an example of “imitation” rather than expression, and therefore, to romantics, not romantic. For a mere imitation to venture intimations of the sublime could strike a romantic critic as a ridiculous misuse of music. “At Vienna, I heard Haydn’s *Creation* performed by four hundred musicians,” wrote Mme. de Stäel, an exile from revolutionary France, in her travel memoir *De l’Allemagne* (From Germany; 1810):

It was an entertainment worthy to be given in honor of the great work which it celebrated; but the skill of Haydn was sometimes even injurious to his talent: with these words of the Bible, “God said let there be light, and there was light,” the accompaniment of the instruments was at first very soft so as scarcely to be heard, then all at once they broke out together with a terrible noise as if to express the sudden burst of light, which occasioned a witty remark “that at the appearance of light it was necessary to stop one’s ears.” In several other passages of the *Creation*, the same labor of mind may often be censured.¹⁴

In this censure one can hear the authentic voice of early romanticism. It was not for *The Creation*, after all, that Hoffmann valued Haydn, but for his untitled instrumental works—works of ineffable content but powerful expressivity. That uncanny combination was the result of inspiration, and called forth inspiration from the listener.

The reason why Mozart was thought of—first in his day and then, more emphatically, in Hoffmann’s—as the most romantically sublime of composers had to do, in the first place, with the discomfort of sensory overload. “Too many notes, my dear Mozart” complained the emperor in the famous story, and in so doing reacted to what Immanuel Kant called the “mathematical sublime,” the awe that comes from contemplating what is countless, like the stars above.¹⁵ The “difficulty” of Mozart’s instrumental style was most spectacularly displayed, perhaps, in the densely grandiose fugal finale to his last symphony (in C major, K. 551), a movement that created, *without recourse to representation*, the same sort of awe that godly or ghostly apparitions created in opera. And that is why the symphony was nicknamed *Jupiter* (by J. P. Salomon, Haydn’s promoter, as it happens). That awe was the painful gateway to the beatific contemplation of the infinite, the romantics’ chosen work.

Notes:

(1) *The Confessions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (New York: Random House [Modern Library], n.d.), p. 1.

(2) E. T. A. Hoffmann, “Beethoven’s Instrumental Music” (1813), in Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History* (New York: Norton, 1950), p. 775.

- (3) Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment* (1790), trans. J. H. Bernard (New York: Hafner, 1951), p. 174.
- (4) Quoted in Strunk, *Source Readings*, p. 776.
- (5) Walter Pater, "The School of Giorgione" (1873), in *The Aesthetes: A Sourcebook*, ed. Ian Small (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 15.
- (6) Quoted in Strunk, *Source Readings*, p. 776.
- (7) Hoffmann, quoted in Strunk, *Source Readings*, p. 776.
- (8) Gustav Schilling, *Encyklopädie der gesammte musikalischen Wissenschaften, oder Universal-Lexicon der Tonkunst*, Vol. VI (Stuttgart 1837), in *Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Centuries*, eds., P. le Huray and J. Day (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 470.
- (9) Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757), in *Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Centuries*, eds. P. le Huray and J. Day, pp. 70–71.
- (10) Elaine R. Sisman, *Mozart: The 'Jupiter' Symphony* (Cambridge Music Handbooks; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 18.
- (11) *Dramaturgische Blätter* (Frankfurt, 1789); quoted in Sisman, *'Jupiter' Symphony*, p. 18.
- (12) Mozart to his father, 29 November 1780; quoted in Sisman, *'Jupiter' Symphony*, p. 17.
- (13) Quoted in le Huray and Day, *Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Centuries*, p. 474.
- (14) Quoted in le Huray and Day, *Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Centuries*, p. 302.
- (15) Or, as first reported, "Too beautiful for our ears, my dear Mozart, and monstrous many notes!" (Franz Niemtschek, *Leben des K. K. Kapellmeisters Wolfgang Gottlieb Mozart, nach Originalquellen beschrieben* [Prague, 1798]; quoted in Thomas Bauman, *W. A. Mozart: Die Entführung aus dem Serail* [Cambridge Opera Handbooks; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987], p. 89).

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Oxford History of Western Music: Richard Taruskin

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Classical

Romanticism

CLASSIC OR ROMANTIC?

Chapter: CHAPTER 12 The First Romantics

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

Nowadays it is conventional, of course, to call Mozart and Haydn “classic” composers rather than “romantic” ones, and even to locate the essence of their “classicism” in the “absoluteness” of their music (construing “absoluteness” here to imply the absence of representation). This is due, in part, to a changed perspective, alluded to at the end of the previous chapter, from which we now tend to look back on Mozart-and-Haydn as the cornerstone of the permanent performing repertory or “canon,” and “classic” is another way of saying “permanent.” As early as 1829, the author of a history of romanticism recognized that in music more than in any other art, everything takes on a “classic” aspect as it ages: “As far as we are concerned,” wrote F. R. de Toreinx (real name Eugène Ronteix), “Paisiello, Cimarosa and Mozart are classics, though their contemporaries regarded them as romantics.”¹⁶

But there was more to it than that. Historical hindsight eventually led to a new periodization of music history that came into common parlance around 1840, parsing the most recent phase of that history into a “Classical” period and a “Romantic” one, with the break occurring around 1800. One of the earliest enunciations of this dichotomy, for a long time almost universally accepted by historians, was an essay, “Classisch und Romantisch” (1841), by Ferdinand Gelbcke (1812–92). The music of the late eighteenth century was a “Classical art” for Gelbcke because like all classical art it was “object-centered, contemplative rather than expressive,” and—cliché of clichés!—because it struck a balance between form and content (or as Gelbcke put it, “between the art which shapes it and the material that is to be shaped”).¹⁷ Mozart, for Hoffmann a dangerous and “superhuman” (i.e., sublime) artist, was by Gelbcke’s time the very epitome of orderly values:

That composure, that peace of mind, that serene and generous approach to life, that balance between ideas and the means of expression which is fundamental to the superb masterpieces of that unique man, these were the most blessed and fruitful characteristics of the age in which Mozart lived, characteristics that we have imperceptibly yet gradually lost.¹⁸

The view may be anachronistic, and it is surely forgetful of romanticism’s original import (to say nothing of the actual conditions of Mozart’s life). But like “Gregorian chant” or “English horn,” the misnomer “Classical period”—corresponding exactly to what the earliest romantic critics called the earliest romantic phase of music—may be too firmly ensconced in the vocabulary of musicians to be dislodged by mere factual refutation. Nor is it without its own historical truth, so long as we remember that what we now call “classical” virtues, especially the virtues of artistic purity and self-sufficiency, are really romantic values in disguise.

Calling them “classical” expresses the nostalgia—an altogether “romanticized” nostalgia—that the artists and thinkers of post-Napoleonic Europe felt for the imagined stability and simplicity of the *ancien régime*. Gelbcke, unlike many later writers, makes no attempt to conceal his idyllic hankering for a bygone time he never knew. “When the Austrian Empire enjoyed a golden era of security, power, prosperity and peace under the reign of the Emperor Joseph II,” he mused rhetorically,

was this not the age of Haydn and Mozart? Although the storms were brewing elsewhere, within the Austrian Empire, nothing transpired to disturb the calm. So it was that both great composers were free to develop those qualities that have already been mentioned in connection with Mozart, qualities that they derived above all from the spirit of the age in which they lived.¹⁹



fig. 12-3 Sketches of Beethoven by L. P. A. Bürmeister (Lyser), published with his signature by the printmaker E.H. Schroeder.

Like so many distinctions that try to pass themselves off as “purely” artistic, the Classic/Romantic dichotomy thus has a crucial political subtext. “Classic” was the age of settled aristocratic authority; “romantic” was the age of the restless burgeoning bourgeoisie. Yet even without looking beyond the boundaries of music, no one in the nineteenth century could evade the sense that a torrential watershed had intervened between the age of Mozart and Haydn and the present. Even Hoffmann, writing a generation before Gelbcke, acknowledged that a momentous metamorphosis had taken place, although he saw it as a culmination of a prior “romantic” tendency rather than a break with a “classic” one. A difference of degree can be so great, nevertheless, as to be tantamount to a difference in kind, and so it was for Hoffmann when he compared the work of Mozart and Haydn, “the creators of our present instrumental music,” with that of “the man who then looked on it with all his love and penetrated its innermost being—Beethoven!”²⁰

Notes:

(16) F. R. Toreinx, *L'Histoire du romantisme* (1829); quoted in le Huray and Day, *Music and Aesthetics in the*

Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Centuries, p. 415.

(17) Ferdinand Adolf Gelbcke, "Classisch und Romantisch: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichts-schreibung der Musik unserer Zeit," in *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (1841); quoted in le Huray and Day, *Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Centuries*, p. 525.

(18) *Ibid.*, p. 527.

(19) *Ibid.*, p. 528.

(20) Hoffmann, quoted in Strunk, *Source Readings*, p. 776.

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Oxford History of Western Music: Richard Taruskin

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Ludwig van Beethoven

Musical Canon

BEETHOVEN AND “BEETHOVEN”

Chapter: CHAPTER 12 The First Romantics

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

The enthusiastic quote comes from Hoffmann’s essay, “Beethoven’s Instrumental Music,” published in 1814 but based on articles and reviews written as early as 1810—and so do most of the other quotations from Hoffmann given above. Even as he waxed ardent about Mozart’s romanticism and Haydn’s, Hoffmann did so in the knowledge that they had been surpassed in all that made them great. Hoffmann’s characterization of Beethoven, taken in conjunction with his analytical writings about several of Beethoven’s works, does far more than reflect the romantic viewpoint of 1814. Hoffmann’s view of Beethoven reflects assumptions about art and artists that have persisted ever since—ideas to which practically all readers of this book will have been exposed, and to many of which they will have subscribed, even readers who have never read a single word about Beethoven, or (for that matter) about music.

Ideas received in this way—informally, unconsciously, from “the air,” without knowledge of their history (or even that they *have* a history)—are likely to be accepted as “truths held to be self-evident.” In this way, Hoffmann’s “Beethoven” stands for a great deal more than just Beethoven. It stands for the watershed that produced the modern musical world in which we all now live. To learn about it will be in large part to learn about ourselves. Before we can adequately understand Beethoven, then, or indeed anything that has happened since, we will need to know more about “Beethoven.”

To begin with, Hoffmann’s “Beethoven” was the idea of the romantic (or Kantian) sublime multiplied to the *n*th power. “Beethoven’s music,” Hoffmann raved,

opens up to us the realm of the monstrous and the immeasurable. Burning flashes of light shoot through the deep night of this realm, and we become aware of giant shadows that surge back and forth, driving us into narrower and narrower confines until they destroy *us*—but not the pain of that endless longing in which each joy that has climbed aloft in jubilant song sinks back and is swallowed up, and it is only in this pain, which consumes love, hope, and happiness but does not destroy them, which seeks to burst our breasts with a many-voiced consonance of all the passions, that we live on, enchanted beholders of the supernatural!²¹

The purpose of art, then, is to grant us an intensity of experience unavailable to our senses, and even (unless we too are geniuses) to our imaginations. But that intensity, to be felt at maximum strength, must be unattached to objects. It must be realer than what is merely present to the senses and nameable. Thus,

Beethoven’s music sets in motion the lever of fear, of awe, of horror, of suffering, and wakens just that infinite longing which is the essence of romanticism. He is accordingly a completely romantic composer, and is not this perhaps the reason why he has less success with vocal music, which excludes the character of indefinite longing, merely representing emotions defined by words as emotions experienced in the realm of the infinite?

The process whereby the great displaces the pleasant as the subject and purpose of art is well under way. And therefore, Hoffmann notes with perhaps a trace of an aristocratic smirk, “the musical rabble is oppressed by Beethoven’s powerful genius; it seeks in vain to oppose it.” But mere musicians, be they ever so learned in the craft of their profession, fare no better:

Knowing critics, looking about them with a superior air, assure us that we may take their word for it as men of

great intellect and deep insight that, while the excellent Beethoven can scarcely be denied a very fertile and lively imagination, he does not know how to bridle it! Thus, they say, he no longer bothers at all to select or to shape his ideas, but, following the so-called daemonic method, he dashes everything off exactly as his ardently active imagination dictates it to him.

While a romantic artist inevitably makes a demoniac impression, Hoffmann goes on to assert, a true genius can be "unbridled" in effect yet at the same time fully in control of his method. Discerning that control where others miss it is the function of the critic. A critic, he implies, can be inspired, too. He, too, can be a genius.

The truth is that, as regards self-possession, Beethoven stands quite on a par with Haydn and Mozart and that, separating his ego from the inner realm of harmony, he rules over it as an absolute monarch. In Shakespeare, our knights of the aesthetic measuring-rod have often bewailed the utter lack of inner unity and inner continuity, although for those who look more deeply there springs forth, issuing from a single bud, a beautiful tree, with leaves, flowers, and fruit; thus, with Beethoven, it is only after a searching investigation of his instrumental music that the high self-possession inseparable from true genius and nourished by the study of the art stands revealed.²²

What all of this amounts to is the idea, fundamental to the modern concept and practice of "classical music," of the lonely artist-hero whose suffering produces works of awe-inspiring greatness that give listeners otherwise unavailable access to an experience that transcends all worldly concerns. "His kingdom is not of this world," declared Hoffmann in another essay on Beethoven, making explicit reference to the figure regarded by Christians as the world-redeeming Messiah. And indeed, the romantic view was in essence a religious, "sacralizing" view. It was literally an article of faith to romantics that theirs was a specifically Christian idea of art—intent, like the Christian religion, on eternal values and on an intensity of experience that (as Schilling put it) might "transcend cognition" so that its communicants would "experience something higher, more spiritual." Therein lay the difference between romantic art and all previous art, even (or especially) that of classical antiquity. The beauty of all pre-Christian art was a materialistic beauty, as pagan religion was a materialistic religion. Its "classic" proportions and pleasing grace, inspiring though they had been to artists ever since the humanist revival, were hedonistic virtues, expressive of nothing (to quote Schilling once more) beyond a mere "refined and ennobled sensuality." Beauty, in the name of the new art-religion, had to give way before greatness. From now on music expressive of the new world-transcending values would be called not beautiful music but "great music." It is a term that is still preeminently used to describe—or at least to market—"classical music," and Beethoven is still its standard-bearer.

The newly sacralized view of art had immense and immediate repercussions on all aspects of daily musical life. Great works of music, like great paintings, were displayed in specially designed public spaces. The concert hall, like the museum, became a "temple of art" where people went not to be entertained but to be uplifted. The masterworks displayed there were treated with a reverence previously reserved for sacred texts. Indeed, the scores produced by Beethoven *were* sacred texts, and the function of displaying them took on, at the very least, the aspect of curatorship—and at the highest level, that of a ministry.

Where previously, as Carl Dahlhaus (1928–89) once memorably put it, the written text of a musical composition was "a mere recipe for a performance," it now became an inviolable authority object "whose meaning is to be deciphered with exegetical interpretations."²³ By invoking the concept of exegesis—scriptural commentary—Dahlhaus once again draws attention to the parallel between the new (or "strong") concept of art and that of religion. Music, because of its abstract or "absolute" character, required the most exegesis. It therefore became the art-religion par excellence, and provided the most work for an art-ministry—that is, criticism. Where previously the work served the performer, now the performer, and the critic too, were there to serve the work.

The scores of earlier "canonical" composers came to be treated with a similar reverence. But here the new treatment contrasted, and in some ways even conflicted, with the way such older works had been treated when they were new. Mozart did not scruple to alter his works in performance in order to please his audience with spontaneous shows of virtuosity, and neither did his contemporaries. Not only Mozart, but all performers of concertos and arias in his time improvised their passagework, "lead-ins," and cadenzas, and were considered remiss or incompetent if they did not. For them scores, even (or especially) their own scores, were "mere recipes," blueprints for flights of fancy, pretexts for display. Beginning in the early nineteenth century, however, spontaneous performance skills began to lose their prestige in favor of reverent curatorship.

Musicians were now trained (at conservatories, "keeping" institutions) to reproduce the letter of the text with a perfection no one had ever previously aspired to, and improvisation was neglected if not scorned outright. By the late nineteenth century, most instrumentalists played written-out cadenzas to all canonical concertos from memory; the cadenzas were now just as "canonical" as the rest of the piece. Beginning with Beethoven, composers actually set them down in their scores, expecting performers to reproduce them scrupulously. Nowadays, it is only the most exceptional pianist who has the wherewithal to improvise a cadenza, and those who do have it are as likely to be censured for their impertinence as praised for their know-how.

Improvisation skills have not died out by any means, but they have been excluded from the practice of "classical music." They continue to thrive only in nonliterate or semiliterate repertoires such as jazz and what is now called "pop" or popular music, a concept that did not exist until "classical music" was sacralized in the nineteenth century.

If sacralization implied inhibition of spontaneous performer behavior, that is nothing compared with the constraints that were imposed on audiences, who were now expected (and are still expected) to behave in concert halls the way they behaved in church. Recalling Mozart's own description of the audience that greeted his *Paris* symphony with spontaneous applause wherever the music pleased them (as audiences still do when listening to pop performers), it is hard to avoid a sense of irony when contemplating the reverent passivity with which any audience today will receive the same symphony. Concert programs now even contain guides to "concert etiquette" in which new communicants at the shrine can receive instruction in the faith. One that appeared in New York "stagebills" during the 1980s even affected a parody of biblical language. When attending a concert, it reads:

- Thou Shalt Not:
- Talk ...
- Hum, Sing, or Tap Fingers or Feet ...
- Rustle Thy Program ...
- Crack Thy Gum in Thy Neighbors' Ears ...
- Wear Loud-Ticking Watches or Jangle
- Thy Jewelry ...
- Open Cellophane-Wrapped Candies ...
- Snap Open and Close Thy Purse ...
- Sigh With Boredom ...
- Read ...
- Arrive Late or Leave Early ...

This is only the latest version of a mode of discourse that began with critics like E. T. A. Hoffmann around 1810. As musicians and music lovers, we still live under the iron rule of romanticism.

Notes:

(21) *Ibid.*, p. 777.

(22) *Ibid.*, p. 778.

(23) Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, trans. J. B. Robinson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), p. 9.

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Beethoven: Influence and reception

Beethoven: Deafness, 1801–2

KAMPF UND SIEG

Chapter: CHAPTER 12 The First Romantics

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

Was Beethoven really responsible for all of this? Only in the sense that things were said and done in his name that, were it not for him, would have been said and done in the name of others, and perhaps differently. He became the protagonist and the beneficiary of an attitude that had been growing for almost half a century by the time he began making a name for himself, and that ultimately reflected changing social and economic conditions over which he had no more control than any other musician. His music was clearly affected by it; if it had not existed he would have composed very differently (in all likelihood more like Mozart). But by the force of his career and his accomplishments, and by the commanding mythology that grew up around his name, he mightily affected it in turn; without him it might not have achieved the authority his powerful example conferred upon it. In the “Beethoven watershed” we have one of the clearest examples of symbiosis between a powerful agent and the intellectual milieu in which he thrived.

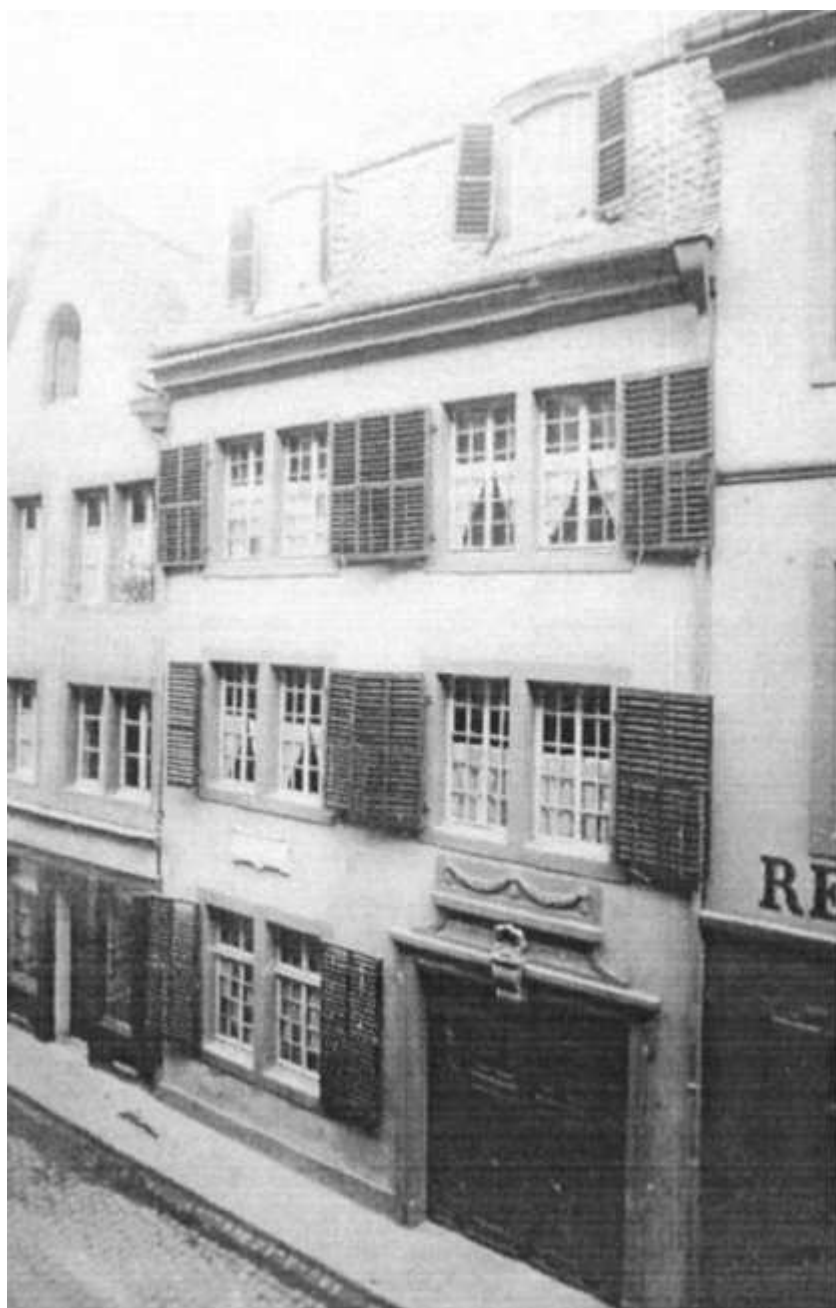


fig. 12-4 The house in Bonn where Beethoven was born.

In some important respects Beethoven shaped his time (and ours) in ways he could never have intended. He was born, on 16 December 1770, into a transplanted Flemish family of court musicians, like the Bachs but far less prestigious. His grandfather and namesake, Louis van Beethoven (1712–73), after occupying positions in several Belgian cities, accepted a singer's post at the minor Electoral court of Bonn, a smallish city on the Rhine (later the capital of the Federal Republic of Germany or "West Germany"), where he changed his name to Ludwig and in 1761 acceded to the Kapellmeistership, a position to which his son Johann, the composer's father, did not measure up.

The younger Ludwig was originally groomed for a career in the family mold. By the age of twelve, after establishing a local reputation as a piano prodigy, he was appointed assistant to the Electoral court organist. At eighteen, he took over some of his father's duties as singer and instrumentalist. His first important compositions date from 1790, when he was nineteen: a cantata on the death of his employer's elder brother, the emperor Joseph II, followed by another (this one actually commissioned) celebrating the coronation of Leopold II, Joseph's successor. This sort of piece was standard Kapellmeisterly fare.

Although neither cantata seems to have been performed at the time, they were shown to Haydn, who passed through Bonn en route to England in December of that year, and received his approval. After Haydn's return from his first

London visit, late in 1792, the Elector arranged for Beethoven to study with the great man in Vienna. A line of succession was thus established. The lessons, confined in the main to basic training in counterpoint, did not last long. Haydn was summoned back to England early in 1794. In his absence Beethoven took instruction from some other local maestros—from Johann Georg Albrechtsberger (1736–1809), the Kapellmeister of St. Stephen's Cathedral; and possibly from Antonio Salieri (1750–1825), the imperial court Kapellmeister—and began making a name for himself as a pianist. He became the darling of the aristocratic salon set, and seemed to be duplicating, or even surpassing, Mozart's early Viennese success as virtuoso performer and improviser.

By the time Haydn returned in August 1795, Beethoven had become a household name among the noble music lovers of the capital. He had had his first big concert success, performing his Concerto in B ♭ major (later published as his Second Concerto, op. 19), and had also published his opus 1. This was a set of three trios for piano, violin, and cello, dedicated to one of his patrons, Prince Karl von Lichnowsky (1761–1814). Haydn expressed regrets that Beethoven had published the third of these trios, a brusque work in the dark key of C minor. In retaliation, Beethoven refused to identify himself on the title page of his op. 2 (three piano sonatas) as Haydn's pupil, even though the sonatas were dedicated to his former master. (He claimed, when pressed, that although he had taken a few lessons from Haydn, he hadn't learned anything from him.) These acts of self-assertion, like the startling assertiveness of some of the early compositions, were probably the product of both sincere self-regard and self-promoting calculation. They later became key elements in the Beethoven myth.

Beginning in 1796 Beethoven made concert tours throughout the German-speaking lands. They were immensely successful, both in pecuniary terms and in terms of his spreading fame. The Czech composer Václav Tomášek (1774–1850) heard him in Prague in 1798; in memoirs he published near the end of his long life he averred that Beethoven was the greatest pianist he had ever heard. Beethoven's supremacy among composers of his generation was established by the turn of the century, especially after a concert he organized for his own benefit on 2 April 1800. The program contained works by Haydn and Mozart, another Beethoven concerto performed by the author, and, as always, an improvisation.

But it also contained two new Beethoven compositions without keyboard: the Septet for Winds and Strings, op. 20, which would remain one of his most popular works, and most important by far, the First Symphony, op. 21. This last was the crucial step, because with his symphonic debut Beethoven was now competing not only with other virtuoso composers of his own generation, but directly with Haydn on the master's own turf. The next year he published a set of six string quartets (op. 18) that challenged Haydn in his other genre of recognized preeminence. This secured Beethoven's claim, so to speak, as heir apparent to the throne Haydn's death would shortly vacate.



fig. 12-5 Piano by Sebastian Erard, presented to Beethoven by the maker in 1803.

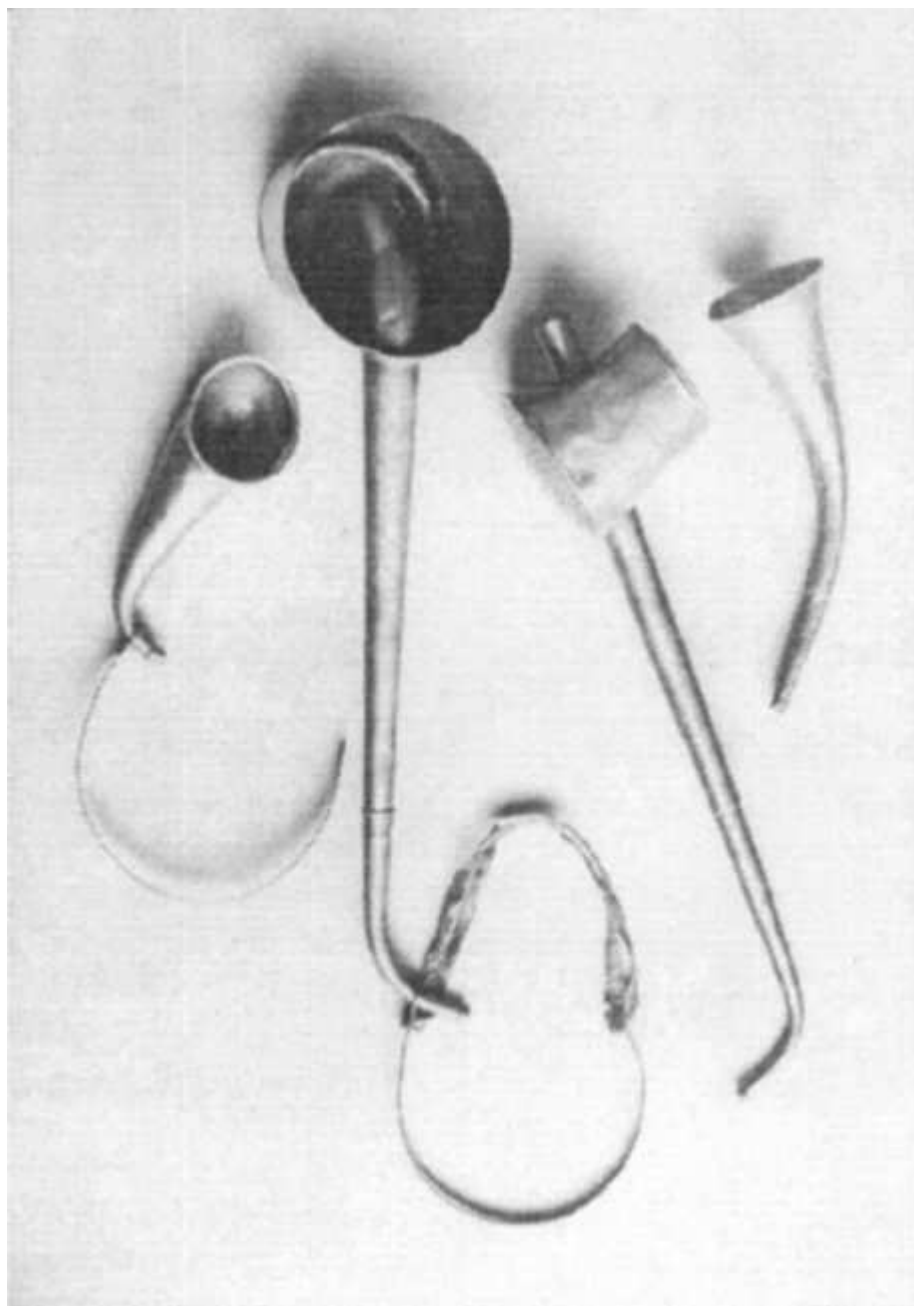


fig. 12-6 Ear trumpets, made for Beethoven between 1812 and 1814 by Johann Nepomuk Maelzel, who was best known for his metronome.

And now disaster. In a letter to a friend dated 29 June 1801, Beethoven confessed for the first time that, after several years of fearful uncertainty, he was now sure that he was losing his hearing. The immediate result of this devastating discovery was withdrawal from his glittering social life: “I find it impossible to say to people, I am deaf,” he wrote. “If I had any other profession it would be easier, but in my profession it is a terrible handicap.”²⁴ What an understatement! And yet, while eventually he had to cease his concertizing, he did not give up his composing.

Indeed, as he told his brothers in a letter he addressed to them in October of the next year from a suburb of Vienna called Heiligenstadt, composing remained his chief consolation. The realization that he still had music in him, and that he had an obligation to share it with the world, had cured his obsessive thoughts of suicide. This letter, which he apparently never sent, was discovered among Beethoven’s papers after his death. Its poignant mixture of despondency and resolution, and its depiction of a man facing unimaginable obstacles over which he was by then known to have triumphed, have made the Heiligenstadt Testament, as it has come to be known, perhaps the most famous personal utterance of any composer.²⁵ It has done more than any other single document to make Beethoven an object of inexhaustible human interest, the subject of biographical novels, whole galleries of idealized portraiture, and most recently, of biopics.

None of these books, pictures, or films would have been made, it could go without saying, were it not for the extraordinary musical output that followed the Heiligenstadt Testament. And yet perhaps it needs saying after all, for Beethoven's deafness not only became the chief basis of the Beethoven mystique, and the chief source of his unprecedented authority as a cultural figure; it also served as one of the chief avenues by which Beethoven's personal fate, as mediated through the critical literature we have been sampling, became the most commanding and regulating single influence on the whole field of musical activity from his time to ours.

The idea of a successful deaf composer is a virtually superhuman idea. It connotes superhuman suffering and superhuman victory, playing directly into the emerging quasi-religious romantic notion of the great artist as humanity's redeemer. That scenario—of suffering and victory, both experienced at the limits of intensity—became the ineluctable context in which Beethoven's music was received. And, as we shall shortly see, that very scenario was consciously encoded by the composer in some of his most celebrated works.

Yet there was also another factor at work, profoundly affecting Beethoven's output and his significance, and enabling him to facilitate by his example the inexorable romantic transformation of musical art and life. His deafness caused him to disappear physically from the musical scene. It removed him, so far as the musical world was concerned, from "real time," the time frame in which musical daily business was conducted. His creative activities now took place in an unimaginable transcendent space to which no one but he had access. The copious sketches he made for his compositions beginning in the late 1790s (and, somewhat bizarrely, kept in his possession throughout his life) have precisely for this reason exercised an enormous fascination—and not only on musicians or musicologists—as a lofty record of esthetic achievement, but also as an ethically and morally charged human document of *Kampf und Sieg* (struggle and victory).

The creative and performing functions were in Beethoven gradually but irrevocably severed, leaving only the first. And that sole survivor, the creative function, was now invested with a heroic import that cast the split—again, just as romantic theory would have it—in ethical, quasi-religious terms. Never again would the performing virtuoso composer, on the Mozartean model, be considered the ideal. The composer—the creator—became a truly Olympian being, far removed from the ephemeral transactions of everyday musical life—improvisations, cadenzas, performances in general—and yet a public figure withal, whose pronouncements were regarded as public events of the first magnitude. That was the difference between Beethoven and such earlier nonperforming composers as Haydn. Haydn passed most of his creative life in the closed-off, private world of aristocratic patronage, while Beethoven, even after his social alienation, spoke to the mass public that emerged only after the patronage system had begun to wither.

Beethoven's last appearance as concerto soloist took place at a concert on 22 December 1808 at which the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies both received their first performances, and Beethoven, in addition to improvising, performed his Fourth Piano Concerto and his so-called Choral Fantasy, a short but grandiose work that begins with a piano solo (extemporized at the first performance) and ends with a choral hymn that foreshadowed the gigantic "Ode to Joy" at the end of the Ninth Symphony. His last public appearance as pianist took place in the spring of 1814 (in the so-called "Archduke" Trio, op. 97), from which time onward, even down to the present, a "classical" composer's involvement in performance (except as conductor, another sort of silent dictator) would carry something of a stigma, a taint of compromise, as "art" (the province of creators) became ever more radically distinguished from "entertainment" (the province of performers). The distinction between art and entertainment is wholly the product of romantic esthetics. Mozart would not have understood it. Beethoven certainly did. The social and economic conditions that followed the demise of the private patronage system were its enablers. Critics like Hoffmann were its inventors.

Notes:

(24) Beethoven to Franz Wegeler, 29 June 1801; in *Beethoven: Letters, Journals and Conversations* trans. Michael Hamburger (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1960), p. 24.

(25) For the full text, trans. Piero Weiss, see P. Weiss and R. Taruskin, *Music in the Western World*, 2nd ed., pp. 277–79.

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Beethoven: The symphonic ideal

Sonata form

THE EROICA

Chapter: CHAPTER 12 The First Romantics

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

Whether it is fair to infer a causal nexus will forever be a matter for debate, but almost immediately after Beethoven's confession of his progressive deafness and his social alienation, his music underwent a momentous transformation in style. As early as 1798, the ambassador to Vienna from revolutionary France, General Bernadotte, suggested to Beethoven that he write a "heroic symphony" on the subject of the charismatic young general Napoleon Bonaparte, then riding the crest of adulation for his brilliant campaigns in Italy and Egypt. In the summer of 1803, with Napoleon now (as First Consul) the *effective* dictator of France and idolized throughout Europe as the great exporter of political Enlightenment, Beethoven was moved to realize this plan.

The work he produced, a *sinfonia eroica* originally entitled "Bonaparte," was conceived on a hitherto unprecedented scale in every dimension: size of orchestra, sheer duration, "tonal drama," rhetorical vehemence, and (hardest to describe) a sense of overriding dynamic purpose uniting the four movements. The monumentally sublime or "heroic" style thus achieved became the mark of Beethoven's unique greatness and, for his romantic exegetes, a benchmark of musical attainment to which all had now, hopelessly, to try and measure up. The fact that Beethoven, enraged over Napoleon's crowning himself Emperor of the French in 1804, rescinded the dedication before the first performance of the work, substituting the possibly ironic title "Heroic Symphony Composed to Celebrate the Memory of a Great Man," only enhanced its sublimity. It took the work beyond the level of representation into the realm of transcendental ideas.

A quick survey of the first movement of the *Eroica*, as it is now familiarly called, will at once reveal the astonishing earmarks of the new heroic style that seemed so suddenly to spring from Beethoven fully armed, like Athena from the head of Zeus. Analysts and critics never tire of pointing out the insignificance of the theme from which the whole huge edifice derives (a veritable bugle call), or its fortuitous resemblance to the first four bars of a theme by the twelve-year-old Mozart. The latter comes at the beginning of the Intrada (overture) to a trivial little singspiel, *Bastien und Bastienne*, that the boy wonder tossed off to entertain the guests at a garden party hosted by Dr. Franz Mesmer, the quack healer (Ex. 12-1).



ex. 12-1a W. A. Mozart, *Bastien und Bastienne*, first theme of intrada, mm. 1–8

The image displays three systems of musical notation for the first period of the intrada from Mozart's *Bastien und Bastienne*. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system introduces a fortissimo-piano (*fp*) dynamic. The third system continues with *fp* dynamics. The notation includes various note values, rests, and articulation marks such as slurs and accents.

ex. 12-1b W.A. Mozart, *Bastien und Bastienne*, intrada, whole first period

Allegro con brio

Measures 1-44 of the score, showing the initial fanfare and the entry of various instruments (Vc., Vln., WW, Bn., Vla., Vc., Cb., Fl., Cl., Bn., Vla) with dynamic markings such as *f*, *p*, *cresc.*, *ff*, and *ffp*.

ex. 12-1c Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 3, Op. 55 (*Eroica*), I, mm. 1–44 in thematic outline

There is some point to this comparison. What it shows is not that Beethoven's theme is inane or insignificant, but more nearly the opposite: that his new style is founded on a new and explosively powerful concept of what produces a significant musical utterance. Mozart's theme, up to the point quoted in Ex. 12-1a, is entirely conventional in its symmetry. In fairness to the young composer, Ex. 12-1b shows how the continuation of the theme is cleverly "unbalanced." The second phrase is repeated, and its first two bars are extended in sequence, so that the total length of the theme up to the elided cadence is an interesting fourteen bars in length (4 + 4 + 2 + 2 + 2). But even these departures honor symmetry in the breach. They are by no means unusual or atypical in the music of Haydn and Mozart's time.

Beethoven's treatment of the same four-bar fanfare idea is altogether unprecedented in manner (Ex. 12-1c). The C# that immediately follows the E b -major arpeggio on the downbeat of m. 7 is possibly the most famous single note in the entire symphonic literature, for the way it flatly contradicts all the fanfare's implications. Rather than initiating a balancing phrase, like the fifth bar of Mozart's theme, it can only be heard (thanks to the slur) as a violently unbalancing extension—so violently unbalancing, in fact, that the first violins, entering immediately after the C#, are made palpably to totter for two bars. Relative harmonic stability is restored in m. 9 by the resolution of the

uncanny chromatic note back to a normal scale degree (the leading tone), marked with the first of countless *sforzandi* to give it the force necessary to prop the tottering violins. But the two-bar “time out” in mm. 7–8 has scotched all possibility of phrase symmetry—all possibility, that is, of “themehood,” at least for the moment.

All one can do is try again. A cadence, reinforced by the wind instruments, clears the slate in mm. 14–15. (The first stab at the first theme, not counting the two-bar chordal preparation at the outset, has lasted not Mozart’s interestingly subdivided fourteen bars, but an entirely undivided and indivisible thirteen—probably the most hopelessly and designedly off-balance opening in the symphonic literature.) Balance having been provisionally restored, the winds restate the opening four-bar fanfare. In dialogue with the strings the ascending arpeggio at the end is detached and developed sequentially until the dominant is reached; whereupon harmonic motion is stalled (m. 22), preventing closure.

The long series of syncopated *sforzandi* that now follows (mm. 24–33) seems to push hard against a implied harmonic barrier, until an exhilarating breakthrough to the tonic (m. 36) initiates what is obviously a climactic statement of the original fanfare motif, coinciding with the first orchestral *tutti*, replete with martial trumpets and drums. Even this statement, however, dissipates in a sequence without achieving closure. Instead, after eight bars (m. 42), a decisive pull away from the tonic (by means of an augmented sixth resolving to F, the dominant’s dominant) launches the modulation to the secondary key.

What we have been given, in short, is a thematic exposition that furnishes no stable point of departure, but that instead involves us from the beginning in a sense of turbulent dynamic growth: not state, so to speak, but process; not being, to put it philosophically (and romantically), but Becoming. The theme is not so much presented as it is achieved—achieved through struggle. The clarity of metaphor here, instantly apprehended by contemporary listeners, lent this music from the beginning an unprecedented ethical potency.

Not that the metaphor was in any way categorical or determinate in meaning. As the music theorist Scott Burnham has put it, the struggle-and-achievement paradigm could be attached to Napoleon (as “Beethoven’s hero”) or to the composer himself (as “Beethoven Hero,” Burnham’s name for the “author-persona” of the *Eroica*).²⁶ It could as easily be felt as a metaphor for the listener’s own inner life, thus potentially symbolizing bourgeois self-realization, or liberation, or religious transcendence. In any event, as Burnham points out, Beethoven’s achievement provided the supreme symbolic expression of the chief philosophical and political ideals of its time and place. He calls it, in the tradition of German cultural history, the “Goethezeit,” the time of the great polymath Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832)—poet, playwright, philosopher, and natural scientist in one. He makes it clear, though, that the time might better have been called the “Beethovenzeit,” for precisely with Beethoven, and by force of his example, music achieved its century-long preeminence in the eyes of all romantic artists.



fig. 12-7 *Goethe in the Roman Campagna (1787)* by Johann Heinrich Tischbein.

But of course the *Eroica* movement is only just getting underway. Closure is deliberately, indeed demonstratively, withheld even from the climactic statement of the theme. Dynamic process continues through the modulatory section that now ensues, carrying the listener along through a great wealth of new melodic ideas before the second theme is even reached—and when it finally arrives, at m. 83, it provides no more than a brief touching-down on the way to the main cadence of the exposition.

The formal development section having been reached, the same structural/ethical process that shaped the opening theme will be seen to operate at the global level as well, giving shape to the entire 691-measure movement, which thus emerges not as a gigantic sprawl but as a single directed span—or, to recall Goethe the naturalist, a single organic growth. The same rhetorical gesture that governed the very first statement of the fanfare—that of a disruptive detour enabling a triumphant return—will shape the movement as a whole, lending the opening statement a quality of prophesy and the whole a quality of fated consequence.

Of course the “there-and-back” or pendular harmonic plan had been a fundamental shaper of musical form for a hundred years or more when Beethoven composed the *Eroica*; of course his music was rooted in that tradition and depended on it both for its coherence and for its intelligibility. Moreover, his accomplishment could be looked upon as a continuation of Mozart’s and (particularly) Haydn’s earlier project of dramatizing the binary plan: that, we may recall, is what “symphonic” style was all about from the beginning. And yet the difference in degree of drama—or more to the point, of disruption and concomitant expansion—in Beethoven’s treatment of the plan seemed to his contemporaries, and can easily still seem, to be tantamount to a difference in kind.

Consider the move to the “far-out point” (FOP) in the development section, starting (for those with access to the score) at m. 220. That measure recommends itself as an access point because tonal progress up to it has been slow. In fact, the harmony is the same $E\flat$ triad that elsewhere in the piece functions as the tonic. Here, however, owing to its preparation (an augmented sixth on $F\flat$, precisely analogous to the one on $G\flat$ with which Ex. 12-1c ended) it is clearly identified as the local dominant of $A\flat$, the global subdominant. The harmony rocks gently back and forth for a while between the local dominant and the local tonic before a move to F minor (m. 226) incites a fugato, a common

tactic for speeding up harmonic rhythm toward an implied goal.

And then it happens. Just as in the exposition at m. 25 ff, the harmony stalls and strains against an invisible barrier suggested by the same syncopated *sforzandi* as before (Ex. 12-2). Only this time (m. 248) it stalls not on a primary harmonic function of whose eventual resolution there is no doubt, but on a diminished-seventh chord built on G \sharp —enharmonically equivalent to A \flat , the local tonic, but now implying resolution to A, a note altogether outside the tonic scale. The stall therefore arrests the harmonic motion at a far more threatening point; for even when resolution takes place (m. 254), there is no sense of achievement—just another stall. Six measures later the A minor harmony is resolved “Phrygianly” to an even more remote sonority, a dominant-seventh on B-natural, presaging even less satisfying prospects for resolution than before (see Ex. 12-2).

Musical score for measures 248-254. The score is for a full orchestra, including Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bn.), Horns (Hr.), Trumpets (Tr.), Violins I (Vln. I), Violins II (Vln. II), Violas (Vla.), Cellos (Vcl.), and Double Basses (Cb.). The music is in 3/4 time and features a complex harmonic structure with syncopated *sforzandi* (marked *ff*). The key signature has one sharp (F \sharp). The score shows a harmonic stall on a diminished-seventh chord built on G \sharp (enharmonically equivalent to A \flat) at measure 248. The score is divided into two systems, with measure 250 marked at the beginning of the second system.

Musical score for measures 255-261. The score is for a full orchestra, including Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bn.), Horns (Hr.), Trumpets (Tr.), Violins I (Vln. I), Violins II (Vln. II), Violas (Vla.), Cellos (Vcl.), and Double Basses (Cb.). The music is in 3/4 time and features a complex harmonic structure with syncopated *sforzandi* (marked *ff*). The key signature has one sharp (F \sharp). The score shows a Phrygian resolution from the A minor harmony at measure 255 to a dominant-seventh chord on B-natural at measure 261. The score is divided into two systems, with measure 255 marked at the beginning of the second system.

ex. 12-2 Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 3, Op. 55 (*Eroica*), I, mm. 248–65

And it is indeed to that unlikely goal—E-natural, seemingly a further-out FOP than ever approached before—that resolution is eventually made, but not before one last detour through another set of wrenching harmonic stalls that finally reapproaches the dominant-seventh-of-E through the Neapolitan of that unclassifiable key, expressed in a fiercely dissonant form that retains as a suspension the high flute E from the preceding C-major chord (the flat submediant of the looming key, suggesting that it will materialize in the minor). The suspended E rubs painfully against F, the chord root, in the other flute part. For fully four excruciating measures (mm. 276–279) this ear-splitting harmony is hammered out—and then simply dropped (Ex. 12-3).

The grating semitone between the flutes is never resolved; resolution takes place only by implication, in another register, played on other instruments (the E resolving to the first violins' D# in m. 280, the F, most unconventionally, to the viola F#. The resolution chord, delayed by a disruptive rest on the downbeat of measure 280, still throbs tensely owing to the second violins' C-natural, suspended from the preceding chord, which adds a minor ninth to the dominant seventh on B. Tension is reduced by degrees: the C moves to B in measure 282, the remaining dissonance (A, the chord seventh) to G in measure 284. The smoke has metaphorically cleared, and we are left in E minor, the “unclassified” tonality adumbrated twenty-four measures before, with no immediate prospect of return to harmonic terra firma.

**ex. 12-3 Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 3, Op. 55
(Eroica), I, mm. 276–288.**

So far from home no symphonic development had ever seemed to stray before. Having dramatized the disruption, Beethoven now dramatizes the sense of distance by unexpectedly introducing a new theme in the unearthly new key (mm. 284ff). It has been argued that this theme is a counterpoint to an embellished variant of the main theme of the movement (see Ex. 12-4), hence not really a new theme at all. But even if one accepts the demonstration shown in Ex. 12-4, the novelty of the music at m. 284 is striking—as indeed it must be, because it performs an unprecedented function within the movement’s dramatic unfolding. By far the most placid, most symmetrically presented melody in the movement, it expresses not “process” but “state” for a change—the state of being tonally adrift.

ex. 12-4 Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 3, Op. 55 (*Eroica*), I, the relationship between the E minor theme at mm. 284ff and the main theme of the first movement

And yet, there being only twelve possible tone centers, and only six degrees of remoteness (since once past the midpoint, whether reckoning by the circle of fifths or by the chromatic scale, one is circling not out but back), one is never quite as far away from home as one is made at such moments to feel. Beethoven engineers a “retransitional” coup similar to the one we have already encountered in the slow movement from Mozart’s G-major piano concerto, K. 453 (Ex. 11-5), whereby the seeming outermost reaches of tonal space are traversed in a relative twinkling. But where Mozart did it with maximum smoothness, to amaze (and perhaps amuse), Beethoven does it with maximum drama, to inspire and thrill.

Understood enharmonically, as F \flat , E-natural is equivalent to (II, the flatted or “Neapolitan” second degree of the scale, just a stone’s throw from the tonic on the circle of fifths. Beethoven does not take quite such a direct route home; but he might as well have done, since by mm. 315–316 he has achieved the essential linkage, hooking up the flat supertonic broached in m. 284 with V and I of the original key, its implied successors along the circle of fifths. All harmonies on either side of this essential link amount to rhetorical feinting, staving off the inevitable moment of “double return,” when the tonic key and the first theme will at last make explosive contact.

The purpose of strategic delay, or “deferred gratification,” is, as always, the enhancement of the emotional payoff when the long-awaited event is finally allowed to occur. It does not happen until m. 398, by which time suspense has been deliberately jacked up to an unbearable degree (see Ex. 12-5, which begins twenty measures earlier)—so literally unbearable, in fact, that at m. 394 the first horn goes figuratively berserk, personifying and “acting out” the listener’s agony of expectation by breaking in on the violins—still dissonantly and exasperatingly protracting the dominant function in a seemingly endless tremolo—with a premature entry on the first theme in the tonic.

Musical score for measures 360-384. The score includes parts for Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bn.), Horns (Hr.), Violins I and II (Vln. I, Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vcl.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The music is in 3/4 time and features a variety of articulations such as *pizz.* (pizzicato) and *arco* (arco), along with dynamic markings like *pp* (pianissimo) and *ppp* (pianissimissimo).

Musical score for measures 385-390. This section includes a first ending (1.) for measures 385-390. The instrumentation remains the same as in the previous section. The score shows a change in dynamics and articulation, with *pp* and *ppp* markings and *pizz.* and *arco* instructions.

ex. 12-5 Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 3, Op. 55 (*Eroica*), I, mm. 378–405

So unprecedented was this bold psychological stroke that it was at first mistaken, even by the composer's close associates, for a sort of prank. His pupil and assistant Ferdinand Ries (1784–1838) described it in his memoirs as a “mischievous whim” (*böse Laune*), and recalled that

At the first rehearsal of the symphony, which was horrible, but at which the horn player made his entry correctly, I stood beside Beethoven, and, thinking that a blunder had been made, I said: “Can't the damned hornist count?—it's so obviously wrong!” I think I came pretty close to receiving a box on the ear. Beethoven did not forgive the slip for a long time.²⁷

Far from a blunder or a miscount, the horn entrance dramatizes once again in retrospect the unprecedented scope of the tonal journey the movement has traversed and the pent-up emotional stimulation such a journey generates as it nears its desired fulfillment.

Nor is this the only way in which Beethoven will exploit the sense of disruption caused within the movement by the digression in mid-development to a new theme in a remote key. As in the exposition of the first theme, what is done first at a local level is later recast on the global plane. Full redemption of the movement's disruptive forces, and full

discharge of its tonal tensions will come only after the apparent end of the recapitulation, in a mammoth coda that begins at m. 557 with a shockingly sudden irruption of $D\flat$, the enharmonic equivalent of the pitch that sounded the first disruptive note of all, way back in m. 7. This probably comes as a bigger surprise than anything else in the movement, but like most of Beethoven's "disruptions" it is a strategic maneuver, enabling the control of longer and longer time spans by a single functional impulse.

The coda thus convulsively introduced takes up and resolves two pieces of unfinished business. First it effectively recapitulates the E-minor theme within the normal purview of the tonic by having it appear in F minor, the ordinary diatonic ("unflatted") supertonic. But that is only by the way. The coda's main business is at last to provide the fully articulated, cadentially closed version of the opening theme that has been promised from the very start of the movement, but that has never materialized. It arrives at m. 631 in the form of a quietly confident horn solo that makes up, as it were, for the horn's harried "false entrance" 237 bars earlier. Its swingingly symmetrical eight-bar phrase finally juxtaposes tonic and dominant versions of the opening arpeggio, thus for the first time closing the harmonic circle at close range (Ex. 12-6).

Four times the phrase is repeated, together with its rushing countersubject, in a massive crescendo that ultimately engulfs the whole orchestra, the trumpets and drums entering on the third go-round with a military tattoo (pickup to m. 647) and, on the fourth, finally breaking the melodic surface in a final thematic peroration. Yet even this crest is immediately trumped by one final disruption, the diminished-seventh chord in mm. 663–664, with $D\flat/C\sharp$ (what else?) as the climactic note in the bass. From here there is nothing left to do but retake the goal in one last eight-bar phrase, after which only a clinching I-V-I remains—with the V extended through one more characteristic "stall" (mm. 681 ff) to bring home the final pair of tonic chords (mirroring the pair at the other end of the movement and retrospectively justifying it) as one last victory through struggle.

Musical score for measures 635-638, featuring various instruments including Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bsn.), Horns (Hrn.), Trumpets (Tpt.), Timpani (Timp.), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The score includes dynamic markings such as *p* and *f*.

The score is divided into three systems. The first system includes Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, and Bassoon. The second system includes Horns, Trumpets, and Timpani. The third system includes Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The page number 635 is printed at the top right and bottom center of the score.

The image shows a page of musical notation for Ludwig van Beethoven's Symphony no. 3, Op. 55 (Eroica), I, mm. 631-639. The score is arranged in systems for various instruments: Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bn.), Horns (Hn.), Trumpets (Tpt.), Timpani (Timp.), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The music is in 3/5 time and features a dynamic range from piano (p) to fortissimo (ff). The Violin I part has a prominent melodic line with a crescendo leading to a fortissimo section. The other instruments provide harmonic support and texture.

ex. 12-6 Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 3, Op. 55 (*Eroica*), I, mm. 631–639

One listens to a movement like this with a degree of mental and emotional engagement no previous music had demanded, and one is left after listening with a sense of satisfaction only strenuous exertions, successfully consummated, can vouchsafe. Beethoven's singular ability to summon that engagement and grant that satisfaction is what invested his "heroic" music with its irresistible sense of high ethical purpose and power. It is not the devices themselves—anyone's devices, after all—that so enthrall the listener, but the singleness of design that they conspire to create, the scale on which they enable the composer to work, and the metaphors to which these stimuli give rise in the mind of the listener.

The exalted climactic statement of the opening theme in particular makes use of a cluster of devices—accumulating sonority over an ostinato swinging regularly between the harmonic poles—that as the "Rossini crescendo" would soon cap the overtures to the zaniest comic operas ever written, operas that ever after would scandalize Beethoven's high-minded German devotees with their Italianate frivolity. Anyone's devices indeed: their effect is entirely a matter of context.

In the Beethovenian context, far from a light amusement, the big regular crescendo brings long-awaited closure to a tonal drama of unprecedented scope. That long-deferred resolution is what creates in the listener what Hoffmann called the "unutterable portentous longing" that is the hallmark of romantic art. That "purely musical" tension and

release, powerfully enacted in a wordless context, is what produces in the listener such a total immersion in what Hoffmann called "the spirit world of the infinite."

Notes:

(26) See Scott Burnham, *Beethoven Hero* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. xviii.

(27) Ferdinand Ries, *Biographische Notizen über Ludwig van Beethoven* (1838), in *Beethoven: Impressions By His Contemporaries*, ed. O. G. Sonneck, (New York: Schirmer, 1926), p. 54.

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Oxford History of Western Music: Richard Taruskin

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Beethoven: Middle-period works

Beethoven: Late-period works

CRISIS AND REACTION

Chapter: CHAPTER 12 The First Romantics

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

The great majority of Beethoven's works, to the end of the first decade of the new century (that is, up to the time of Hoffmann's decisively influential critiques), were marked by the new heroic style, whether opera (*Leonore*, later revised as *Fidelio*, on a subject supposedly borrowed from an actual incident from French revolutionary history), or symphony, whether chamber music (the three quartets published as op. 59 with a dedication to Count Razumovsky, the Russian ambassador) or piano sonata (the "Waldstein," op. 53, or especially the "Appassionata," op. 57).

Their prodigious dynamism not only transformed all the genres to which Beethoven applied himself, but also met with wild approval from an ever-widening bourgeois public who read in that dynamism a portent and a portrayal of their own social and spiritual triumph. For such listeners (as Hoffmann, their unwitting spokesman, put it explicitly), Beethoven finally realized the universal mission of music, just as they felt that in their own lives they were realizing the universal aspiration of mankind to political and economic autonomy—an aspiration defined as the superhuman realization of the "World Spirit" by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), the great romantic philosopher of history and Beethoven's exact contemporary. To read Beethoven's music as a metaphor of the universal world spirit was as seductive a notion as it was perilous.

What made it perilous was the tendency it encouraged to cast one's own cherished values as "universal" values, good (and therefore binding) for all. To see all music that did not conform to the heroic Beethovenian model as deficient to the extent of the difference was to discriminate invidiously against other possible musical aims, uses, and styles. To the extent, for example, that the Beethovenian ideal was identified with virility, or with at times violently expressed "manly" ideals of strength and greatness, it invited or reinforced prejudice against women as composers, even as social agents. To the extent that it sanctioned neglect of the audience's pleasure, it could serve to underwrite gratuitous obscurity or difficulty. To the extent that it exalted the representation of violence, whether of *Kampf* (struggle) or *Sieg* (victory), it could serve as justification for aggressive or even militaristic action. To the extent that it was identified with German national aspirations or (as we will very shortly see) with a concept of German "national character," it encouraged chauvinism. To the extent that it was identified with middle-class norms of behavior, it paradoxically thwarted the expression of other, equally "romantic" forms of creative individualism.

That these unwarranted and undesirable side effects have at various times emerged from the Beethoven myth is a matter of historical fact. Whether they are implicit (or, to speak medically, "latent") in it is a matter for continued, and possibly unresolvable, debate.

That such attributes were not inherent in Beethoven but constructed by listeners and interpreters is certainly suggested by the facts of his actual career. The remarkable thing is the way in which he was accepted both by the new mass public and by the old aristocratic one, which continued as before to support him financially, albeit collectively rather than by direct employment. (It should be added that Beethoven's own social attitudes, as conveyed in documents and anecdotes, were ambiguous at best, and inconstant.) Thanks to that support, Beethoven was able to evade the prospect of steady work as Kapellmeister at the court of Westphalia in Kassel, where Napoleon had installed his youngest brother Jerome as king. A consortium of Viennese noblemen undertook in 1809 to guarantee Beethoven a lifetime annuity that more than matched the salary he was offered at Kassel, and that allowed him to devote his full time to composing as he wished, provided only that he remain in Vienna.

This consortium included the Archduke Rudolph, the emperor's younger brother and Beethoven's only composition (as opposed to piano) pupil, to whom the composer dedicated no fewer than ten works, including the "Archduke"

Trio (op. 97, composed 1810–11), the “Emperor” Concerto (Piano Concerto no. 5, op. 73, composed 1809), and the Mass in D (*Missa solemnis*), op. 123 (1819–23), composed in celebration of Rudolph’s investment as a cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church. The consortium also included Prince Joseph Franz Maximilian von Lobkowitz, scion of an ancient Bohemian family long famous for its arts patronage, who had underwritten the first performance of the *Eroica* Symphony at his own private residence in 1804, and to whom Beethoven dedicated not only the *Eroica* but six other works as well, including the op. 18 quartets and both the Fifth and the Sixth Symphonies.

From this evidence of mutual devotion between Beethoven and the Viennese aristocracy, it is clear that the idea of the composer as a musical revolutionist or Jacobin, widespread in the romanticizing literature that cast him as “The Man Who Freed Music” (the title of Robert Schaufliker’s 1929 biography), is as one-sided and misleading as the opposing image—that of the isolated, world-renouncing hermit on a lonely quest of saintly personal fulfillment, just as widespread in an opposing romanticizing literature that culminated in another influential book (J. W. N. Sullivan’s *Beethoven: His Spiritual Development*, published in 1927, the centennial of the composer’s death). These images, and many others, were partial readings of the life of Beethoven in support of one or another variant of the myth of Beethoven, for almost two centuries one of the most potent stimuli to musical thought and action in the West, but a fantastically various one.

The “heroic” phase of Beethoven’s career lasted until around 1812, with the completion of his Eighth Symphony. He then lapsed, probably as a result of deepening deafness and personal frustrations, into a period of depression and evident decline. Goethe, who finally met his great contemporary at a Bohemian spa in the summer of 1811, remarked that Beethoven “was not altogether wrong in holding the world to be detestable, but surely does not make it any the more enjoyable either for himself or for others by his attitude,” adding that his deafness “perhaps mars the musical part of his nature less than the social.”²⁸ Between 1810 and 1812 the composer suffered repeated setbacks in his personal life. Increasingly desperate overtures to unwilling or unavailable prospective brides culminated in an enigmatic love letter to an unnamed “Immortal Beloved,” written in the summer of 1812 and discovered unsent, like the Heiligenstadt Testament, among his posthumous effects. Beethoven being almost as much the object of “human interest” attention as he has been of musical, scholars and biographers and movie producers have devoted enormous energy to the problem of identifying Beethoven’s mysterious love interest.

If Maynard Solomon, one of Beethoven’s biographers, was right in advancing the name of Antonie Brentano, now regarded as the most plausible candidate, then Beethoven’s fate as hopeless suitor has been intriguingly illuminated.²⁹ Frau Brentano, the sister-in-law of Bettina Brentano, a young piano pupil and friend of Beethoven’s, was for two reasons out of reach: she was of aristocratic birth, and she was already married. Beethoven’s lifetime status as a forlorn bachelor, another reason for his posthumous casting as a spiritual hermit, may well have been as much the result of psychological obstacles as actual social impediments. Brought to a state of turbulence by his multiple rejections and thwartings around 1812, they may have contributed to his creative silence in the years that followed.

Another painful emotional drain was Beethoven’s involvement with his nephew and ward Karl van Beethoven, following the death of his brother Kaspar in 1815. The composer’s possessive and destructive behavior, culminating in a successful but morally wounding four-year legal battle to wrest custody of the eight-year-old boy from his mother, testified to his deep longings and discontents but augured bleakly as to the welfare of any of the parties concerned. Eventually, in the summer of 1826, Karl attempted suicide, an emotionally shattering experience for his jealous uncle, who was described shortly afterward by a close associate as looking like a man of seventy. (He was in fact only fifty-five, but less than a year away from death.) The creative trough set off by the events of 1812 lasted about five years, during which time Beethoven wrote little of lasting significance. Of the little that he did write, some (inconveniently enough for his mythmakers) was of a calculated popular appeal, including a noisy “Battle Symphony” known as *Wellington’s Victory*, celebrating Napoleon’s defeat by combined British, Spanish, and Portuguese forces under Arthur Wellesley, the first Duke of Wellington, at the Battle of Vittoria in 1813. It was performed at huge (and hugely successful) charity concerts in December of that year (at which the Seventh Symphony was also unveiled), and again, “by popular demand,” in February 1814 (at which time the Eighth Symphony was along for the ride).

This piece of orchestral claptrap, replete with fanfares, cannonades performed by an augmented percussion section, and a fugue on “God Save the King,” was an early fruit of musical capitalism. It was the brainchild of an entrepreneur inventor named Johann Nepomuk Maelzel (1772–1838), who sought Beethoven’s name appeal so as to attract crowds to view demonstrations of his panharmonicon, a “mechanical orchestra” (actually a mechanical organ with a

variety of noisemaker attachments). Later, Maelzel invented a metronome for which Beethoven again provided testimonials and, more important for posterity, exact tempo settings for his symphonies and other important works. His collaborations with Maelzel cast Beethoven in a rather unheroic light, as a sort of musical market speculator. That was, however, no less typical or “progressive” a role for a musician in economically unsettled times.

Otherwise, Beethoven’s output dwindled drastically. The only important compositions written between 1813 and 1818 are three piano sonatas culminating in the huge sonata in B \flat , op. 106, with its famous post-Napoleonic subtitle (the apparently nationalistic *für das Hammerklavier* in place of the conventionally Italianate *per il pianoforte*); two cello sonatas, op. 102; and a group of songs united in a “cycle” by a recurring theme, with the poignant title *An die ferne Geliebte* (“To the far-off beloved”) that must have had manifold personal resonances for the unhappy composer. The year 1817 went by without a single work of any consequence completed. Perhaps even more indicative of the composer’s state of mind, during this period he worked on a number of sizeable projects—a piano concerto, a trio, a string quintet—that he finally abandoned, and that are known only from entries in his sketchbooks.

His largest and most ambitious compositional effort of the period was *Der glorreiche Augenblick*, a bombastic political potboiler of a cantata, unpublished during Beethoven’s lifetime, intended for performance before the assembled crowned heads of Europe gathered for the Congress of Vienna in 1815 to celebrate “the glorious moment” of imperial restoration following on the final defeat and exile of Napoleon.

So utterly does this reactionary political harangue fail to accord with the Beethoven myth that when it was finally published, in 1837, its text was replaced by a more “esthetic” sort of celebration, *Preis der Ton-kunst* (“In praise of music”), by Friedrich Rochlitz (1769–1842), who as editor of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, the first important modern music magazine, was the most influential critic of his time. As such, he played almost as great a role as Hoffmann had played before him in the early propagation of the Beethoven myth.

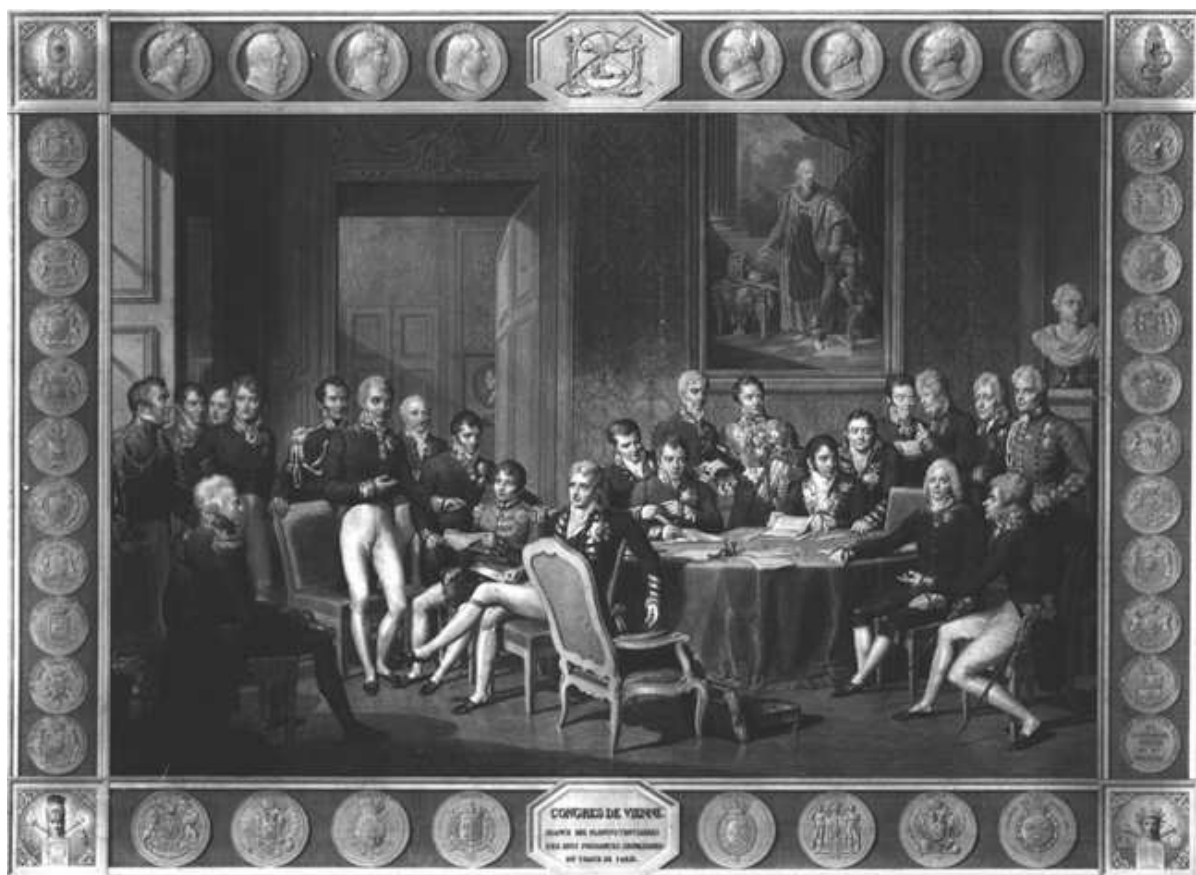


fig. 12-8A A historical painting by Jean Baptiste Isabey: Napoléon Bonaparte as First Consul (1804). Napoléon was the intended dedicatee of Beethoven’s Third Symphony.



fig. 12-8B Jean Baptiste Isabey, *The Congress of Vienna (1814)*.

Beethoven began to shake off his creative torpor toward the end of 1817, possibly spurred by a flattering invitation from the Philharmonic Society of London to compose two “grand symphonies” for the coming concert season and present them in person. He never composed either symphony, and never duplicated Haydn’s triumphant success with a trip to London, but he was sufficiently energized to embark on the “Hammerklavier” sonata, even though it took him almost a whole year to complete it. Successful completion of this first large project in two or three years brought back his old creative euphoria.

When Anton Diabelli (1781–1858), a minor composer but a major music publisher, asked Beethoven to contribute a variation on a trivial little waltz tune Diabelli had written, for publication in a “patriotic anthology” featuring the work of some fifty Austrian and German composers (including the young Franz Schubert, the eleven-year-old boy wonder Franz Liszt, and Beethoven’s own pupil Archduke Rudolph), Beethoven responded not with one variation but with twenty. Realizing that he had burst the bounds of the commission he had received, he held them back until he had time to complete what had turned into a monumental project. The full set of thirty-three *Diabelli Variations*, one of Beethoven’s crowning works, was completed in 1822 and published as his op. 120, long before the omnibus album finally appeared. Concurrently with the second phase of work on the Variations, Beethoven composed three short but very intense piano sonatas, the last of which (no. 32 in C minor, op. 111) was finished almost simultaneously with the Variations.

A similar indication of Beethoven’s regained ebullience, and the creative overful-fillment to which it could lead, was the Mass he undertook to compose on hearing that Archduke Rudolph was to be elevated to the rank of cardinal and installed as Archbishop of Olomouc, an important ecclesiastical seat in what is now the Czech Republic. He had meant to have it ready for the installation ceremony in March 1820, but the music expanded irrepressibly under his hand, and the whole vast design, now called the *Missa solennis* (Solemn Mass), op. 123, was only completed in the early months of 1823. Beethoven had not only missed the deadline by three years; he had also ended up with a work whose stupendous length precluded its forming part of an actual church service. The first performance took place under secular auspices in St. Petersburg on 7 April 1824, on the initiative of Prince Nikolai Borisovich Golitsyn (1794–1866), a Russian nobleman and chamber music enthusiast who became one of the outstanding patrons of Beethoven’s last years.

Notes:

(28) Goethe to Carl Friedrich Zelter, 2 September 1812; in *Beethoven: Impressions by His Contemporaries*, ed. O. G. Sonneck (New York: Schirmer, 1926), p. 88.

(29) See M. Solomon, "New Light on Beethoven's Letter to an Unknown Woman," *Musical Quarterly* LVIII (1972): 572–87; also M. Solomon, *Beethoven* (New York: Schirmer, 1977), Chap. 15.

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Symphony: Beethoven

Romanticism

THE “NINTH”

Chapter: CHAPTER 12 The First Romantics

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

Beethoven now undertook to compose a symphony, his first in more than a decade. Like the Variations and the Mass, it broke all generic precedents, encompassing in its last movement what was for all the world a virtual oratorio, for soloists, chorus, and an orchestra augmented by a whole battery of “Turkish” instruments, on the text of Friedrich Schiller’s famous poem, *An die Freude* (known in English as the “Ode to Joy”). Feeling that his music was no longer fashionable in Vienna (then in the throes of infatuation with the operas of Rossini and with a new breed of concerto virtuosi), Beethoven made inquiries with an eye toward having the new symphony, the Ninth (op. 125), introduced in Berlin.

On hearing of this, a group of his admirers—among them his old patron Prince Lichnowsky, his new publisher Diabelli, and his last important pupil Karl Czerny (1791–1857)—tendered him a “memo” or open letter imploring that he not forsake his “second native city.” It is one of the most affecting documents of the incipient romantic art-religion (now significantly tinged with post-Napoleonic nationalism), and impressive testimony to Beethoven’s central place in its ideology.

Although Beethoven’s name and creations belong to all contemporaneous humanity and every country which opens a susceptible bosom to art, it is Austria which is best entitled to claim him as her own. Among her inhabitants appreciation for the great and immortal works which Mozart and Haydn created for all time within the lap of their homes still lives, and they are conscious with joyous pride that the sacred triad in which these names and yours glow as the symbol of the highest within the spiritual realm of tones, sprang from the soil of their fatherland. All the more painful must it have been for you to feel that a foreign power has invaded this royal citadel of the noblest, that above the mounds of the dead and around the dwelling-place of the only survivor of the band, phantoms are leading the dance who can boast of no kinship with the princely spirits of those royal houses; that shallowness is abusing the name and insignia of art, and unworthy dalliance with sacred things is beclouding and dissipating appreciation for the pure and eternally beautiful.

For this reason they feel a greater and livelier sense than ever before that the great need of the present moment is a new impulse directed by a powerful hand, a new advent of the ruler in his domain.... For years, ever since the thunders of the Victory at Vittoria ceased to reverberate, we have waited and hoped to see you distribute new gifts from the fulness of your riches to the circle of your friends. Do not longer disappoint the general expectations³⁰



fig. 12-9 Kärntnertortheater, Vienna, site of the first performance of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony.

Moved by the tribute, Beethoven decided to come out of retirement for what would be the last time. He agreed to a public concert, his first in a decade, to be held at the same theater in which, ten years before, his own much-revised opera *Leonore* (now called *Fidelio*) had finally met with favor from the public that had formerly spurned it.

The official announcement read:

GRAND

MUSICAL CONCERT

by

HERR L. v. BEETHOVEN which will take place Tomorrow, May 7, 1824 in the Royal Imperial Theater beside the Kärtnerthor.

The musical pieces to be performed are the latest works of Herr Ludwig van Beethoven.

First: A Grand Overture [“The Consecration of the House,” op. 124]

Second: Three Grand Hymns with Solo and Choral Voices [i.e., the Kyrie, Credo, and Agnus Dei from the *Missa solemnis*]

Third: A Grand Symphony with Solo and Chorus Voices entering in the finale on Schiller’s Ode to Joy. The solos will be performed by the Demoiselles Sontag and Unger and the Herren Haizinger and Seipelt. Herr Schuppanzigh has undertaken the direction of the orchestra, Herr Kapellmeister Umlauf the direction of the whole, and the Music Society the augmentation of the chorus and orchestra as a favor.

Herr Ludwig van Beethoven will himself participate in the general direction.

Prices of admission as usual.

Beginning at seven o’clock in the evening.³¹

As promised, the composer, by then stone deaf for almost a decade, did stand before the assembled orchestra and chorus and wave his arms, but according to the later recollection of the pianist Sigismund Thalberg, who as a twelve-year-old prodigy attended the concert, the court conductor Michael Umlauf, listed as general overseer in the advertisement above, "had told the choir and orchestra to pay no attention whatever to Beethoven's beating of the time but all to watch him."³² The most famous story of this great event, for which we have not only Thalberg's memory to rely on but also corroborating testimony from other witnesses and participants, relates how "after the Scherzo of the Ninth Symphony Beethoven stood turning over the leaves of his score utterly deaf to the immense applause, and [the contralto soloist Karoline] Unger pulled him by the sleeve, and then pointed to the audience, whereupon he turned and bowed." Of all Beethoven's works, the Ninth Symphony cast the longest shadow over the rest of the nineteenth century, and has continued to lower over the music of the twentieth century as well. In its awe-inspiring vastness it has been so long and so often compared to a mountain that as recently as 1967, the critic and musicologist Joseph Kerman could write, simply, that "we live in the valley of the Ninth Symphony." Immediately notorious, it has been as strenuously resisted as it has been enthusiastically submitted to. Both submission and resistance have been eloquent testimonials not only to the work itself, but to the cultural attitudes that it quickened and polarized.

One of the most telling contemporary comments was that of Louis Spohr (1784–1859), a violinist and, later in life, the first virtuoso baton conductor in the modern sense of the word. It was the reaction of one who had known and played under Beethoven in his youth, but who could not accept the new turn the master's art was taking. For Spohr the Ninth was a monstrosity that could only be explained in terms of its creator's deafness.

His constant endeavor to be original and to open new paths, could no longer as formerly, be preserved from error by the guidance of the ear. Was it then to be wondered at that his works became more and more eccentric, unconnected, and incomprehensible? Yes! I must even reckon the much admired Ninth Symphony among them, the three first movements of which, in spite of some solitary flashes of genius, are to me worse than all of the eight previous Symphonies, the fourth movement of which is in my opinion so monstrous and tasteless, and in its grasp of Schiller's Ode so trivial, that I cannot even now understand how a genius like Beethoven's could have written it. I find in it another proof of what I already remarked in Vienna, that Beethoven was wanting in aesthetical feeling and in a sense of the beautiful.³³

(arr. F. Liszt)

Presto

a.

ff

tremolo

b.

Presto

ff

etc.

ex. 12-7 Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 9, Op. 125, IV “Schreckensfanfare” (arr. Franz Liszt)

Recalling Edmund Burke’s elaborate set of contrasts between the sublime and the beautiful, one can only agree with Spohr’s comment, though not necessarily with its intent. If to be beautiful meant to be pleasing, then Beethoven did indeed lack a sense of beauty. Or rather, he rejected the assumption on which Spohr based his judgment, that to be beautiful (that is, to please) was the only proper aim of art. Like Bach before him (though he could scarcely have known it), Beethoven in the Ninth did at times deliberately assault the ear, most famously and extravagantly with the fanfares—Richard Wagner called them *Schreckensfanfaren*, “horror fanfares”—that introduce the finale containing the “Ode to Joy” (Ex. 12-7). In the second of them, the D minor triad and the diminished-seventh chord on its leading tone are sounded together as a seven-tone harmony with a level of dissonance that would not be reached again until the very end of the century.

However much music like this may move or thrill, it cannot be said to please the listener. By Mozartean standards (recalling his letter about Osmin’s rage aria in *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, quoted in chapter 9), it isn’t music. By composing it, Beethoven tells us that he doesn’t care what we think of it (or of him); that it is bigger than we are. It was, to many, an insulting message, a sort of declaration of composerly independence, an arrogant emancipation proclamation.

Spohr’s seemingly contradictory charge of triviality was aimed at the famous melody to which Beethoven set Schiller’s Ode. In its folklike simplicity it seemed a sort of urban popular tune, out of place in the lofty precincts of the rest of the symphony; and Beethoven did his best to accentuate its low-class associations by giving it a “Turkish” parade variation that turned it, for all the world, into Viennese street music (Ex. 12-8).

Freu - de, schö - ner Göt - ter - fun - ken, Toch - ter aus E -
 ly - si-um, wir be - tre - ten feu - er - trun - ken, Himm - li - sche, dein
 Hei - lig - tum! Dei - ne Zau - ber bin - den — wie - der,
 was die — Mo - de streng ge - teilt; al - le Men - schen
 wer - den Brü - der, wo dein sanf - ter Flü - gel weilt.

ex. 12-8a Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 9, IV, "Ode to Joy" theme

etc.

ex. 12-8b Ludwig van Beethoven, beginning of “Turkish” variation on the “Ode to Joy” (arr. Liszt)

The most radical move, however, was to load the symphony down with a great freight of imagery and symbolism, but an imagery and a symbolism that is not fully explained either within the work itself or by reference to any public code. Maynard Solomon has identified in the symphony a great deal of conventional musical imagery—martial, pastoral, ecclesiastical—that any audience familiar with the works of Mozart and Haydn would have instantly recognized. He has also pointed to an elaborate network within the work of thematic reminiscences and forecasts that unite all of the movements into a single expressive whole. Most particularly, these thematic forecasts prefigure the “Ode to Joy” melody in the finale, and turn the whole symphony (it is possible to argue) into a single quest for “Elysium,” the mythical abode where heroes and other fortunate shades are rewarded by the Gods with the Joy whose praises Schiller sings (Ex. 12-9).

These are the “introversive” and “extroversive” sign systems we first encountered and discussed as expressive media in connection with Haydn’s instrumental music. As always, the two are fully separable only in theory. The Joy Theme that is prefigured in the early movements by a process of introversive signification is itself an extroversive sign, pointing outside of the work to words like “Joy” and “Elysium” and the concepts for which they stand.

But as in every other way, Beethoven maximized and transformed his heritage to the point where, as Hoffmann was first to suggest, it crossed the threshold into a difference not only in degree but in kind. Specifically, by withholding an explicit key to the sign systems on whose importance he nevertheless insists, by offering no explanation of the meanings to which those systems may give rise, Beethoven enlists all listeners in another “quest”—a never-ending process of interpretation. “The precise nature of Beethoven’s programmatic intentions,” Maynard Solomon cautions, “will always remain open,” turning the Ninth Symphony into a vast symbol, “the totality of whose referents cannot be known and whose full effects will never be experienced.”³⁴ And this ultimate uncertainty, Solomon avers somewhat more controversially (but very much in the romantic spirit), is “true to the nature of music, whose meanings are beyond translation—and beyond intentionality.” The message—Solomon’s, to be sure, but perhaps Beethoven’s as well—is clear. We may interpret Beethoven’s meanings in endless ways, depending on our perspicacity and our interests. What we may not do, on the one hand, is to claim to have arrived at a definitive interpretation, or, on the other, to deny the reality of the semiotic dimension or its relevance to the meanings of the work.

ex. 12-9a Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 9, foreshadowing the “Ode to Joy” in earlier movements

II, Trio

NB

ex. 12-9b Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 9, foreshadowing the “Ode to Joy” in earlier movements

III, mm. 127-30

NB

etc.

ex. 12-9c Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 9, foreshadowing the “Ode to Joy” in earlier movements

This is romanticism of the purest strain. What must forever remain controversial about it is the implication (which Solomon, if not Beethoven, makes explicit) that such is “the nature of music.” Meanings like those Solomon describes had not figured in previous musical discourse, at least not instrumental discourse. The eighteenth century had its semiotic codes, of course: there was the *Affektenlehre* or system of symbolic figures on which Bach and Handel and their contemporaries had drawn to depict their characters’ emotions. And there was the so-called *sinfonia caratteristica*, the “characteristic” (that is, pictorial) symphony, to which works like Beethoven’s Sixth (“Pastoral”) Symphony belonged, with its “Scene by the Brook” and its vividly graphic “Storm.” (The *Eroica*, too, might be called a *sinfonia caratteristica* in view of all of its military imagery, beginning with that bugle call of a first theme.) The difference was that conventionally embodied meanings like these, whether emotive or descriptive, were always *public* meanings. No one needs to interpret the “Pastoral” Symphony, just as no one needed to explain to

Prince Esterházy what Haydn was getting at with his "Farewell" Symphony. If certain eighteenth-century genres do need to be interpreted now by historians—the expressive conventions of the *opera seria*, for example—that is only because we have lost the code through disuse, not because it was esoteric. Some eighteenth-century sacred genres such as the Bach cantatas did occasionally embody esoteric meanings, it is true, to which hermeneutic techniques have to be applied. But such theological, often numerological symbolism was a survival of a pre-Enlightenment esthetic and was rejected between Bach's time and Beethoven's.

The meanings embodied in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony are no longer public in this way. Though they are clearly crucial components of the work, they cannot be fully comprehended according to some socially sanctioned code. They have become subjective, hermetic, gnomic, "not of this world." They are not so private as to render the musical discourse unintelligible, but they do render its message ineffable and inexhaustible and, to that extent, oracular. Intuitive grasp, aided of course by whatever can be gleaned by code or study or experience, is the only mode of understanding available. Just as often we may be deeply moved without quite knowing why or how. And that must be what Beethoven meant by insisting, in his late years, that he was not merely a composer (*Tonsetzer*) but a "tone-poet" (*Tondichter*).

Notes:

(30) Elliot Forbes, ed., *Thayer's Life of Beethoven* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), pp. 897–98.

(31) Forbes, ed., *Thayer's Life of Beethoven*, pp. 907–8.

(32) Quoted in Forbes, ed., *Thayer's Life of Beethoven*, p. 909.

(33) *Louis Spohr's Autobiography* (London: Longman, Green, 1865), pp. 188–89.

(34) M. Solomon, "Beethoven's Ninth Symphony: A Quest for Order," *19th-Century Music* X (1986–87): 8, 10–11.

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Oxford History of Western Music: Richard Taruskin

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Beethoven: 1824–7

Beethoven: Late-period style

INWARDNESS

Chapter: CHAPTER 12 The First Romantics

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

Beethoven lived less than three years after the premiere of the Ninth Symphony, finally succumbing to the effects of liver disease (itself the result, it is speculated, of heavy drinking) on 26 March 1827. During this final phase he returned to the string quartet, another genre he had not touched in more than a decade, and devoted himself to it almost exclusively. The immediate stimulus came from Prince Golitsyn, the Russian nobleman who arranged the first performance of the *Missa solemnis*. In the fall of 1822 he had invited Beethoven to compose anywhere from one to three quartets for him, and to name his price. In the end Beethoven completed six works for string quartet, including the three commissioned by Golitsyn and dedicated to him (opp. 127, 130, 132), and two more full-scale works in the genre (in C-sharp minor, op. 131, gratefully dedicated to a certain Baron von Stutterheim who had accepted the Beethoven's nephew Karl into his guards regiment after the boy's attempted suicide; and in F major, op. 135).

The remaining work was a "Great Fugue" (*Grosse Fuge*) that was originally planned as the finale of the Quartet in B-flat major, op. 130. When Mathias Artaria, his publisher, pointed out that at six movements the quartet was long even without the mammoth finale, and that the fugue was not only huge but inordinately difficult to play, Beethoven agreed to detach the fugue for separate publication (as op. 133, dedicated to Archduke, now Archbishop, Rudolph) and to compose a dancelike rondo to provide a more conventional, less taxing conclusion to what was already a somewhat suitelike composition resembling a divertimento of old. The substitute finale of op. 130, delivered to the publisher in November 1826, was Beethoven's last completed work.



fig. 12-10 Beethoven's study in the Schwarspanierhaus, his last residence.

The steadfastness of Beethoven's late interest in the quartet medium can be partially accounted for by the devotion of Ignaz Schuppanzigh (1776–1830), the violinist who served as orchestra leader (or “concert-master” as we now say) at the momentous concert in which the Ninth Symphony was unveiled. He had been the leader of Prince Lichnowsky's private string quartet since the 1790s, and Beethoven had relied upon his counsel from the very beginning of his career as a quartet composer. Following the general trend of the time, Schuppanzigh reconstituted his quartet as a freelance ensemble during the winter of 1804–5 and began giving subscription concerts in Vienna. These were among the first regular public chamber music concerts anywhere. It was at these concerts that Beethoven's “middle” quartets were first performed, notably the “Razumovsky” series, op. 59, commissioned by the Russian ambassador in Vienna. Razumovsky later employed Schuppanzigh's quartet and lavishly subsidized its activities until 1814, when his palace burned down.

From 1816 until 1823, probably owing to his connection with Razumovsky, Schuppanzigh relocated in St. Petersburg, the Russian capital, where he was very active in promoting Beethoven's works, and not only quartets. It was he who put Prince Golitsyn in touch with Beethoven, thus serving as the late quartets' catalyst. His own professional ensemble, again reconstituted in Vienna in 1823 and again offering regular subscription concerts, gave the first performances of the three Golitsyn quartets, as well as the posthumous premiere of Opus 135, Beethoven's swan

song. Schuppanzigh's readiness for creative collaboration with Beethoven was surely among the most potent stimuli on the composer's "quartet imagination."

And yet there came a point where Beethoven's burgeoning romantic idealism doomed any true symbiosis with performers. A much-repeated story that may be true recounts Beethoven's contemptuous retort when Schuppanzigh complained that a certain passage in one of the late quartets was too difficult to play effectively: "Do you fancy I am thinking of your puking little fiddle when the muse confides in me?" he is supposed to have said. In fact, in Beethoven's choice of the verb "confide" we may encounter another reason for Beethoven's late preoccupation with the quartet medium: its privateness, or, as the German romantics characteristically put it, its "inwardness" (*Innigkeit* or *Innerlichkeit*).

The intimacy of chamber music offered the composer the possibility of a heightened subjectivity, a medium where he could speak his inmost, private thoughts and confide his deepest private moods as if to a musical diary. There are pages in the late quartets that can seem almost embarrassing to hear in public, as if hearing were overhearing — eavesdropping on the composer's afflicted personal existence, invading his privacy. One of these is the fifth movement of the Quartet in B ♭ major, op. 130. Its tempo is *Adagio molto espressivo*; the parts are marked *sotto voce* (in an undertone); and it is subtitled "Cavatina," which to Beethoven meant a short, slow operatic aria of particular poignancy. (The Countess's "Porgi amor" in Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*, in which a betrayed wife gives vent to her misery, is a classic of the genre.)

The impression is unmistakable that Beethoven is confiding his private grief; and in case anyone should mistake it, the composer makes it even more explicit near the end (Ex. 12-10), where the dynamic level becomes even more hushed ("sempre pp"), the harmony slips unexpectedly and mysteriously into the flat submediant region, and the first violin, in a passage marked *Beklemmt* (constricted or stifled, "all choked up"), effectively loses its voice, its line being continually interrupted by rests as if racked by sobs.

ex. 12-10 Ludwig van Beethoven, Quartet no. 13 in B-flat, Op. 130, V (“Cavatina”)

Adagio assai

ex. 12-11a Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 3, II (“Marcia funebre”), first violin, mm. 1–8

ex. 12-11b Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 3, II (“Marcia funebre”), first violin, mm. 238–47

This was not in fact the first time Beethoven had used this device. A comparable, though much shorter, passage had occurred at the end of the second movement (“Marcia funebre,” “funeral march”) in the *Eroica* Symphony more than twenty years earlier (Ex. 12-11). But what had the appearance of a public orator’s rhetorical ploy in the symphony now had the aspect of a private disclosure. The voice appears to belong this time not to a public “someone” but to an

actual person, recalling the inscription Beethoven placed on the first page of the *Missa solemnis* autograph, “From the heart: May it also go to the heart” (*Von Herzen—Möge es wieder—zu Herzen gehn!*).

In the wake of this movement and others like it, the key of the flat submediant became a virtual symbol of *Innigkeit*—“inwardness of expression”—for Beethoven’s successors, particularly Franz Schubert, his fellow Viennese. Here Beethoven bequeathed to future composers of the romantic persuasion not only an esthetic purpose, and not only a general approach to instrumental music that invested it with “voice,” but an actual *topos*—an expressive “topic” or sign referent. For a musical work may indeed point outside itself to another musical work, and after Beethoven, the work that failed to point to his colossal example was a rarity. One can fairly say that virtually the whole corpus of German instrumental (and not only instrumental) music composed in the nineteenth century was a commentary on Beethoven.

In the appropriation of a vocal genre lay a further clue as to why Beethoven spent his last, semiretired years with the string quartet rather than what would seem for him an equally private medium, namely the piano. In fact he did continue to write for the piano, and with emphatic “privacy,” after completing the *Diabelli Variations*, concentrating on short, strongly characterized pieces he called *Bagatelles* (French for “trifles”). He had been writing them for decades; one, a little rondo composed in 1808 and published with the subtitle “Für Elise” (For Eliza), has become a ubiquitous children’s practice piece. The late ones, composed between 1820 and 1824 and published in two sets (op. 119 and op. 126), are definitely not for the young. They are gnomic, often enigmatic pieces that find their echo in some of the more grotesque little movements in the late quartets (for instance, the tiny *presto* that forms the second movement of the same B♭ major quartet that also contains the heartrending Cavatina).

But the piano could not give the illusion of “vocality” on which Beethoven now relied for intimately “innig” utterance. His preoccupation with the vocal, moreover, was also strangely bound up with archaism—an archaism already evident in his predilection for fugues in many of his late works, including three of the late piano sonatas (opp. 101, 106, and 110). Taken in conjunction with the political sentiments expressed in *Der glorreiche Augenblick*, this archaism has been interpreted as a religious gesture, and a sign of Beethoven’s disillusioned acquiescence in the spirit of post-Napoleonic reaction. That reading gains some support from the late quartets, for now Beethoven pushed back beyond fugues to imitations or evocations of earlier modes of religious vocal polyphony—his own version of a *stile antico*.

This new-old inclination, and its highly personal meaning for Beethoven, is vividly embodied in the slow movement of the Quartet in A minor, op. 132, composed in 1825. Beethoven had spent the month of April and part of May that year gravely sick in bed, and the movement, composed later that spring, bears the heading *Heiliger Dankgesang eines Genesenen an die Gottheit, in der lydischen Tonart* (“Sacred Hymn of Thanksgiving from a Convalescent to the Deity, in the Lydian Mode”). It is in effect a sort of motet with variations, on a theme reminiscent of an old chorale (Ex. 12-12), summoning up (in Joseph Kerman’s words) “some infinitely remote liturgy, a ritual music of romance,” interspersed with a contrasting exultant dance in D major, marked “Neue Kraft fühlend” (Feeling new strength), that also returns in varied form.³⁵ The variation technique is itself an archaic one: “divisions,” as they were called in the seventeenth century, whereby the rhythmic activity is continually heightened by breaking the long notes values down into shorter and shorter ones.

ex. 12-12 Ludwig van Beethoven, Quartet no. 15 in A minor (“chorale” tune), Op. 132, III (“Heiliger Dankgesang”), reconstructed from mm. 3–7, 9–13, 15–19, 21–25

The “Lydian mode” is of course another archaism, the most obvious one of all, and the most romantic. For in actual practice the Lydian mode of medieval music theory had been regularly adjusted into what we call the major mode from the beginning. Beethoven’s version of the mode is thus no medieval restoration but a romantically exotic invention: a strange F major notated without a B ♭ in the key signature, with all the B-naturals (and they are quite rare) applied as leading tones to C, the dominant, or used within a transposed statement of the choralelike subject that is harmonized in C.

What makes the imaginary archaism of the music evident to all listeners is the contrapuntal nature of the writing, the use of “freely canonic” imitation at the octave and unison, the cantus firmus textures, particularly the liberal use of dotted note values on the weak beats, typical of school counterpoint even today but unusual in any other context. In reality, the seemingly archaic contrapuntal style gives Beethoven access to a level of pure diatonic “linear” dissonance that must have struck his earliest listeners as nothing short of modernistic. It is used to project an overwhelming intensity of subjective feeling at which Beethoven hints verbally in the last and rhythmically most complex variation, where he writes that the instruments are to be played *Mit innigster Empfindung* (“With the most inward expression”), actually using the word that would become for all German composers the very motto of romanticism (Ex. 12-13).

And yet despite all privacy and inwardness in thought and apparent purpose, Beethoven at the time of his death was far more a public figure than any composer had ever been before; and that, too, was part of the legacy of romanticism. The streets of Vienna were thronged on the morning of his funeral, 29 March 1827. Police estimates put the crowd at ten thousand.

Molto adagio

Vln. I Mit innigster Empfindung

Vln. II Mit innigster Empfindung

Vcl. Mit innigster Empfindung

Vc. Mit innigster Empfindung

ex. 12-13 Ludwig van Beethoven, Quartet no. 15 in A minor, Op. 132, III, Last variation on the “Heiliger Dankgesang”



fig. 12-11 Beethoven's funeral procession, by Franz Stoeber (Beethoven House, Bonn).

At the cemetery wall, an oration by the dramatist Franz Grillparzer (1791–1872) was declaimed in high tragic tones by a famous actor, Heinrich Anschütz. Like the letter of 1824 imploring for Vienna the rights to first hearing of the Ninth Symphony, Grillparzer's eulogy placed the emphasis on nationality, comparing Beethoven with Goethe (the "hero of verse in German speech and tongue") and tracing for him a historically spurious but heavily symbolic musical genealogy from Handel and Bach. "Standing by the grave of him who has passed away," Grillparzer's homily began,

we are in a manner the representatives of an entire nation, of the whole German people, mourning the loss of the one highly acclaimed half of that which was left us of the departed splendor of our native art, of the fatherland's full spiritual bloom. There yet lives—and may his life be long!—the hero of verse in German speech and tongue; but the last master of tuneful song, the organ of soulful concord, the heir and amplifier of Handel and Bach's, of Haydn and Mozart's immortal fame is now no more, and we stand weeping over the riven strings of the harp that is hushed.³⁶

Forever afterward it would be an article of faith for German artists that Beethoven's stature was unequalable ("He who comes after him will not continue him," Grillparzer declared), that with Beethoven the age of heroes had ended. The Napoleonic myth and the Beethoven myth—as can only seem inevitable in retrospect—had fused. And yet all who came after would nevertheless be under an onus to strive toward the unreachable mark Beethoven's legacy had set. The concept of music and the role of the composer had both been irrevocably transformed by romanticism, and enormously enlarged. Beethoven had been at once the protagonist of these transformations, and their vessel.

Notes:

(35) Joseph Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets* (New York: Norton, 1979), p. 254.

(36) Forbes, ed., *Thayer's Life of Beethoven*, p. 1057.

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Oxford History of Western Music: Richard Taruskin

CHAPTER 13 C-Minor Moods

The “Struggle and Victory” Narrative and Its Relationship to Four C-Minor Works of Beethoven

Chapter: CHAPTER 13 C-Minor Moods

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

DEVOTION AND DERISION

The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians calls Beethoven “the most admired composer in the history of Western music,” and we have seen some of the reasons for that. Not only has Beethoven been admired by other musicians and by his composing progeny; he has also been consistently the most popular composer with concert audiences over a period now approaching two centuries, during which the makeup of the concert audience has undergone repeated profound change. But it is also true that for just as long a period, and in the same tradition, Beethoven has been among the most feared, resisted, and even hated of composers, and we shall see the reasons for that, too, as our investigation of nineteenth- and twentieth-century music proceeds.

Both admiration and resistance have a single source; in fact they are the two sides of a single coin. They have arisen in reaction to Beethoven’s looming, unshakeable presence as the most authoritative and influential figure in the tradition of which this book is the history—a tradition that has yet fully to outgrow its romantic phase, the phase that was formed, so to speak, in the image of Beethoven. For close on two centuries, in short, Beethoven has been the one to beat.

So a book like this needs more than an account of Beethoven’s life in relation to his art, or an appreciation of his cultural and esthetic significance. We need a survey of his actual musical achievement as well—one that is at once comprehensive, representative, reflective of his influence, and still relatively brief. That is a tall order, especially the last requirement. Perhaps the best way to fill it would be to concentrate on the music that has most exercised posterity, fastening in particular on two categories: the music that has been the most popular, and the music that has been the most notorious or controversial.

Indeed, it turns out that both categories are the same; or rather, that a small number of famous works inhabit both categories. And it further turns out that many of these works share the same key: the quintessentially “Beethovenian” key of C minor. What Joseph Kerman calls Beethoven’s “C-minor mood,” the one most firmly associated with the composer by posterity, has been an object of devotion and derision in equal measure.¹ In its dynamic, even terrifying agitation and disquiet it concentrates our image of Beethoven as an unruly “unlicked bear” (as his high-society patrons called him in his youth), as the tormented soul he became in mature isolation, and as the enigmatic visionary of his last decade.

From the beginning, the prevalence of C minor sharply delineated Beethoven’s distance from the spiritual world of Haydn and Mozart, who used the key quite sparingly. The fact that a C-minor work has nevertheless figured prominently in our discussions of both men—the *Fantasia*, K. 475, in the case of Mozart; the *Creation* Prologue in that of Haydn—betrays the bias that those discussions necessarily share with all descriptions that serve the purposes of historical narrative. Our discussions of Mozart and Haydn, in other words, were written in the knowledge—knowledge unavailable to Mozart and Haydn—that Beethoven was coming, and that we would have to take account of his relationship to them. For however rare their use of the key, it was Mozart and Haydn who—inevitably—provided Beethoven with the precedent on which he based his conception of it.

For devotion to the C-minor Beethoven, we may turn to any of the critics (beginning once again with E. T. A. Hoffmann) or composers (beginning with Robert Schumann, who was also a critic), not to mention the countless audiences, who have viewed the Fifth Symphony, this chapter’s centerpiece, as the Beethovenian epitome, hence the epitome of “classical music” outright. Schumann linked it up in especially direct fashion with the “romantic sublime”

by refusing to write at length about it. “Let us be silent about this work!” he bade his readers.² “No matter how frequently heard, whether at home [played on the piano] or in the concert hall, this symphony invariably wields its power over men of every age like those great phenomena of nature that fill us with fear and admiration at all times, no matter how frequently we may experience them.”

Derision began early, too, and found a willing spokesman, once again, in Louis Spohr, for whom the work “did not add up to a classical [that is, a beautiful] whole,” since the first movement “lacked the dignity essential to the opening of a symphony,” and the last movement was merely “empty noise.” Prime time for Beethoven-scorn, however, was the disillusioned aftermath of the First World War. To the great British music scholar Edward J. Dent (1876–1957), writing in that fallen moment, the Beethoven of the C-minor mood symbolized everything that was outmoded in European culture. Having been promoted by the musicians and critics of the Victorian age as “the great musician of moral uplift,” Beethoven was now suspect in the eyes of youth.³

Though he remained unwilling or unable to level the charge of charlatantry at Beethoven himself, Dent saw in Beethoven-worship the origin of a sanctimonious and baleful tendency—the tendency for

every little scribbler to regard himself as a prophet, and the tendency of music-lovers in general to exhibit a ludicrously exaggerated reverence for the artist—a reverence, it need hardly be said, which the artist, and especially the charlatan, has lost no time in exploiting to the full.⁴

As a result, Beethoven’s work, however genuine its inspiration or its musical distinction, has been resisted by many modern thinkers as being, like other varieties of moral conviction, a kind of “false consciousness” masking hypocritical complacency. “The lofty idealism of Beethoven,” Dent wrote, “is a thing which we cannot possibly deny or ignore; but we may justly question whether the artistic expression of it is still convincing to modern ears.”⁵ These were the words of one resigned to reluctant disbelief—a voice raised in protest against Beethoven’s continuing, unassailable, but (for Dent) no longer fitting ascendancy. Were Beethoven not still a dominating presence in the minds of all musicians a full century after his death, there would have been no reason at so late a date to renounce him. Beethoven, and Beethovenian values, have become so synonymous with the culture of “classical music” that one can chart the checkered course of musical esthetics since his time simply by examining reactions to him.

Dent was not only a professor; in 1926, when he wrote the words just quoted, he was also a founding member and first president of the International Society of Contemporary Music, a concert-sponsoring organization that was then the leading forum for the performance and dissemination of the works of all the most advanced composers of the day. Dent was speaking, then, not only on behalf of contemporary scholars and listeners, but on behalf of contemporary artists as well, and his words found many echoes, at least for a while, among creative musicians.

One of the most colorful was an exchange between Marcel Proust, the French novelist, and Igor Stravinsky, then a youngish Russian composer at the pinnacle of Parisian prestige, at a reception held for Stravinsky at a swanky Paris hotel in the late spring of 1922. As recalled by Clive Bell, an English biographer of Proust, who overheard it, the conversation went like this:

“Doubtless you admire Beethoven,” Proust began. “I detest Beethoven,” was all he got for answer. “But *mon cher maître* [my dear master], surely those late sonatas and quartets...?” “*Pire que les autres* [the worst of all],” growled Stravinsky.⁶

Stravinsky, who later professed as profound an admiration for Beethoven as one could expect from another composer (and for the late quartets in particular⁷), admitted in his autobiography that his earlier antipathy was a pose brought on by a surfeit of oppressively enforced reverence, and by disgust at the mythology that had grown up around Beethoven, surrounding him with a fog of pious words about “his famous *Weltschmerz* [world-weariness], together with his ‘tragedy’ and all the commonplace utterances voiced for more than a century about this composer.”⁸ As Stravinsky put it in retrospect, unthinking deification “alienated me from Beethoven for many years,” until, at last, he was “cured and matured by age.”

The experience was typical. With the passing of that aggressively “modern” moment after World War I, doubts about Beethoven were for a time put to rest; but they dependably resurface whenever a new artistic tendency needs to clear a musical space for itself. John Cage, for instance, an avant-garde musician of the post – World War II period, went on renewed offensive against Beethoven in 1948, claiming that the whole concept of “composition defined by

harmony” was “in error,” and that “Beethoven’s influence, which has been as extensive as it is lamentable, has been deadening to the art of music.”⁹

As the persistent need to attack him attests better than anyone’s praise, the Beethoven of the C-minor mood remains a touchstone of music’s full potential within the European fine-art tradition, and will undoubtedly retain that position as long as the tradition persists. For he (or rather “it”—the touchstone, not the man) has become the tradition’s virtual definer for the listeners on whom it depends for its subsistence.

Yet to describe the distinctive Beethovenian tone simply as the “C-minor mood” is woefully inadequate. It is not just incomplete: such a description leaves out the chief thing that has given Beethoven his hold on the minds and hearts of so many generations of listeners. For the “C-minor mood” is really not a mood at all. A mood is static. What Beethoven offers, as always, is a trajectory. Most of the works we shall examine begin in C minor and end in C major; and the ones that do not make a point of the fact.

Thus, time and again over the whole course of his career, Beethoven seemed to replay, as if under a compulsion, that sublime moment in Haydn’s *Creation* when the dark of chaos yielded to the light of primeval day. The many inflections he gave the basic opposition, from consoling to triumphal to quiescent, have given rise to as many metaphorical interpretations, and to as many moral or ethical readings. Adolf Bernhard Marx (1795–1866) caught the Haydn resonance and drew out its implications with great acumen when he wrote of the Fifth Symphony that its overall theme was “Durch Nacht zum Licht! Durch Kampf zum Sieg!” (“Through night to light! Through struggle to victory!”), sounding a keynote for Beethoven interpretation that has resonated over the centuries on many levels from the biographical or psychological to the nationalistic, and from the benignly auspicious to the potentially sinister.¹⁰

Notes:

- (1) For devotion see Joseph Kerman, “Beethoven’s Minority,” in *Write All These Down: Essays on Music* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 217–37; for derision see Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets*, pp. 70–71.
- (2) Robert Schumann, *On Music and Musicians*, ed. Konrad Wolff, trans. Paul Rosenfeld (New York: Norton, 1969), p. 95.
- (3) Edward J. Dent, *Terpander; or, Music and the Future* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1927), p. 64.
- (4) Edward J. Dent, “The Problems of Modern Music” (1925), in *Selected Essays*, ed. Hugh Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 98.
- (5) Dent, *Terpander*, p. 91.
- (6) Clive Bell, *Old Friends* (London, 1956); quoted in Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), p. 60.
- (7) See Stravinsky’s review (ghostwritten by his assistant Robert Craft) of Kerman’s *The Beethoven Quartets* in *The New York Review of Books*, 26 September 1968; reprinted in Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Retrospectives and Conclusion* (New York: Knopf, 1969), pp. 130–42.
- (8) *Stravinsky: An Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1936), p. 181.
- (9) Quoted in David Revill, *The Roaring Silence: John Cage, A Life* (New York: Arcade, 1992), pp. 95–96.
- (10) Adolf Bernhard Marx, *Ludwig van Beethoven: Leben und Schaffen*, 6th ed., ed. and rev. Gustav Behncke, Vol. II (Berlin: Otto Janke, 1908), p. 62.

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Oxford History of Western Music: Richard Taruskin

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Ferdinand Ries

Piano trio

TRANSGRESSION

Chapter: CHAPTER 13 C-Minor Moods

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

As we may remember from the previous chapter, it was the key (or mood) of C minor that got Beethoven into trouble for the first time. We can get the whole story now from Beethoven's pupil Ferdinand Ries, who claimed to have had it from Beethoven himself. It took place around the end of 1793 or the beginning of 1794, when Beethoven, sent to Vienna by his earliest patron Count Waldstein "to receive the deceased Mozart's spirit from Haydn's hands," had been living in the capital for about a year.¹¹ Now it was time to make good on the count's happy (but for Beethoven, perhaps, somewhat unnerving) prediction. "It was planned," Ries wrote in a memoir published in 1838,

to introduce the first three Trios of Beethoven, which were about to be published as Opus 1, to the artistic world at a soirée at Prince Lichnowsky's, to whom they were dedicated. Most of the artists and music-lovers were invited, especially Haydn, for whose opinion all were eager. The Trios were played and at once commanded extraordinary attention. Haydn also said many pretty things about them, but advised Beethoven not to publish the third, in C minor. This astonished Beethoven, inasmuch as he considered the third the best of the Trios, as it is still the one which gives the greatest pleasure and makes the greatest effect. Consequently, Haydn's remark left a bad impression on Beethoven and led him to think that Haydn was envious, jealous and ill-disposed toward him. I confess that when Beethoven told me of this I gave it little credence. I therefore took occasion to ask Haydn himself about it. His answer, however, confirmed Beethoven's statement; he said he had not believed that this Trio would be so quickly and easily understood and so favorably received by the public.¹²

Note that, contrary to a frequent but unjustified interpretation of this incident, Haydn is not portrayed as disliking or misunderstanding the Trio himself, only as anticipating a poor reception from the paying public. Haydn himself had recently had a sour experience with a piece in C minor. His Symphony no. 95, for the first London series, was the only one without a slow introduction and the only one in a minor key. The public didn't like it; and as Elaine Sisman puts it, "he didn't make the mistake again."¹³ So, far from wishing to suppress a young rival, he was in all likelihood motivated by concern for his former pupil's reputation and commercial prospects. Additional reasons for that concern are not difficult to surmise. They had to do with the genre in which Beethoven was making his debut.

Today's standard nomenclature for late-eighteenth- and nineteenth-century chamber ensembles of three or more, or pieces written for them, is based simply on the number of instruments participating: for example, string or piano "trio," string or piano "quartet," "quintet," and so on. In the eighteenth century, however, as we have already observed in chapter 8, ensembles with fully notated piano parts were generally deemed to be amplified or "accompanied" piano sonatas. What we call a violin sonata (say, by Mozart) would have been called a piano sonata with violin; and what we call a piano trio by Mozart or Haydn would have been called a "sonata con violino e basso," or a "sonata pour le piano-forte avec accompagnement de violon et violoncello," to quote from the title page of a set of three such pieces by Haydn that was published in London in 1794, the same year as the tryout of Beethoven's op. 1.

(French was often the language of such title pages, no matter where published, because the piano trio genre was traditionally deemed a French one, going back to the *Pièces de clavecin en concerts*—"Harpsichord pieces arranged in sets with accompanying parts"—by Jean-Philippe Rameau, published in 1741.)

In such pieces the violin occasionally got to sing its own tunes, but the cello part was largely confined to doubling the piano left hand. That is because the accompanied piano sonata was, in its origins and usual aim, an unambitious and

undemanding household genre. Further evidence of its modesty was its traditional brevity. Except for two early specimens (one of them never published during his lifetime), Haydn's typically huge output of forty-one trios never exceeded three movements, and nine of them, including a pair composed in the 1790s, have only two. Mozart's eight trios (one of them with clarinet in place of violin) all have three movements.

Not only that, but the use of minor keys was extremely rare in such pieces, as it was in all domestic entertainment genres. Mozart never wrote a trio in the minor mode, and Haydn wrote only six. The one that shared Beethoven's key of C minor, composed in the late 1780s, compensated for its seriousness by being cast in only two movements, of which the second (and longer) one was demonstratively marked "gay and witty" (*Allegro spiritoso*) and cast in C major to dispel the gloom. Weightiness, agitation, dark moods—such characteristics were simply not associated with the genre. They were implicitly undesirable. That is what Haydn was getting at.

Now compare Beethoven's op. 1, no. 3. All three trios in op. 1 have four movements—that is, they all have both a slow movement and a minuet between ample allegros, as in a symphony. That amplitude of form was already unprecedented, and so was the willingness it implied to transgress the obligations of genre in the interests of expression—or of making an impression. (Not for nothing did Haydn once refer to Beethoven, behind his back, as the "Grand Mogul from Bonn.")¹⁴ To compound the infraction by the use of C minor, a key associated not with home amusements but with theatrical pathos, was to put op. 1, no. 3, for Haydn, altogether beyond the pale of decorum. From the older composer's point of view, the younger one was committing an act of gratuitous, arrogant aggression against his potential audience. Haydn, who spent his life as a sort of courtier, failed to foresee that Beethoven's public would respond to his aggression with delight. He can be forgiven.

For it was indeed that grand theatrical pathos, vulgar in courtly eyes, to which Beethoven was aspiring. This is evident from the very beginning of the Trio, in a theme that plays a very conspicuous but ambiguous role in the work (Ex. 13-1). It is not hard to see that it is modeled directly on the ominous opening theme of Mozart's Piano Concerto no. 24, K. 491, composed in 1786, one of only two minor-mode Mozartean concertos out of a total of over fifty. (The fact that both are among Mozart's most famous works—the other is the Piano Concerto no. 20 in D minor, K. 466—could be read either as a simple mark of their quality, or, more complexly, as a sign that Mozart's works have been selectively valued by a posterity that knew Beethoven.)

Note particularly the way the dominant degree (G) is circled in both themes by half steps on either side (A \flat , F \sharp), so that a dissonant augmented sixth—or its inversion, an even more dissonant diminished third—is built right into the theme. It is almost as if Beethoven were announcing that what had been a mood of extreme rarity—or of rare extremity—in Mozart or Haydn would be "normal" for him.

ex. 13-1a Ludwig van Beethoven, Piano Trio in C minor, Op. 1, no. 3, I, mm. 1–10

ex. 13-1b W. A. Mozart, Piano Concerto in C minor, K. 491, opening theme

Beethoven's theme, with its portentously theatrical fermata, plays a somewhat ambiguous role in the first movement

of the Trio. It is not exactly the “first theme” in sonata form. That role is taken by the theme that immediately follows the phrase quoted in Ex. 13-1, a melody built up out of repetitions of a restless motive beginning with a long upbeat of three eighth notes. (We shall see later what a characteristic “Beethoven rhythm” this motive is!) That is the theme from which Beethoven derives most of the movement’s continuity. The opening idea, rather, seems reserved for almost the opposite purpose, that of interrupting—or actually disrupting—the course of the music for important announcements, many of them ending with fermatas, and most of them involving chromatic turns—or wrenches—in harmony. Its role is an essentially dramatic or rhetorical one, as befits the theatrical pathos of its style.

ex. 13-2a Ludwig van Beethoven, Piano Trio in C minor (Op. 1, no. 3), I, mm. 29–36

ex. 13-2b Ludwig van Beethoven, Piano Trio in C minor (Op. 1, no. 3), I, mm. 138–49

ex. 13-2c Ludwig van Beethoven, Piano Trio in C minor (Op. 1, no. 3), I, mm. 224–35

In m. 31, for example, the “announcement” theme returns in the form of a deceptive cadence that leads almost immediately to a weird $F\flat$ -major arpeggio that can only in retrospect be interpreted as the Neapolitan sixth of the relative major, the key of the second theme (Ex. 13-2a). At the beginning of the development section (m. 138), the theme comes back again (Ex. 13-2b) to nudge the harmony from its comfortable cadence on $E\flat$ toward the Far Out Point, by substituting the parallel minor and leading from there, very briefly, into the mysterious territory of the flat submediant (here spelled enharmonically, as B major). And in the recapitulation (mm. 214 ff), after announcing the double return, the theme makes another abrupt harmonic turn (Ex. 13-2c; just where, as Haydn probably pointed out, the listener least expects it) into the actual key, not just the chord, of the “Neapolitan” degree, \flat II ($D\flat$ major). Thanks to these surprising modulations, the tonic key has been shadowed on both sides by chromatic half steps, just the way the dominant is shadowed by the notes of the theme itself. More harmonically abandoned than this, music rarely got before the nineteenth century, and never in a trio.

Of course the “announcement theme” gets to announce important events of a more structural kind as well. As we have seen, it introduces the recapitulation. Broken down into motives, it sustains the first part of the development section, as earlier it had provided the exposition with its climax. In all its functions it serves as the vehicle, or channeler, of high rhetoric. Despite its ambiguous structural role, it provides the music that makes the most lasting impression on the listener.

And Beethoven needs to make sure that the impression lasts, for with the arrival of the impetuous *prestissimo* finale, we are confronted with another bold “announcement theme” (this time replete with “Mannheim rocket”) that ends, like the one in the first movement, on a dominant half cadence that is underscored by a fermata (Ex. 13-3a). With something of a start, we realize that this theme is not merely similar in function to the theme heard at the Trio’s outset. It is an actual variant of the earlier theme, in much the same way that the earlier theme had been a variant of a theme from Mozart’s concerto.

Prestissimo

Vln. *ff*

Vc. *ff*

Prestissimo

Pno. *ff*

ex. 13-3a Ludwig van Beethoven, Piano Trio in C minor (Op. 1, no. 3), Finale, mm. 1–8

Vln. *pp*

Vc. *pp*

Pno. *pp* *espressivo*

372

p espressivo

p

380

p

p

ex. 13-3b Ludwig van Beethoven, Piano Trio in C minor (Op. 1, no. 3), Finale, end

Thus Beethoven uses a single “basic melodic shape” or *Grundgestalt* (to use an apt term invented a century later by the Austrian composer Arnold Schoenberg) to secure the entire four-movement structure, at once more sprawling and more tautly unified than had previously been the norm. That tandem of unprecedented rhetorical amplitude and tight structural control would remain the Beethovenian standard. Following romantic theories of esthetics that likened works of art to living organisms in their properties of growth, it quickly became known as Beethovenian “organic” form—the norm against which the work of all composers would soon be measured, up to Schoenberg’s time and even beyond.

After all the stormy impetuosity of the outer movements, the end of the Trio comes as another calculated surprise. After hitting a peak of energy with a passage based on a sequential extension of the opening “rocket” motive to a point of great harmonic tension on a diminished-seventh chord, the movement subsides by degrees. *Sforzando* accents apart, there is no dynamic marking above *piano* in the last 86 measures of the Finale. The music seems palpably to deflate in a marvelously calculated unison descent that implies a sophisticated harmonic pun: treating the dominant as if it were an augmented sixth chord (a technique that would become much more common in the early nineteenth century), allowing the tonal structure almost visibly to “sag” a semitone.

The end of the movement (and the trio) is given in Ex. 13-3b. The task this coda must perform is that of gradually

building back up from B to C, but the effort seems costly. Emotional fatigue seems implicit in the obsessively repeated half-step descents to the tonic C, until the string instruments, seemingly drained of the energy it takes to play a theme, can only vamp the notes of the tonic triad, while the piano deploys its last remaining strength in a series of tonic scales, *pianissimo*.

The tonic, it will certainly not be missed, has relaxed into the major, invoked here, it would seem, as a symbol or metaphor of final repose, or possibly of resignation. Beethoven duplicated this final mode switch, from C minor to C major, many times over the course of his career, in many emotional contexts. Its persistence shows that this heavily fraught progression, according as it did with Haydn's monumental example in the *Creation*, was as much a part of Beethoven's "C-minor mood" as the choice of tonic key itself. The move from minor to major, often played out over a large multimovement span, was not only a spiritually symbolic device but also Beethoven's ultimate unifying stratagem, encompassing complex works within a single narrative or dramatic unfolding.

What is most remarkable is the variety of emotionally resonant stories Beethoven was able, in this way, to tell. By projecting emotionally engaging tonal narratives or dramas over ever longer musical spans, Beethoven forever changed the nature of instrumental music, and the expectations it aroused in audiences. If at the beginning of his career Beethoven seemed careless of those expectations, it was because he sought in the end to transform them. That goal is evident even in his op. 1.

MORTI DI EROI

The choice of C minor as a key that would play a central role in enunciating Beethoven's heroic stance was no surprise. It was virtually mandated by its traditional theatrical associations and reputation. These were well summed up by Francesco Galeazzi (1758–1819), an Italian violinist and composer who between 1791 and 1796 published an encyclopedic music treatise called *Elementi teorico-pratici di musica* (The Theoretical and Practical Elements of Music).

The key of C minor, Galeazzi wrote, was "the tragic key, suitable for expressing great misfortunes like the deaths of Heroes (*morti di Eroi*)."¹⁵ Though Galeazzi was writing out of the tradition of Italian opera, his description of the key accords so tellingly with Beethoven's use of the key in his instrumental music that it almost seems to sum up Beethoven's achievement in transforming the instrumental genres of his day into virtual dramas.

Twice, in fact, Beethoven used the key to portray exactly the occasion for which Galeazzi proclaimed it best suited. One is already familiar: the end of the second movement of the *Eroica* Symphony, which is cast as a *Marcia funebre*, a Funeral March in C minor, literally marking the death of a Hero. An even more pointed and "literary" use of the key to symbolize heroic tragedy comes in the Overture Beethoven wrote in 1807 to *Coriolan*, a *Trauerspiel* or "mourning play" by the Austrian poet Heinrich Josef von Collin (1771–1811).

Though sometimes translated simply as "tragedy," the word *Trauerspiel* connotes (in the words of John Daverio, a cultural historian of German music) an unmitigated "display of human misery, wretchedness, and suffering."¹⁶ It arose in the mid-seventeenth century as a typically fulsome manifestation of "baroque" theater, dealing, in the words of a contemporary observer, with "nothing but killings, despair, infanticide and patricide, conflagration, incest, war and commotion, lamentation, weeping, sighing, and suchlike."¹⁷ Now there is a list of C-minor moods!

Collin's *Trauerspiel* concerned the fate of the Roman general Gnaeus Marcius Coriolanus as related by Plutarch. (Shakespeare's tragedy *Coriolanus* is a treatment of the same story.) He made his fame (and earned his name) by capturing the Volscian city of Corioli, but was then expelled from Rome for tyrannical acts. Joining with the Volscians, his former enemy, he avenged himself by attacking Rome, which he would have destroyed, but was dissuaded by the tears of his wife and his mother. For his fatal vacillation the Volscians condemned him to death by torture.

Allegro con brio

ff

9

tr.

tr.

p

tr.

tr.

17

cresc.

f

ex. 13-4a Ludwig van Beethoven, *Coriolan Overture*, mm. 1–21

p

cresc. poco a poco

ff

p

cresc.

ex. 13-4b Ludwig van Beethoven, *Coriolan Overture*, mm. 52–75

ex. 13-4c Ludwig van Beethoven, *Coriolan Overture*, end

Beethoven's overture to this dismal play encapsulates its desperate emotional content, beginning with ponderous unison Cs and slashing chords that wed the blunt opening of Haydn's *Creation* Prologue to the restless harmony of Mozart's C-minor Concerto, K. 491 (Ex. 13-4a). A second theme offers major-mode relief, but comfort is short-lived; C minor, and with it the "C-minor mood," quickly reasserts itself (Ex. 13-4b). That second theme, however, offers a possible way to achieve C major in the recapitulation, and the promise seems briefly to be kept. The even quicker crushing of the major, however, where its retention and eventual exaltation might have been expected, epitomizes.

more eloquently perhaps than any words could do, the hopelessness of the drama. The return of the violent opening gesture, the hollow unisons now reinforced with additional winds, seems virtually to portray the Hero's murder, and in the final coda, with its composed deceleration of the "first theme" music from the exposition, we seem to witness the wasting of his energies and his anguished demise (Ex. 13-4c).

This is horror music. And the horror is conveyed as much by what does not happen, by what is deliberately withheld, as by anything that actually occurs. The trajectory from C minor to C major is cut off as palpably as the Hero's life. All the more powerfully, then, does the completed narrative sound forth in what has to be regarded as the *Coriolan* Overture's counterpart: Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, op. 67, the most famous symphony in the world.

Its status was confirmed, almost from the beginning, by E. T. A. Hoffmann, who cast his most extensive blast of romanticist propaganda in the form of an extended description of the Fifth. This famous essay of 1810 stands today as an early landmark of music analysis, a then wholly new form of writing about music, in which technical observations were linked up directly with expressive interpretations, in a manner that emphatically paralleled and positively reinforced the equally novel (and equally zealous) intentions of contemporary composers. Where composers proceeded from causes to effects, exegetical critics like Hoffmann endeavored to work back from the effect to uncover the cause.

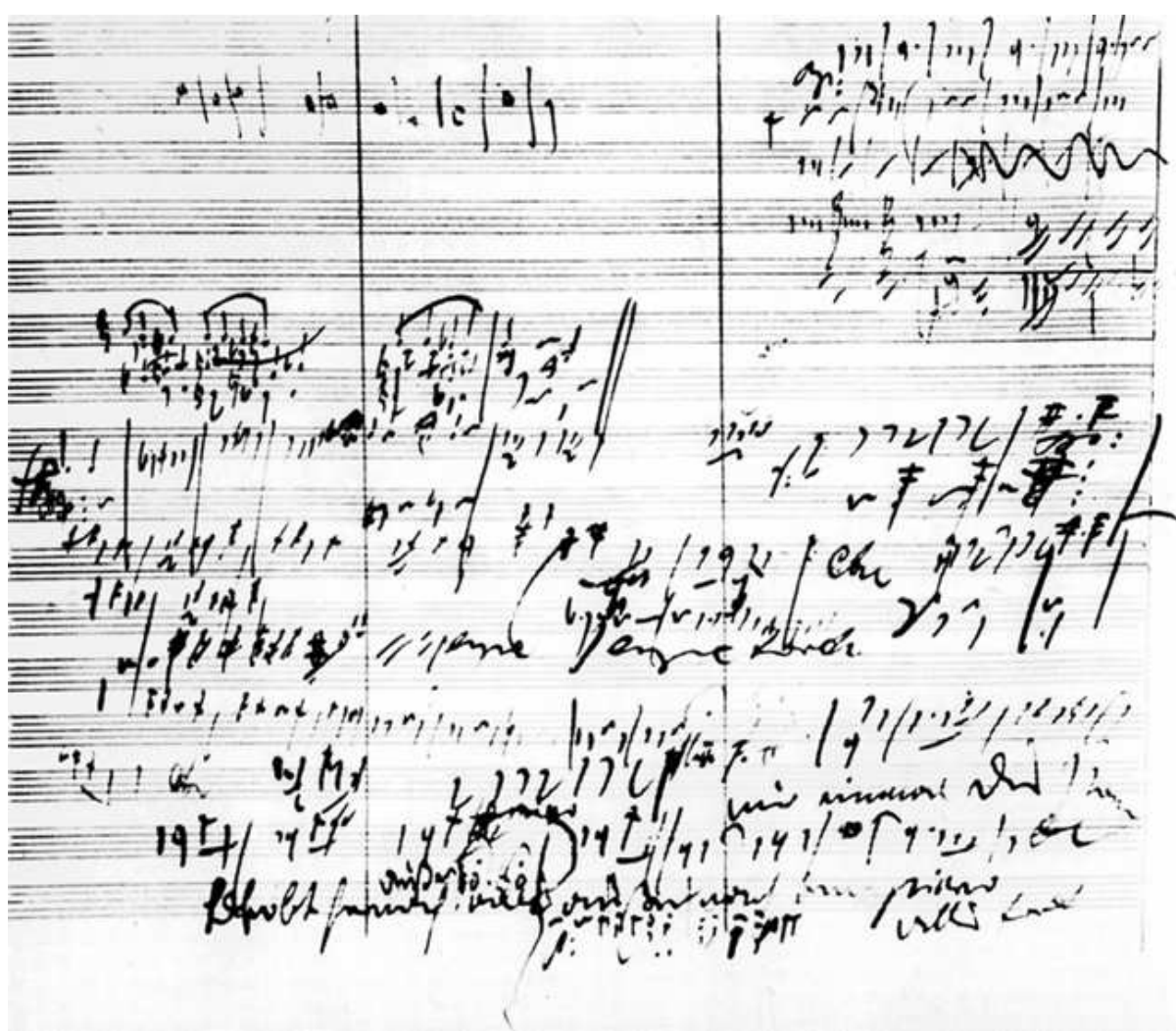


fig. 13-1 Sketches for the third movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.

In the case of Hoffmann himself, who was not only a musician but an outstanding literary figure as well, analysis (to paraphrase a famous remark by the musicologist Manfred Bukofzer) could fairly be described as "composition in reverse." It became the distinguishing feature of German instrumental music that it attracted this sort of exegetical interpretation. Alongside verbal interpretations like Hoffmann's (and later Robert Schumann's), there also arose the "interpretations" of master performers, including the first baton ("maestro") conductors. In this as in so many other ways, Beethoven's music was the preeminent catalyst, remaking the world of music in what we still recognize today

as its modern image.

Hoffmann used the Fifth to demonstrate, on the “micro” level, the organic unity of the composition; and on the “macro” level, the expressive power to which that unity gave rise. Very significantly, if a little predictably, he finds Beethoven’s truest forebear in Shakespeare, worshipped by German romantics as the greatest of all dramatists. It was a romantic mission to rescue Shakespeare from the low status to which he had been consigned by the dogmatic “neoclassical” critics of the French Enlightenment, who (basing themselves on Aristotle’s authority) charged him with formlessness. Hoffmann’s task, then, was to demonstrate the organic growth of tree from seed in order to certify Beethoven’s supreme mastery, not only of compositional technique, but of transcendent expression as well. The two, Hoffmann strongly argued, were the two sides of a single coin, and the Fifth offered the ultimate proof:

Can there be any work of Beethoven’s that confirms all this to a higher degree than his indescribably profound, magnificent symphony in C minor?...No doubt the whole rushes like an ingenious rhapsody past many a man, but the soul of each thoughtful listener is assuredly stirred.... The internal structure of the movements, their execution, their instrumentation, the way in which they follow one another—everything contributes to a single end; above all, it is the intimate interrelationship among the themes that engenders that unity which alone has the power to hold the listener firmly in a single mood. This relationship is sometimes clear to the listener when he overhears it in the connecting of two movements or discovers it in the fundamental bass they have in common; a deeper relationship which does not reveal itself in this way speaks at other times only from mind to mind, and it is precisely this relationship that prevails between sections of the two Allegros and the Minuet and which imperiously proclaims the controlling force of the master’s genius.¹⁸

In this remarkable paragraph Hoffmann has alluded both to the “micro” and the “macro” structures of the symphony and suggested both the ways in which the levels are mutually reinforcing or “synergistic,” and the ways in which structural unity and powerful expression exhibit in Beethoven a comparable synergy. Indeed, there is synergy between composition and critique as well, for surely there is no work by Beethoven (or by any other composer) that so flaunts the derivation of the whole from a single “germinal seed,” the four notes proclaimed at the very outset in the gruff unison so endemic to the C-minor mood.

Notes:

(11) Album inscription, quoted in *Thayer’s Life of Beethoven*, ed. Elliot Forbes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 115.

(12) Ferdinand Ries, *Biographische Notizen über Ludwig van Beethoven* (1838), in *Beethoven: Impressions By His Contemporaries*, ed. O. G. Sonneck (New York: Schirmer, 1926), p. 74.

(13) Personal communication to author.

(14) A. C. Kalischer, *Beethoven und Wien* (Berlin, 1910), p. 8.

(15) Quoted in Rita Steblin, *A History of Key Characteristics in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1983), p. 109.

(16) John Daverio, *Robert Schumann: Herald of a “New Poetic Age”* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 345.

(17) Martin Opitz, *Prosodia Germanica* (ca. 1650); quoted in Daverio, *Schumann*, p. 345.

(18) E. T. A. Hoffmann, “Beethoven’s Instrumental Music” (1813), in Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History* (New York: Norton, 1950), p. 778.

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GERMINATION AND GROWTH

Chapter: CHAPTER 13 C-Minor Moods

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

This famous opening (Ex. 13-5a) has many points of congruence with the opening of the Trio, op. 1, no. 3—the unison, the fermata, and the use of a brusque “announcement theme” to arrest the attention before the actual, structurally functioning “first theme” gets underway (m. 6). What is new and noteworthy in the Fifth is the way the first theme is related to the announcement theme. It is built up out of a multitude—a veritable mosaic—of motivic repetitions, all derived from the opening four-note group as if to demonstrate the process of germination. It is a theme that no one instrumental part ever gets to play in its entirety, as if to demonstrate the way in which the whole, as in any organism, transcends the mere sum of its parts.

Fl. Allegro con brio $\text{♩} = 108$ 10

Ob.

Cl. in Bb

Bn. *ff* *p*

Hn. in Eb

Tpt.

Timp.

Vln. I *ff* *p*

Vln. II *ff* *p*

Vla. *ff* *p*

Vc. *ff* *p*

Cb. *ff* *p* 10

The image displays a page of a musical score for Ludwig van Beethoven's Symphony no. 5 in C minor, Op. 67, measures 1 through 24. The score is arranged in a system with multiple staves for different instruments. The instruments listed are Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet in Bb (Cl. in Bb), Bassoon (Bn.), Horn in Eb (Hn. in Eb), Trumpet (Tpt.), Timpani (Tamp.), Violin I (Vln. I), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.). The score shows a dynamic progression from piano (p) to fortissimo (f) starting at measure 20, indicated by the markings 'p cresc.' and 'f'. The number '20' is written above the staff at the beginning of the fortissimo section. The score is in C minor, as indicated by the key signature of three flats.

ex. 13-5a Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 5 in C minor, Op. 67, mm. 1-24

The image shows a musical score for the string section of Ludwig van Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67, measures 62-65. The score is arranged in five systems, each with two staves. The instruments are: Vln. I (Violin I), Vln. II (Violin II), Vla. (Viola), Vc. (Violoncello), and Cb. (Contrabasso). The key signature is C minor (three flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The first two measures (62-63) feature a melodic line in the violins and violas, with a dynamic marking of *p dolce* for the first violin and *p* for the others. The last two measures (64-65) feature a rhythmic pattern in the cellos and basses, with a dynamic marking of *p*. The rhythm is an upbeat of three short notes followed by a long downbeat note. The notes are beamed together in the eighth measure.

ex. 13-5b Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 5 in C minor, Op. 67, mm. 62–65 (strings only)

And now notice that the four notes of the symphony's "germinal seed" are grouped in exactly the same rhythm—an upbeat of three short notes to a long downbeat note—as the much-repeated idea from which the first theme in the first movement of the Trio, op. 1, no. 3, is built up (beginning in the piano part at m. 10), already referred to in the discussion of that piece as a distinctive "Beethoven rhythm" because of its pronounced forward thrust (see the end of Ex. 13-1a). That propulsive force, as Hoffmann noted, is virtually unremitting in the first movement of the Fifth, accounting for the "interrelationship among the themes that engenders that unity which alone has the power to hold the listener firmly in a single mood." It continues to sound, for example, in the cellos and basses while the other instruments turn their attention to the ostensibly contrasting "second theme" (Ex. 13-5b), and returns in full force to inform the codetta or closing theme at the end of the exposition, as Beethoven insists on our noticing with his unusual beaming of the eighth notes (Ex. 13-5c).

110

FL.

Ob.

Cl. in B \flat

Bn.

Hn. in E \flat

Tpt.

Timp.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

110

Fl.
Ob.
Cl. in Bb
Bn.
Hn. in Eb
Tpt.
Timp.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

120

120

ex. 13-5c Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 5 in C minor, Op. 67, mm. 109–21

(Andante con moto)

pp

NB

ex. 13-6a Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 5 in C minor, Op. 67, II, mm. 76–77

ex. 13-6b Ludwig van Beethoven, *Symphony no. 5 in C minor, Op. 67, II, mm. 88–96*

ex. 13-6c Ludwig van Beethoven, *Symphony no. 5 in C minor, Op. 67, III, mm. 19–26*

Nor is that the only way in which the “germinal seed” makes its presence known. It recurs significantly in the other movements as well, extending “organic” unity over the entire four-movement span. One can hear it ticking like a time bomb in the second violins and violas at mm. 76–77 in the second (slow) movement (Ex. 13-6a), and again in the cellos at mm. 88–96 (Ex. 13-6b). Transformed into a two-measure idea, it informs the main theme of the third movement (informally known as the scherzo although Beethoven did not so designate it) beginning at m. 19 (Ex. 13-6c), and comes back along with the theme itself during the famously enigmatic reprise of the scherzo theme in the finale.

But that is far from its only role in the finale. As shown in Ex. 13-7a, the germinal seed-rhythm is firmly embedded in the finale’s jubilant main theme, and actually leads the theme to its highest point. More obviously, the germinal rhythm, now expressed in triplets, informs the finale’s second theme as well (Ex. 13-7b). Even the codetta is implicitly informed by it, as evidenced by the threefold pitch repetitions on the upbeats (Ex. 13-7c).

Finally, expressed as a sort of hocket, the germinal seed-rhythm launches the headlong coda of the finale on its way (Ex. 13-8a) and then, at the Presto (m. 414, Ex. 13-8b) makes explicit (in the cellos and basses) what had formerly been the “implicit” derivation of the finale’s codetta theme from the germinal seed (Ex. 13-8b).

It was the Austrian music theorist Heinrich Schenker (1868–1935) who first proposed that the original “germinal seed” be regarded as consisting not in the first four-note unison alone, but in both unison phrases, as shown in Ex. 13-9a. Only in this way, he argued, can the organic unity of the first movement be understood to the full. Indeed, when this conceptual adjustment is made, the horn call that serves as brisk transition to the second theme (Ex. 13-9b) stands revealed as the germinal theme’s direct offspring (derived by expanding the thirds to fifths).

Even more significantly, the relationship (or, at least, a relationship) becomes clear between the mysteriously becalmed, harmonically outlandish retransition (Ex. 13-9c) and the music that it interrupts. The antiphonal pairs of half notes are a sequential extension of the “horn call” idea, and the further reduction to single chords hocketing

between strings and winds can now be related, through the mediating horn call, to the germinal motif.

ex. 13-7a Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 5 in C minor, Op. 67, IV, mm. 1–12, piccolo

ex. 13-7b Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 5 in C minor, Op. 67, IV mm. 45–48, first violins

ex. 13-7c Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 5 in C minor, Op. 67, IV, mm. 64–70, violas

ex. 13-8a Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 5 in C minor, Op. 67, IV, mm. 402–404

ex. 13-8b Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 5, in C minor, Op. 67, IV, Presto, outer string parts

The so-called “new theme” in the coda (Ex. 13-10) has been another site of contention among critics. Some have touted it as a bold deviation from the overall “organic” plan, while others have argued that it is more readily understood as a rhythmic regrouping or reaccenting of the original four-note germinal motive: instead of . On this point there has grown up a large literature of sharp, occasionally acrid, debate.



ex. 13-9a Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 5, in C minor, Op. 67, I, opening unisons (mm. 1–5)



ex. 13-9b Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 5, in C minor, Op. 67, I, horn call (mm. 59–63)

ex. 13-9c Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 5, in C minor, Op. 67, I, mm. 195–231

ex. 13-10 Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 5 in C minor, Op. 67, first movement coda

The point, from a historical vantage point, is not to adjudicate the dispute but to characterize it. It is a new sort of musical argument, in which the *meaning* of instrumental music is discussed in terms of its *structure*. The meaning has been internalized, and the job of the critic is not so much to judge the music as to understand it, or (more practically) to help listeners understand it by explicating it. That is what was meant, later, when German critics began talking about and touting the value of “absolute” music. It meant exactly what Hoffmann meant when he called Beethoven’s instrumental music “romantic”—that is, capable of expressing what is otherwise inexpressible (and in particular, inexpressible in words). A later German composer, Richard Wagner (1813–83), defined absolute music as music that can convey “an unsayable content.”¹⁹ So it should never be imagined that “absolute” instrumental music contained or expressed nothing beyond its “organic” sound structure. The organic sound structure was the vehicle or gateway to a hitherto inaccessible realm of transcendent or ineffable meaning. The best possible illustration, as it happens, comes in the second movement of the Fifth, where as we have already observed, the germinal motive can be discerned at certain points, ticking away (“like a time bomb”). What sort of detonation does that ticking presage, and what does it mean?

The second movement of the Fifth, marked *Andante con moto*, is a broadly conceived, rather unusual set of variations on a theme—or to be more exact, a broadly conceived theme and two *doubles*, or embellished repetitions, with an extended coda—in the fairly unusual key of A ♭ major, the submediant degree with respect to the original tonic scale. The reason for its selection will become apparent when we consider the structure of the theme and the thrice-repeated tonal trajectory that it embodies.

ex. 13-11a Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 5 in C minor, Op. 67, II, mm. 1–8

The opening eight-bar phrase (Ex. 13-11a), while it cadences quite normally, has a somewhat bizarre middle. The fourth bar, which might be expected to contain a caesura (a brief point of rest or articulation), instead sounds a note of unexpected tension—an E-natural, identified by the succeeding notes as the leading tone in an applied dominant (V of vi). The tension is quickly (and “normally”) resolved in a circle of fifths, but the brief shock fixes the fourth measure’s errant harmony in the mind: a C major triad. Beethoven acknowledges the force of the shock by compensating for it with a fivefold embellished and then foreshortened repetition of the perfect cadence in mm. 6–8, reverberations that do not die down completely until m. 22.

Fl.
Ob.
Cl. in Bb *debe*
Bn. *debe*
Hn. in C
Tpt. in C
Timp. C, G
Vln. I *p dolce*
Vln. II *pp*
Vla. *p dolce*
Vc. *pizz.*
Cb. *pizz.*

The musical score is arranged in systems. The first system includes Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, and Bassoon. The second system includes Horn in C and Trumpet in C. The third system is for Timpani (C and G). The fourth system includes Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The score features various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like *debe*, *p dolce*, *pp*, and *pizz.* (pizzicato). The woodwinds and strings play melodic lines, while the percussion remains silent.

ex. 13-11b Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 5 in C minor, Op. 67, II, mm. 23–31

The two-bar phrase that begins with the upbeat to m. 23 (Ex. 13-11b) can be identified as an expansion of the three-note incipit, or opening motive, of the original theme. It is followed by a phrase (mm. 25–26 with pickup) that continues the same trajectory to the next tonic chord tone. But then once again the unexpected intervenes: yet another sequential continuation (mm. 26–27) moves not to another stable tone, but to a wildly unstable $G\flat$, a chromatic tone that fundamentally threatens the identity of the tonic by turning it into the V of IV. Its instability is immediately reinforced by another chromatic tone, the A-natural in the second violin and viola that forms a diminished seventh against the intruder. The diminished seventh harmony is then repeated in the kind of suspenseful stall familiar from the ones encountered in the *Eroica* Symphony in the previous chapter.

And now the denouement. In m. 30 the A-natural falls back to $A\flat$, the $G\flat$ is respelled $F\sharp$, and the resulting augmented sixth, reinforced by a sudden orchestral tutti, *fortissimo*, resolves the only way it can—to the same C major triad that had briefly intruded in the first phrase of the theme; but this time it is immediately confirmed by a brilliantly fulfilling—that is, tonicizing—cadence. The sense of breakthrough, achieved by a great effort, is shattering. *Durch Kampf nach Sieg!*

The reason for the unconventional choice of $A\flat$ as the tonic for the second movement is now clear. It was chosen strategically, to enable this sudden, surprising (and elating) breakthrough to the key that will eventually discharge

the violent C-minor mood of the first movement. It offers a foretaste of the outcome we have by now learned to associate with Beethoven's heroic narratives, the narratives that so decisively transformed the meaning of music for nineteenth-century audiences.

The horns, trumpets, and drums now exult in the brightness of the new key, blaring out in C major the same music that had been played *piano* and *dolce* (softly and sweetly) in mm. 22–26 by the clarinets and bassoons, and reminding us that—according to the same Galeazzi whose characterization of C minor so agreed with Beethoven's practice—the key of C major is *grandioso, militare*. The foretaste of victory lasts for six blazing bars (mm. 32–38). Achieved by rupture, however, and prematurely, it is impermanent. The strings insinuate a soft but decisive destabilizing harmony in m. 39—another diminished seventh chord that resolves through another drawn-out suspense passage, a tortuously chromatic vagary that lasts fully nine bars (mm. 39–48) until it arrives at the dominant of the A \flat and the first *double* can begin.

It is in the course of that *double* that the mysterious references to the germinal motive (“ticking like a time bomb”) appear; and their appearances coincide exactly with the “suspense passages” that surround the second explosion of C major. Beethoven has contrived, in other words, to bring a reminder of the “C-minor mood” of the opening movement into direct conjunction with the foretaste of C-major victory. It is a moment fraught with multiple “introversive” resonances, as defined in chapter 10, resonances that connect both with what is past and with what still (potentially, or hopefully) lies ahead.

These are dramatists' devices. Beethoven was not the first composer to apply them to instrumental music. We have observed similar gestures in the symphonies of Mozart and (particularly) Haydn. But by using them so much more pervasively than his predecessors, and so intensifying their effect, Beethoven seemed, to Hoffmann and his contemporaries, to have ushered in a new musical era—the era that Hoffmann so influentially dubbed romantic. Of paramount significance is the fact, emphasized by the prophetically discerning Hoffmann, that the technical achievement (organically unified form) and the expressive or dramaturgical achievement (creating a meaningfully related sequence of musically represented moods that plays overwhelmingly upon the listener's nerves) are one and the same achievement, variously described.

To return to the narrative: the premature thrusts toward the light in the second movement are effectively (though not hopelessly) canceled by the coda, in which the augmented sixth chord that had so stunningly rerouted the harmony toward C major in the variations is neutralized by the soothing bassoon solo. The F \sharp is respelled (or re- respelled) G \flat , the chord is re-resolved as a V of IV, and the local tonic A \flat , a weak secondary function with respect to the symphony's once and future tonics, is temporarily reconfirmed. The trajectory of struggle and victory has its vacillations, its setbacks.

The scherzo, consequently, is dark—another C-minor mood, replete with a unison “announcing theme” and fermatas. The darkness is expressed both in the tone color (muttering cellos and basses, *pianissimo*) and in the harmony: the jarring cross-relation between the outer voices as the second fermata is approached. Amazingly enough in view of its seeming originality, this very spot (mm. 16–20) in Beethoven's scherzo virtually reproduces a five-bar sequence from the last movement of Stamitz's Orchestra Trio in C minor (op. 4, no. 3), one of the early symphonies investigated in chapter 10. The two little passages, which encompass not only the unusual cadence with a false relation but also the beginning of a contrasting idea, are laid out for comparison in Ex. 13-12.

Was it an old memory from Beethoven's Bonn years, treacherously disguised as imagination, that resurfaced here in the form of an unwitting quotation from Stamitz, his grandfather's counterpart at Mannheim? Or was it a deliberate “extroversive” allusion, the point of which we no longer get? Beethoven's music, as we have already learned in our brief consideration of the Ninth Symphony (in the previous chapter), teems with riddles like these, as does most romantic symphonic music composed in its wake. The Fifth Symphony, perhaps even more than the Ninth, was a landmark of “coded utterance”—the use of obvious but tantalizingly unexplained signaling, both introversive and extroversive—in instrumental music. And the enigmatic complex comprising the symphony's scherzo and finale is what chiefly made it so.

As Hoffmann has already alerted us, and as the most cursory glance at the score reveals, the two movements are joined like Siamese twins, their joining furnishing the means for not merely the juxtaposition of C minor and C major, but the direct transformation of the one into the other, through which the symphony's “overarching single gesture” is consummated at last. The point is made with suitable drama—a lengthy dominant pedal to gather and focus tension, by way of *molto crescendo* and tremolos, not to mention the contrast between the nattering

muttering dissolve with which the scherzo comes to its inconclusive end, *pianissimo*, and the dazzling brassy blast that launches the finale on its triumphant course.

For early audiences, that blast was magnified far beyond its present power to shock by the unexpected sound of trombones in their symphonic debut. (Up to now we have encountered them only in church and in the opera pit, where they were employed for their religious—or, in Gluck’s *Orfeo* and Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, their infernal—associations.) In the finale of the Fifth, they are accompanied by the contrabassoon and piccolo, both used until that very moment solely in military bands. Thus the “grand military” affect associated with C major by Galeazzi is once again invoked and quite literally reinforced. Unlike the *Eroica*, however, the Fifth is not generally thought to carry explicitly military associations. It is generally agreed that its military affect is metaphorical, symbolizing a triumph that is experienced (whether externally, with respect to the composer, or internally, by a sympathetically identifying listener) as personal.

(Presto)
mm. 141 - 164

col 8va

NB

ex. 13-12a Carl Stamitz, Trio, Op. 4, no. 3, IV, mm. 141–164

The image displays three systems of musical notation for a piano accompaniment. The first system is marked 'Allegro' and 'col 8va'. The second system is marked 'poco rit.' and 'a tempo'. The third system is marked 'NB' and 'poco rit.' and includes a 'etc.' marking. The notation includes treble and bass staves with various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

ex. 13-12b Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony no. 5, in C minor, Op. 67, III, mm. 1–20

But that is not the full extent of the interrelationship of scherzo and finale. It is no such simple contrast. There is also the reprise of the scherzo within the finale, at a point that could not be more disruptive: during the retransition, right before the recapitulation, where it seems to reintroduce C minor, most unwelcomely, right as the dominant is about to resolve for the last time to the tonic major. In a larger sense, of course, the scherzo reprise serves a strategic purpose, prolonging as it does the suspense of “dominant tension,” and enabling a replay of the transitional passage so as to launch the recapitulation with a blast comparable to the one that had launched the exposition. Triumph, it could be argued, is not compromised but actually enhanced by the overcoming of one last setback.

But that is only one possible argument, one possible rough verbal paraphrase of a specifically musical reality. We have here one of the very earliest instances of the sort of situation, at once fascinating and frustrating, that became increasingly the norm in the symphonic music of the nineteenth century—music that at once demands and thwarts paraphrase. As the pianist and critic Charles Rosen has characterized it, the dilemma is that for music in the post-Beethoven tradition, “metaphorical description is called for, and even necessary,” but “none will be satisfactory or definitive.”²⁰

The dilemma, of course, is ours, not music’s. From the quintessentially romantic situation Rosen describes, music comes out the winner—as a medium transcending paraphrase and metaphor, and hence privy to a mode of expression that transcends what is fully expressible with blunt, all-too-human instruments like language and logic. Music all at once became a matter of intense interest (and envy) not only for artists in all media, but for philosophers as well. Different romantic philosophers have had different ways of getting at musical transcendence, though all agreed that it left phenomenal reality (that is, what can be apprehended through the senses alone) far behind and seemed to approach what Kant (following Plato) called the noumenal: the irreducible, ineffable essence of things, the reality that lay behind all appearance. Where other arts could only describe or reproduce appearances, music had access to the thing itself.

Beethoven, possibly reacting to Hoffmann’s critiques, had put it this way to a friend (who immediately quoted it in a letter to Goethe) as early as 1810: “I despise the world which does not intuitively feel that music is a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy.”²¹ “Intuitively feel” rather than “understand” because such knowledge

can come only as revelation. Like religious faith, it is inaccessible and impervious to sense or reason. As the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) would later put it, where the other arts were confined to *representing* the world, music could actually *present* the underlying reality, or what Schopenhauer called the Will.

And, as Schopenhauer insisted, it did so in ways that even a composer could not fully explain. “The composer,” Schopenhauer wrote, “reveals the inner nature of the world and expresses the deepest wisdom in a language which his reason does not understand.”²² Beethoven was the first composer to be self-consciously aware of this great romantic truth and to act on that awareness.

Notes:

(19) Richard Wagner, *Das Judentum in der Musik* (1850), in *Judaism in Music and Other Essays*, trans. W. Ashton Ellis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), p. 96.

(20) Charles Rosen, *Critical Entertainments: Music Old and New* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 267.

(21) Bettina von Arnim to Goethe, 28 May 1810; in *Beethoven: Impressions by His Contemporaries*, ed. O. G. Sonneck (New York: Schirmer, 1926), p. 80.

(22) Artur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, trans. E. F. J. Payne, Vol. I (New York: Dover, 1966), p. 260.

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Beethoven: Late-period style

Beethoven: Late-period style

LETTING GO

Chapter: CHAPTER 13 C-Minor Moods

Source: MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

Author(s): Richard Taruskin

Schopenhauer was the most radically romantic thinker in Germany during the last decade of Beethoven's life. Like Beethoven a lonely man, he evolved an influential philosophy of pessimism. As manifested in the strivings of individuals, he taught, the Will produces inevitable strife and frustration, dooming all inhabitants of the world to a life of unsatisfied cravings and spiritual pain. Ultimately the only way out was renunciation of desire, implying transcendence of the individual will—an idea for which Schopenhauer was indebted to Buddhist teachings, making him one of the earliest European bridge-builders to Asian culture. Short of full renunciation, some temporary assuagement of worldly pain can be found in philosophy and art—particularly in music, whose inherent faculty of transcendence could model, and perhaps even induce, the spiritual quiescence at which Schopenhauer's philosophy aimed.

These ideas, which found their first expression in *The World as Will and Representation*, a treatise that Schopenhauer published in 1818 at the age of thirty, would seem likely to appeal powerfully to a spirit as thwarted and tortured as Beethoven. We have no direct evidence of Beethoven's contact with Schopenhauer's philosophy or its "Eastern" antecedents, only the tenuous circumstance that intellectual Vienna was talking about it. But there is at least one late work of Beethoven's that seems to prefigure a Schopenhauerian *Weltanschauung*, or outlook on life, and that is the last of his piano sonatas, No. 32 in C minor, op. 111, composed in 1821–22 and consisting of two large movements: one in the titular key of C minor, and the other in C major.

We have seen Haydn's primal dark/light opposition of C minor and C major played out by now in several very different Beethovenian narratives. In op. 1, no. 3, the major came gently, as relaxation or solace. In the Fifth Symphony it came spectacularly, as victory, symbolized by the finale's fifty-four-bar coda, consisting of nothing but manically reiterated tonic cadences and triads (one of the most fanatically adored and, in consequence, fiercely lampooned pages in all of symphonic music). In the *Coriolan* Overture it never came at all, betokening in its withholding the tragic outcome of the drama.

Now, in op. 111, C major assumes a luminous (or, in the quasi-sacred terms Beethoven probably intended, a numinous) aura. It serves as the medium for metaphysical disclosure, conjuring an oceanic vista in which the desiring subject can finally lose itself. The late-Beethovenian religious impulse, already observed in the previous chapter, that found expression not only in sacred compositions like the *Missa solemnis* but in secular ones as well (the Ninth Symphony; the Quartet in A minor, op. 132, with its "Heiliger Dankgesang"), here reaches an early pinnacle.

That religiosity, betokening a turning-away from the world and its vicissitudes, found its most conspicuous (or most conspicuously *musical*) outlet in Beethoven's sudden infatuation with the fugue. By the end of the eighteenth century, fugal writing was a decidedly archaic device that had only one surviving application in a living genre: the Mass or oratorio chorus. Before 1815, that was where Beethoven had used it, with a single well-known exception: the finale of his Quartet in C major, op. 59, no. 3 (the last of the "Razumovsky" set, composed in 1806), in which the fugal technique, applied to a rollicking subject, set up a tour de force of performance virtuosity. Thanks to the fugal organization, listeners knew in advance that the cello was going to have to play at a tempo that was already taxing enough for the violins. This kind of whimsical fugalism was of a piece with the kind found occasionally in the quartets of Haydn (op. 20) and Mozart (K. 387).

From 1814–15, however, there was a big change; and it is impossible not to suspect a connection between the change in Beethoven and the political changes that took place over that momentous year of post-Napoleonic Restoration. As noted in the previous chapter, Beethoven contributed an oratorio, *Der glorreiche Augenblick* (“The glorious moment”), to the festivities that greeted the reactionary Congress of Vienna.

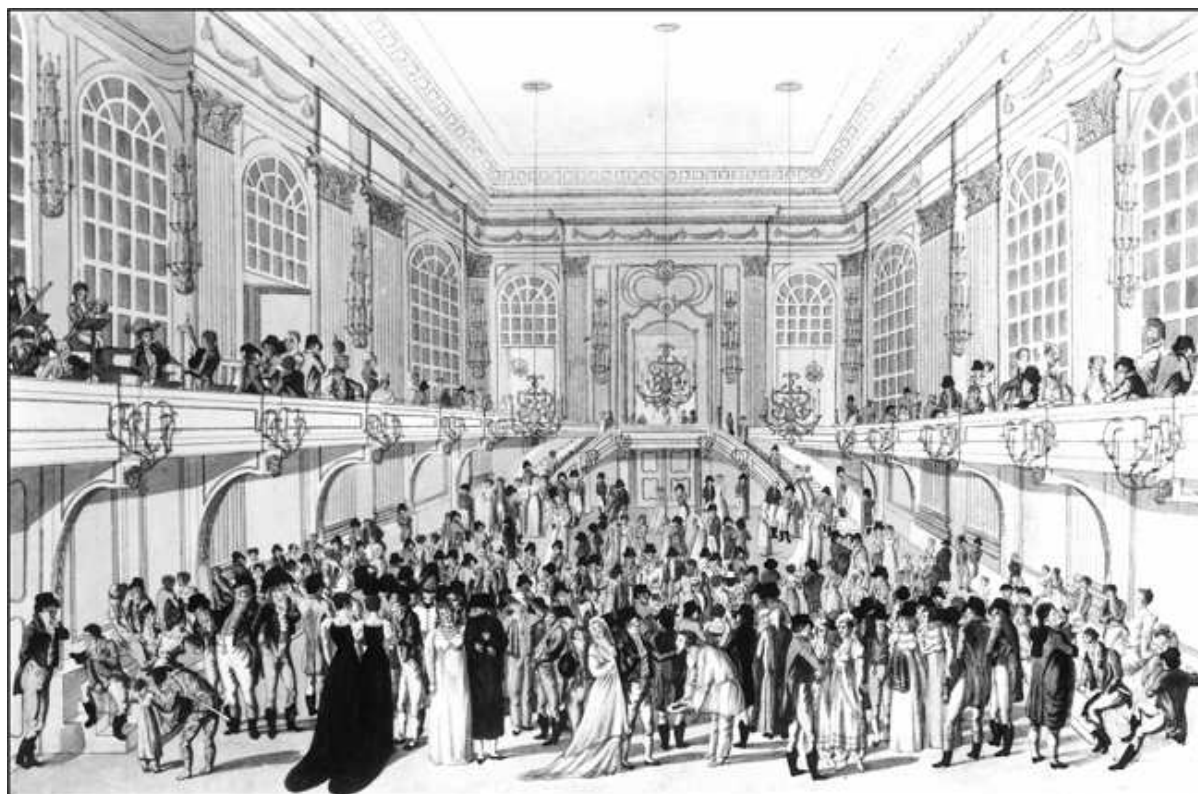


fig. 13-2 Masked ball in the Redoutensaal (Vienna) celebrating the Congress of Vienna, following performances of Beethoven’s Seventh Symphony and *Wellington’s Victory*, or “Battle” Symphony

The offering ended with a grandiose and sentimental finale in which the chorus, divided into separate groups of *Frauen* (sopranos and altos) and *Männer* (tenors and basses), is joined by a choir of *Kinder* (child sopranos and altos of both genders). The three groups first step forward one by one to pay a quasi-religious tribute to the assembled crowned heads of Europe:

Frauen:	Es treten hervor	Now we step forward,
	die Schaaren der Frauen,	the host of women,
	den glänzenden Chor	to behold the shining
	der Fürsten zu schauen,	throng of princes,
	auf alle die Kronen	and to lay a holy
	den heiligen Segen	mothers’ benediction
	der Mütter zu legen.	on all the crowned heads.
Kinder:	Die Unschuld als Chor,	Innocence itself
	sie wagt es zu kommen,	now ventures to come forth
	es treten hervor	in a choir of children, all

die Kinder, die frommen, righteous and meek, to bind
Herz, Himmel und Scepter heart, heaven, and scepter
mit Blumengewinden together with
zusammen zu binden. garlands of flowers.

Männer: Auch wir treten vor, We, too, come forth,
die Mannen der Heere, we men of battle,
ein Kriegerischer Chor in martial chorus
mit Fahnen und Wehre, with arms and colors flying
und fühlen die höchste and feeling the highest
der Vaterland's-wonnen delight in our Fatherland,
sich also zu sonnen. thus we bask in its glory.

All then come together in a rousing choral fugue (Ex. 13-13) that invokes Vienna by its ancient Latin name:
“Vindobona, may you prosper! World, your great moment is at hand!”

Presto

Vin - do - bo - na, Vin - do - bo - na, dir und Glück, dir und Glück, dir und Glück,
Welt, Welt, dein gros - ser Au - gen - blick, dein
gros - ser Au - gen - blick!

Vin - do - bo - na, Vin - do - bo - na, dir und Glück, dir und Glück,
Welt, Welt, dein gros - ser Au - gen - blick!

dir und Glück, Welt, Welt, dein gros - ser
blick, dein gros - ser Au - gen - blick!

ex. 13-13 Ludwig van Beethoven, *Der glorreiche Augenblick*, final Presto, beginning of fugal exposition

The poetry is doggerel. The music, hurriedly composed, is undistinguished. Overall, *Der glorreiche Augenblick* (no doubt owing in part to its political message, so offensive to modern liberalism) is commonly regarded as Beethoven's closest approach to drivel. And yet despite its occasional nature, its repugnant sentiments, and its artistic insignificance, the work may hold a key to some of Beethoven's most sublime utterances—provided we remember what the adjective “sublime” properly connotes.

The Latin epithet (“Vindobona!”) and the choral fugue had a similar import. Both were archaic references that invoked antiquity—that is, long-lastingness, which is ultimately to imply the timeless or eternally valid. That, of course, was precisely the political import of the Congress of Vienna: the purported reinstatement of ancient, divinely ordained, and timeless principles of social order in place of novel principles arrogantly conceived by the rational mind of man and still more impudently instituted on earth by the likes of Napoleon. It was a fierce reactionary rebuke to the Enlightenment, and so was much of romanticism.

In place of the optimistic, melioristic Enlightened vision, lately come to grief, political and philosophical romanticism offered a sentence of stasis, terrible or comforting depending on one's point of view. The world has

been created for all time by God. It cannot be improved (said political romanticists), only at best secured. It cannot be improved (said philosophical romanticists), only at best escaped. Both safeguard and escape signal acceptance of the status quo, or at the very least, resignation to it.

Perhaps the best way of viewing Beethoven's post-1815 fugal frenzy, then, would be to regard it as having been induced or inspired by political romanticism, to which Beethoven is known to have responded with pessimistic gusto. In conversation with Ferdinand Hiller shortly before his death, he mocked the great watchword of political reform: *Vox populi, vox Dei*, "The voice of the people is the voice of God." (It is attributed to Charlemagne's adviser Alcuin.) "I never believed it," Beethoven scoffed.²³ It was a disclaimer many disillusioned or nervous former champions of democracy were making. At the same time Beethoven declared Handel, the supreme master of the political fugue, to have been the greatest of all composers.

The resigned, disappointed public temper of post-Napoleonic Europe, with its hankering after the security of a timeless social order, found a private echo in the context of Beethoven's instrumental music. Fugues began turning up in bizarre profusion—and in the strangest places. What, for instance, could be an unlikelier place for a fugue than the finale of a cello sonata? And yet that is how Beethoven's fifth cello sonata (in D major, op. 102, no. 2) ends. It was composed in 1815, almost immediately after *Der glorreiche Augenblick* was first performed (Ex. 13-14a).

It was the first of many. The next year, 1816, Beethoven wrote a fugal finale for the Piano Sonata in A major, op. 101 (Ex. 13-14b). In 1818 there followed a truly colossal fugue, the one that caps the "Hammerklavier" Sonata, op. 106 (Ex. 13-14c). In between, perhaps most tellingly of all, came 1817, Beethoven's most barren year, in which he managed to complete only one work, and an insignificant one at that. And yet that one completed composition was still and all a small fugue (for string quintet, published posthumously as opus 137). All through this period Beethoven sketched as well at other, uncompleted, fugues. Example 13-14 gives the subject and answer from the expositions of the three main "finale fugues" of the period.

Allegro fugato

The image displays three systems of musical notation for fugue expositions. Each system consists of two staves: a bass clef staff and a treble clef staff. The first system is labeled 'Allegro fugato' and shows the subject in the bass clef staff, marked 'sempre p'. The second system shows the answer in the bass clef staff, also marked 'sempre p'. The third system shows the subject in the bass clef staff and the answer in the treble clef staff, both marked 'sf'. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings.

ex. 13-14a Ludwig van Beethoven, late fugue subjects, Cello Sonata in D, Op. 102, no. 2 (Finale)

ex. 13-14b Ludwig van Beethoven, late fugue subjects, Piano Sonata in A, Op. 101 (Finale)

ex. 13-14c Ludwig van Beethoven, late fugue subjects, "Hammerklavier" Sonata in B-flat, Op. 106

(Finale)

Later there would be fugues in the Piano Sonata in A \flat (op. 110, 1822), the *Diabelli* Variations (op. 120, 1819–23), and the very Handelian *Consecration of the House* Overture (op. 124, 1822), as well as in two quartets: the C \sharp minor, op. 131 (first movement), and the B \flat major, op. 130 (finale, later published separately as the *Grosse Fuge*, op. 133). Nor do even these exhaust the list.

The idea of incorporating fugues into sonatas is in some ways an incongruous one. To put it very bluntly, a fugue is a one-idea piece while a sonata is a two-idea piece. Consisting as it does of a single subject viewed as it were from all sides, a fugue is contemplative and, when sufficiently big, monumental. Consisting as it does of a tonal and (usually) thematic polarity worked through to a reconciliation, a sonata is dialectical and, when sufficiently big, dramatic. So different do the genres appear in their implications that in 1913 an influential German scholar named August Halm published a book, *Von zwei Kulturen der Musik* (“On the two cultures of music”), that tried to cast the entire history of music in terms of their opposition.

Before Beethoven’s late period, no one had really tried to reconcile the two genres, or use them in genuine tandem. When Haydn or Mozart wrote “fugal” sonata movements (or when Beethoven himself did it up to the quartets of op. 59), all that it usually meant was casting the first theme in the form of a fugal exposition, and then recapitulating it with a new countersubject, often ingeniously derived from another theme. Alternatively, it could mean casting the development section, or part of it, in the form of a *fugato*. “Real” thoroughgoing fugues were simply (and rightly) thought impossible to reconcile with the dynamics of sonata form.

Partly it is a matter of the structure of the theme itself. As we have long known, but as the subjects in Ex. 13-14 (especially the immense one from the “Hammerklavier” sonata) will remind us, a typical fugue theme has a well-etched beginning but a very hazy ending. Fuguelike themes typically recede into an evenly flowing “time-river.” Resisting dynamism, they cannot be brought to climax except by patently artificial means—mounting sequences, inflated dynamics, tacked-on codas, or the like.

It is not surprising, then, that Beethoven’s late fugal preoccupation focused at first on finales, where the fugue could stand in for the traditional rondo—a form that was, like the fugue itself, monothematic in content and episodic in form. The periodic fugal expositions provided an easily comprehended analogy for the recurring rondo theme. No conceptual damage was done. But when the fugue form takes over the first-movement function, as it does in the Quartet in C \sharp minor, op. 131, we can really sense an invasion of rhythmic and tonal quiescence, pessimistically usurping the place of a dynamic process that had formerly homed strategically (and optimistically) in on a dramatically satisfying closure.

The greatest “conceptual damage” done by fugue to sonata in late Beethoven occurs in the first movement of the Piano Sonata in C minor, op. 111, which is unequivocally in sonata form and not overly burdened, except in the development section, with imitative counterpoint. It is therefore, strictly speaking, not a fugue at all. But in some very telling ways it behaves like one, and by doing so signals the fundamental changes that have taken place in Beethoven’s whole musical (and cultural, and political, and social) outlook.

The sonata begins with a slow introduction (*maestoso*) that almost seems an intensified replay of the famous slow introduction to another C minor sonata (op. 13, subtitled “Pathétique”) composed almost a quarter of a century earlier (see Ex. 13-15). Both introductions feature dramatic diminished-seventh harmonies directed at the dominant and tonic in turn. The later sonata—by dispensing with the preliminary tonic, by resolving the second diminished seventh not to the tonic but to a strained “V of iv,” by spacing the harmonies so that they seem to cover the length and breadth of the keyboard, and by piling on additional diminished-seventh chords in bewildering profusion—boosts the pathos level beyond anything Beethoven (or any composer) would have imagined or dared in 1797.

The exaggerated pathos, as we will discover, is a dramatic foil. Meanwhile, the main body of the movement, the *Allegro con brio ed appassionato*, establishes itself (Ex. 13-16a) with a cluster of signs we have long associated with “C-minor moods”: unison writing, fermata (m. 20), a melodic diminished seventh (m. 21, preceded by an even more dissonantly “C-minorish” diminished fourth in m. 20). But the theme behaves like no sonata theme we have yet encountered. The unison writing goes on at extravagant length (more than ten measures, from m. 18 to m. 28), and the phrase that descends a diminished fifth (first heard in mm. 21–22) is on two further appearances (mm. 22–23, 30–31) marked *portato* (separated by dots within a slur, normally a bowing indication for strings) and *poco*

ritenente, “holding back slightly,” to emphasize its doleful, “cast down” effect.

Grave

ex. 13-15a Ludwig van Beethoven, Piano Sonata no. 8, Op. 13 (“Pathétique”), beginning of the slow introduction

Maestro

ex. 13-15b Ludwig van Beethoven, Piano Sonata no. 32, Op. 111, beginning of slow introduction

The headlong dash so typical of Beethoven’s sonata expositions is being deliberately frustrated, not only by the *poco ritenente*, but also by the theme itself, which is so obviously structured like a fugue subject. Instead of driving forward, it peters out into a time-river of steady sixteenth notes. And yet the expected fugal answer, normally

prepared by the rhythmic dissolution of the subject, never materializes. The whole movement is one unconsummated gesture after another. It never manages to define itself either as a fugue or as a sonata. Forever frustrated in its immediate purposes, it is forever in search of a way out, symbolized here (as in the Ninth Symphony) by a brief second theme (m. 50 ff) in the “Elysian” key of the submediant. Here, as everywhere, cadences are highly attenuated: the only complete $A\flat$ -major triads in the section of the piece nominally in that key are placed in weak metrical positions, and in unstable inversions to boot. The cadence in the secondary key (m. 69) is made only at the end of another fuguelike time-river passage *all'unisono*.

The development, exceedingly brief or even stunted, begins with a number of gambits that go nowhere: first, a sort of *passus duriusculus* formed by repeating the diminished fourth from the first theme in a chromatic descending sequence; next, a passage that before petering out in yet another time-river negotiates the circle of fifths with a series of imitative, quasi-fugal entries on a countersubject to the same theme, now stretched to encompass a diminished seventh instead of a diminished fourth; finally, another go around a circle of fifths by way of retransition, each stage of its progress stabbed out with a diminished-seventh chord, *sforzando*. Of all Beethoven compositions, this one must be the most saturated with diminished-seventh harmonies, making it the most pungently and pervasively dissonant movement Beethoven (or anyone since Bach, who had very different reasons) had ever composed.

ex. 13-16a Ludwig van Beethoven, Piano Sonata no. 32 in C minor, Op. 111, I, mm. 17–31

ex. 13-16b Ludwig van Beethoven, Piano Sonata no. 32 in C minor, Op. 111, I, mm. 146–end

And suddenly (m. 92) the struggle leaves off. The recapitulation repeats all the same futile gestures previously assayed in the exposition. As in the *Coriolan* Overture, the parallel major takes the place of the secondary key (mm. 116 ff), providing a brief ray of light or hope, but one that is dispelled even more quickly than in the Overture, and with the same dispiritingly “tragic” effect. Finally, as in the Trio, op. 1, no. 3, C major returns (Ex. 13-16b) in conjunction with a concluding diminuendo to end the movement, somewhat unexpectedly, on a note of alleviation or relief.

Or escape. In the Sonata, unlike the Trio, the strangely abrupt mood of serenity into which the music is suddenly allowed to relax does not end the composition. It is, rather, picked up and sustained throughout the movement that follows. More than twice the length of the first, the second movement of op. 111 is a set of variations on a pristine binary theme (Ex. 13-17a); but it carries a significant subtitle, *Arietta*, a simple song or hymn. Like the Cavatina in the Quartet in B ♭, op. 130 (Ex. 12-10), or the Song of Thanksgiving in the Quartet in A minor, op. 132 (see Ex. 12-12), the movement conveys the impression of an especially immediate and personal utterance, even if the nonsustaining piano tone cannot impersonate a human voice as naturally as strings.

Adagio molto semplice e cantabile

ex. 13-17a Ludwig van Beethoven, Piano Sonata no. 32 in C minor, Op. 111, II, *Arietta* (mm. 1–18)

It is also one of the slowest and “raptest” pieces Beethoven ever wrote, despite the seemingly paradoxical use of tiny note values. At times the music practically reaches a point of stasis or suspended motion, as if Beethoven were putting into practice the advice he gave an aspiring composer, one Xaver Schneider, in a letter of 1812: “Continue to raise yourself higher and higher into the divine realm of art; for there is no more undisturbed, more unalloyed or purer pleasure than that which comes from such an experience.”²⁴

Just so, we can almost hear Beethoven taking imaginative leave of the world, retreating—or, as he would no doubt have preferred to put it, ascending—into the higher realm of art, where quiet ecstasy abides. (And now recall all the depressingly reiterated melodic descents in the first movement to which the lofty ascent of the *Arietta* is an answer.) To paraphrase a famous remark of Friedrich Schiller, the poet of the Ninth Symphony’s “Ode to Joy,” the movement stands as an “effigy of the ideal,” perhaps the most literal embodiment Beethoven ever gave to the “longing for the infinite” that E. T. A. Hoffmann identified as the romantic essence of his art.

The attempt to adumbrate the infinite can be viewed in many dimensions. The most puzzling aspect of the movement, its notation, seems to be an effort to overwhelm the player or reader of the score with what Kant called the “mathematical sublime”—awesome, ungraspable profusion, as preeminently represented for Kant (in a passage Beethoven copied out and underscored) by “the starry sky above.” Notating the op. 111 variations in miniaturized time, with the beat falling on the dotted eighth, gives the page a similarly uncanny, immeasurably proliferous look. By the time the third or fourth variation is reached, the beat has been progressively divided into sixteenths, thirty-seconds, and sixty-fourths. Finally, triplets of thirty-seconds turn every beat into a miniaturized version of the full measure (Ex. 13-17b). Single measures stretch across whole systems in the score and one is faced, so to speak, with as many notes as there are stars in the sky.

Nor is this the only way in which Beethoven tries to represent what is normally measured in music as immeasurable. The next stage of rhythmic diminution, finally reached after a little cadenza into which the fourth variation dissolves, is the unmeasured trill—a kind of aural vanishing point, in which all sense of countable time is lost (Ex. 13-17c). The most arresting effect comes in mm. 112–114, a triple trill (almost impossible—that is, *infinitely* hard—to perform) that lasts for seven beats, during which time seems to come literally to a halt despite the repeated notes in the bass.

This symbol of infinite duration or boundless time returns in m. 160 to accompany the last, exalted statement of the theme in its original note values, bringing things full circle—or rather, full spiral, since the trills unmistakably signal a higher, transfigured mode of existence (Ex. 13-17d). As the latest, greatest philosophical romanticist, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), later put it of the similarly indefinite *tremolando* rhythms at the beginning of the Ninth Symphony, to listen is to feel oneself “floating above the earth in an astral dome, with the dream of immortality in one’s heart.”²⁵ The trills serve another purpose as well, and one that is equally sublime. The ones in Ex. 13-17c introduce the only modulation ever to intrude, in this movement, upon the limpid C-major tonality of the whole. The triple trill takes place on a harmony that can only be interpreted as the dominant of E \flat major; and, after a virtual eternity of trilling, chromatically (and timelessly) ascending into the musical ether, the tonic of that key finally materializes in m. 118, somewhat weakly but nevertheless definitely expressed (in first inversion), and confirmed by an allusion to the second phrase of the original melody.

The image shows a musical score for Ludwig van Beethoven's Piano Sonata no. 32 in C minor, Op. 111, II, mm. 72–80. The score is in C minor and 3/4 time. It features a right hand with a continuous tremolo of eighth notes and a left hand with a steady accompaniment of chords and eighth notes. The score is divided into five systems, with measures 72, 74, 76, 78, and 80 marked at the beginning of each system. Dynamics include 'cres.', 'pp', and 'sempre pp'. A triple trill is visible in the right hand at the end of measure 80.

ex. 13-17b Ludwig van Beethoven, Piano Sonata no. 32 in C minor, Op. 111, II, mm. 72–80

ex. 13-17c Ludwig van Beethoven, Piano Sonata no. 32 in C minor, Op. 111, II, mm. 106–20

By analyzing a number of late works (along, in some cases, with their sketches), the pianist and Beethoven scholar William Kinderman identified the combination of high pitch and a modulation to E \flat as Beethoven's "symbol for the Deity," directly related to (or inspired by) Kant's invocation of the starry sky.²⁶ That is a private meaning and an arcane one, deducible not from listening but only by dint of scholarly inquiry. What is available to every listener, though, and overwhelming in its effect, is the virtually fathomless distance that separates the pianist's hands at this point: almost five octaves where E \flat is first invoked, and almost five and one-half octaves on the next downbeat, where the right hand's melodic arc reaches its zenith. That is yet another kind of musical infinity. It conjures up another sort of boundlessness—not of time but of space.

It is also a recollection of the first movement—or rather, a reference to what in retrospect now stands revealed as a forecast in the first movement of the second movement's oceanic vista. In mm. 48–49 of the first movement, and again in mm. 114–115 (see Ex. 13-18), the pianist's right hand is required to traverse the whole breadth of the keyboard in great arcs, approaching and then exceeding five octaves in expanse. These sublime moments introduce the second theme in the exposition and the recapitulation respectively. The latter, actually the biggest registral leap in the entire sonata, takes place immediately before the one brief foretaste in the first movement of C major—the tonality that, in the second movement, will finally supplant its agonized C-minor contortions with a transcendent, rapturous stillness.

The image displays a musical score for the second movement of Ludwig van Beethoven's Piano Sonata no. 32 in C minor, Op. 111, measures 160 through 169. The score is written for piano and consists of five systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The first system (measures 160-161) features a dynamic marking of *sf* (sforzando) followed by *pp* (pianissimo). The second system (measures 162-163) shows a melodic line in the right hand with a long slur and a bass line with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The third system (measures 164-165) continues the melodic and accompanimental patterns. The fourth system (measures 166-167) shows the right hand with a long slur and the bass line with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The fifth system (measures 168-169) concludes the passage with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line with a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

ex. 13-17d Ludwig van Beethoven, Piano Sonata no. 32 in C minor, Op. 111, II, mm. 160–69

ex. 13-18 Ludwig van Beethoven, Piano Sonata no. 32 in C minor, Op. 111, I, mm. 48–49, 114–116

With its extremes of rapidity and stillness, its ability to make rapidity seem to merge with stillness, and its uncanny quality of hovering (most spectacularly in Ex. 13-19, mm. 89–92), the second movement of op. 111 was one of many romantic attempts—and perhaps the first fully conscious and considered one—to render the infinite palpable through music. If Hoffmann was right to insist that romanticism was music’s natural birthright, it would have happened anyway without Beethoven; we will never know.

ex. 13-19 Ludwig van Beethoven, Piano Sonata no. 32 in C minor, Op. 111, II, mm. 89–92

Notes:

(23) Quoted in Forbes, ed. *Thayer's Life of Beethoven*, p. 1046.

(24) Quoted in *Beethoven: Letters, Journals and Conversations*, trans. and ed. Michael Hamburger (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1960), p. 151.

(25) Friedrich Nietzsche, *Menschliches Allzumenschliches* (1878); *Music and the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 61.

(26) See William Kinderman, "Beethoven's Symbol for the Deity in the *Missa solennis* and the Ninth Symphony," *19th-Century Music* XI (1985): 102–18.

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fig. 13-3 House of the music publishing firm of Nikolaus Simrock (Bonn), which issued the first editions of many of Beethoven's compositions.

But of course there was a Beethoven. And, owing in some large measure to that fact and to the enormous force of his

example, the nineteenth century, especially in the German-speaking lands but not only there, was preeminently the music century. It was the century in which music embodied visionary philosophy, provided its audience with a medium in which they could live vicarious emotional lives, and became the object of emulation for all the other arts. It was the century in which composers could become culture heroes and political activists, could become champions of whole nations, could even define nationhood in new and powerful ways.

And that is because it was the century in which the audience for art music increased a hundredfold. As Arnold Hauser, the great social historian of art, would emphasize, from now on the middle class, not the aristocracy, would become the chief consumer of music, and music would become the favorite art of the middle class, “the form in which it could express its emotional life more directly and with less hindrance than in any other.”²⁷ The vastly increasing size and importance of the middle-class public gave rise to a whole new class of public spokesmen and public educators for music. Thus the nineteenth century was also the century in which modern music journalism, music criticism, music scholarship, and music historiography were born. It was the century in which instrumental design and concert-hall construction rose to the challenge of the new mass audience with an unprecedented burst of technological advancement, when parlor pianos became standard middle-class furniture and had to be mass-produced to meet the demand, and when music publishing, benefiting from the industrial revolution, ballooned into a big business. The nineteenth century was the first great century of musical commerce and publicity.

It was also the century in which institutions of standardized professional instruction in music flourished, thanks to the public conservatory system that had originated in revolutionary France and had been exported as a by-product of Napoleon’s conquests. It found its most fertile soil in Germany, whence it spread to outlying regions like Russia and the United States, colonizing them in the name of the newly emancipated art of music. The nineteenth century was the great century of music education. Many of the important composers of the century—Felix Mendelssohn in Germany, Anton Rubinstein in Russia, Luigi Cherubini in France—became conservatory professors, training their pupils in an increasingly rigorous and standard academic discipline of composition. (What we now call “sonata form,” for example, was first described as such by Anton Reicha, a transplanted Bohemian composer, in a classroom textbook devised for the Paris Conservatory and published in 1824.) Yet just as many important composers—Robert Schumann in Germany, Hector Berlioz in France, the lesser known Alexander Serov and César Cui in Russia (just coming into its own as a music-consuming power)—went into public journalism rather than professional instruction. Criticism was an activity made both possible and necessary by the commercial and industrial explosion and its attendant publicity machine, but its practitioners, romantics all, adopted a distinctly “contrarian” position with respect to the institutions that sustained them, leading to a widening rift between the mass audience and the composers it idolized and supported.

Schumann’s activity expressed the contradiction best. For his journalistic purposes, undertaken in response to the growth of public appetite for art, he invented a fictional mouthpiece called the “League of David” (*Davidsbund*), a band of idealistic musicians (all based on aspects of Schumann’s own personality) that did battle on the one hand with that very public, now branded the “Philistines,” and on the other hand against the “industrialized” routines of academic training, which fostered stylistic uniformity and conservatism.

In seeming paradox, the nineteenth century, the century of burgeoning commerce, technology, industry, and mass education, was also the century in which composers cultivated introspection to the point of near incomprehensibility, defied and rejected their preceptors and predecessors, asserted the claim that they were more important than their patrons and audiences, and (in a pair of closely related, quintessentially romantic terms) purported to *emancipate* themselves and their art, and to render both their art and themselves *autonomous*. It was thus the great century of artistic individualism.

The paradox, however, was only on the surface, for individualism and self-expression was also a prime middle-class virtue or ideal. In seeming to oppose their public, musicians were actually imitating it, for emancipation—political, social, economic—was their common goal. Both the composers and their listeners idealized the “self-made man.” Thus the “autonomous” musical work, the work of an “emancipated” creator, although touted as the work of world-transcending, “disinterested” (and therefore apolitical) genius, was equally a potent political symbol.

As Hauser pointed out, as composers were emancipated from the service class (or, as one could also put it, as composers were cut adrift from the secure social structures that had formerly supported them), and their music was no longer written to specific order but created “on spec” (that is, in the expectation of a demand that had to be created), they came to despise the idea of composing as an “official” activity of any kind—which of course does not at all mean that they stopped doing such work, only that (to adopt Hauser’s Marxist vocabulary for a moment) they

became “alienated” from the utilitarian aspects of their work. Hauser diagnoses this as a “conflict of conscience and a crisis where in earlier times no antithesis of any kind had been suspected to exist.”²⁸ We have already seen how Beethoven’s forced social alienation (by reason of his deafness) contributed to his prestige. His handicap was read in retrospect as emancipation—as was Mozart’s falling out with his employer, the Archbishop of Salzburg. At the time both were experienced as catastrophes; in legend both were transformed into salvation.

These legends were the product and the vehicle of canonization—turning Mozart and Beethoven, with Haydn, into timeless preceptors of art as the standard concert repertory took shape around their works (first, as we have seen, in England, the great commercial empire, but soon thereafter in Germany). All of these nineteenth-century expansions and developments, all these claims and counterclaims, however difficult to reconcile, could find precedent and validation in Mozart and (especially) Beethoven, and therefore no longer needed reconciling.

Thus Beethoven became the authoritative—at times, even, the authoritarian—symbol of the age, the one who in the words of one self-appointed disciple, Richard Wagner, had shown “the only possible way” for music to develop further.²⁹ And in becoming that, Beethoven (as we have seen at the beginning of this chapter) also became the chief butt and target of all who resisted that way and that development. Today more than ever, in fact, artists have felt the need to resist the universalizing or (in a term much favored by resisters) the “hegemonic” claims of romanticism, of aggressive heroism, of philosophical grandiosity—in a word, of Germany.

And here we come to the untold story of musical classicism and musical emancipation. It represented the victory of German art, and so its history was written from the standpoint of the victors. The particular origins of the style and attitude represented by Beethoven were suppressed—even their origin in Beethoven. The origins were displaced to a more mythological time—that of Bach, Haydn, and Mozart, the earliest “canonized” composers—and the style was represented as an “unmarked” or transparent one that was said (in language drawn from the discourse of the Enlightenment) to represent “universal” and therefore timeless human values.

This was the discourse of “classical music,” which, when purveyed by concert-giving and educational institutions in the guise of “music appreciation,” became (for one last paradox) the vehicle for the commercial (and, even more covertly, the political) exploitation of a product that was touted precisely as something above commerce and politics. For an example, here is a description of “Classicism” by Paul Henry Lang, the author of *Music in Western Civilization* (1941), the most successful music appreciation textbook of the mid-twentieth century:

By the end of the eighteenth century we no longer speak of German music, for this music became the musical language of the world, as in the two previous supreme syntheses the musical language of the Franco-Flemish composers and later of the Neapolitans became the language of the world [in sixteenth-century church music and eighteenth-century opera, respectively]. For in the symphonies of Haydn, as in the works of Mozart and of the other masters of the era, there speaks a musicianship that is universal, timeless, and valid under all circumstances. This music is not one solution or one aspect, nor is it a personal matter; it speaks to all peoples.³⁰

By now it is easy to see that this is not a statement of fact but rather a polemic. (It is quite contradictory, in fact—if the Franco-Flemish and the Neapolitan “syntheses” did not ultimately prove to be “universal, timeless, and valid under all circumstances,” why should we expect the German one to do so?) “There are universal values,” the historian Stanley Hoffman has written, “and they happen to be mine.”³¹ That is Hoffman’s sardonic definition not of genuine universality, of course, but of ethnocentrism—a single (and therefore partial) viewpoint, asserted on behalf of a powerful nation, that seeks dominance by representing itself as universal and impartial.

The same debasement of Enlightened “universalism” has been used on behalf of many “centrisms.” In American politics, for example, it has found echo whenever defenders of the status quo have tried to discredit legislation on behalf of the civil or economic rights of minorities, of women, of labor, or of the indigent as “special interest” legislation, implying that what favored the interests of rich white men served the interests of all. Ruling out personal decision in favor of an obligatory consensus (as Lang explicitly does on behalf of German “classicism”) is another move that nowadays advertises its political character more obviously than it did before World War II, explicitly a war fought against totalitarianism.

Even Lang, after the war, muted his universal claims for Germany: his last book was a 1966 biography of Handel that zealously represented the composer as an Englishman by choice, against those who emphasized his German birth.

There was still, of course, a universalist component in the argument, but now it was advanced on behalf of “cold war” values: the free enterprise, laissez-faire politics, and individual self-definition available on the Western side of the wall that by then divided Germany. It is more obvious than ever that the concept of “classicism,” for music, initially the creation of romanticism, was perennially available for tweaking on behalf of whatever values or interests might be contending at a given time for “universal” dominance.

If historically factual proof of its origins, or of its political nature, is needed, moreover, it can be furnished. The first writer to speak of a “classical period” in music history, comprising the work of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and their lesser contemporaries, was the Leipzig music critic Johann Gottlieb Wendt, who wrote under the Mozartean pen name Amadeus Wendt, Amadeus being a translation of his second given name. He coined the term in a book with the unwieldy but revealing title *Über den gegenwärtigen Zustand der Musik besonders in Deutschland und wie er geworden: Eine beurtheilende Schilderung* (“On the present state of music, especially in Germany, and how it got that way: A critical sketch”), published in 1836, almost a decade after Beethoven’s death, and more than a quarter century after writers like E. T. A. Hoffmann began describing the three Viennese composers, but particularly Beethoven, as the founders of musical romanticism. Wendt’s title betrays the link between the discourse of classicism as a timeless or universal standard, and the discourse of nationalism: Germany as exemplary music-nation, whose values are (or should be) those of all peoples.

It is easy to see now why Beethoven has always been “the one to beat.” One can sympathize with those who have opposed his authority, and one can do so without any loss of belief in his greatness. The very fact that after two centuries Beethoven is still the standard-bearer of the universalizing claims of classical music, and still receives the brickbats of resisters, is all the evidence we need of his centrality to the musical culture that we have inherited, and that is now ours to modify as we see fit.

Notes:

(27) Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art*, trans. Stanley Godman (New York: Vintage, n.d.), Vol. III, p. 82.

(28) Hauser, *Social History of Art*, Vol. III, p. 82.

(29) Richard Wagner, *The Art-Work of the Future*, in *Richard Wagner’s Prose Works*, trans. W. Ashton Ellis, Vol. I (London, 1895), p. 123.

(30) Paul Henry Lang, “Music and History” (1952), in P. H. Lang, *Musicology and Performance*, ed. Alfred Mann and George Buelow (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 38.

(31) Stanley Hoffman, “Us and Them,” *The New Republic*, 12 July 1993, p. 32.

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