

# Durham E-Theses

---

## *Lyric as self-reflection: The role of the slow movement in Beethoven's works*

BUCKLEY, JOANNE,MARIE,KIRKBRIDE

### How to cite:

---

BUCKLEY, JOANNE,MARIE,KIRKBRIDE (2012) *Lyric as self-reflection: The role of the slow movement in Beethoven's works* , Durham theses, Durham University. Available at Durham E-Theses Online: <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/3613/>

### Use policy

---

The full-text may be used and/or reproduced, and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes provided that:

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a [link](#) is made to the metadata record in Durham E-Theses
- the full-text is not changed in any way

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Please consult the [full Durham E-Theses policy](#) for further details.

**Lyric as self-reflection:  
The role of the slow movement in Beethoven's works**

**Joanne Marie Kirkbride Buckley**

**Music Department, Durham University**

**The thesis is submitted to Durham University in fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.**

**September 2011**

# **Lyric as self-reflection: The role of the slow movement in Beethoven's works**

**Joanne Marie Kirkbride Buckley**

## **Abstract**

The slow movement has often been overlooked by writers on the Classical style, who typically gloss over its formal and expressive intricacies in favour of sonata form analyses of first movements and finales. But closer study reveals that the slow movement may be due greater prominence – that it may even be ‘richer than the entire rest of the [multi-movement] form’.<sup>1</sup> The present study seeks to redress the balance and to correct the perception that the slow movement is simply a ‘simplification’ or ‘deformation’ of sonata form types. Lyrical forms, I argue, present their own unique set of characteristics, which demand to be judged on their own terms.

Tracing the development of the slow movement through the Classical style also reveals the growing importance of the slow movement to nineteenth century composers, and suggests that Beethoven's works represent a turning point in the characterisation of the genre. Detailed comparative analyses of Beethoven's slow movements, alongside those by Haydn, Mozart and C.P.E. Bach, present a compelling picture of the slow movement as centrepiece, rather than parenthesis. As Dahlhaus suggests, this creates a reversal of priorities and causes us to re-evaluate our perception of Classical form: ‘The lyricism that is confined to an enclave in the classical sonata became the predominant structural principle, causing a crisis for the idea of thematic process.’<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Nohl, Ludwig, cited by Notley, Margaret, ‘Late Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music and the Cult of the Classical Adagio’, from *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Summer, 1999), p. 34

<sup>2</sup> Dahlhaus, Carl, *Beethoven: Approaches to his Music*, trans. M. Whittall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 203

# Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>What is a Slow Movement? A Conceptual Theory</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Historical and Contemporary Theory</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Tempo and Motion</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Form</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Tonality</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Topic</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Distance and Other-worldliness</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>The Individual</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Beethoven's Slow Movements: An Overview</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Tempo</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Tonality</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Form</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Variation Form in Beethoven's Slow Movements</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>The 'neue Manier'</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>Variation as Slow Movement</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>Variation as Form and Process</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>Lyricism on the Late Landscape</b>	<b>117</b>

<b>‘Voices from elsewhere’: Vocal Evocations in Beethoven’s Slow Movements</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>The Search for Song</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>Vocal Mimicry</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>The Soloist</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>Voice versus Narrative</b>	<b>155</b>
<b>Voice and Voicelessness</b>	<b>160</b>
<b>The ‘Songfulness’ of the Late Quartets</b>	<b>166</b>
<b>Song as Slow Movement</b>	<b>179</b>
 <b>‘A moment of becoming at a standstill’: Interruption, Improvisation and the Influence of the Fantasia in Beethoven’s Slow Movements</b>	 <b>183</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>184</b>
<b>Fluidity and Precision</b>	<b>186</b>
<b>Interruption</b>	<b>199</b>
<b>Dislocation</b>	<b>206</b>
<b>Expression and Effect</b>	<b>209</b>
 <b>Conclusion</b>	 <b>225</b>
<b>Appendix</b>	<b>231</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>233</b>

# Acknowledgements

This thesis has been a long time in the making: I first started to think about Beethoven's slow movements in 2005, when I moved to Durham to begin a Masters degree with Michael Spitzer. I completed my Masters dissertation on the topic of the second subject area in Beethoven's slow movements in 2006 and realised there was still so much more to explore and discuss. So, I began a PhD, also with Michael Spitzer, at Durham in 2006. Five years later and the project has finally come to completion, the last three years of which have been undertaken on a part-time basis alongside my work as an arts administrator. In August 2009 I moved to Edinburgh and in August 2010 Michael moved to Liverpool, so at times it has been a geographical and logistical challenge too!

Above all, I am indebted to Michael for his unswerving support and understanding throughout what has been a lengthy, and often challenging, project. He has been the ideal supervisor – inspiring me with confidence and always encouraging me to push that little bit further. I have learned from his ideas and advice, and above all we have become firm friends over the years, which I know will remain true for many years to come. I am also grateful to Max Paddison for acting as my second supervisor and, particularly in recent times, supporting me through the process of completion and submission. Many of the ideas he sowed in my mind while supervising parts of my Masters degree have flourished and found their way into this thesis, and I am grateful to him for unlocking the often thorny world of Adorno for me.

Ideas that once seemed buried in the past have a funny way of creeping back up on you and in recent times I have found myself thinking regularly of my undergraduate days at St Catharine's College, Cambridge. I was tremendously fortunate to have W. Dean Sutcliffe as my Director of Studies and analysis supervisor at that time, and he must take the credit for inspiring me to pursue analysis through to a doctoral degree. I am also grateful for the advice he offered on an early portion of my thesis, presented for the first time at a Society for Music Analysis event in 2008. Academic support is, of course, only part of what a doctoral student needs and I am tremendously grateful to the staff of the Music Department at Durham University, and particularly to Karen Nichol, for welcoming me so warmly in 2005 and for continuing to offer help and encouragement at every turn over the years.

When I arrived at Cambridge in 2001, I doubt my family had any idea that it would be the beginning of a decade in academia, but they have watched patiently as I continued my studies, listening when I vented my frustration and encouraging me in my successes. I am pleased that I can finally answer 'yes' when they ask if the thesis is yet complete. Finally, I must thank my husband, Andy, who is the very reason I moved to Durham in the first place. Having

completed his own PhD some years earlier, he knows better than many how challenging it can often be, and why it is worth seeing it through. He has lived with my thesis too, and his inquisitive questioning has been the inspiration behind many of my ideas. I hope some of his patience may have rubbed off on me after all this time.

# Introduction

'The type of form shown in the first movements of sonatas contains all the elements of Beethoven's art in its highest state of organisation. When we have grasped its principles clearly, most of the other art-forms explain themselves as simplifications of what we have already learnt.'<sup>3</sup> Donald Tovey's declaration is clear and unequivocal: first movement sonata form has a privileged status in the Classical style – the other movements are not just subsets, but 'simplifications' of this formal blueprint. That is to say, the slow movement, minuet and rondo – or any other non-sonata structures – are considered inferior to (or, at the very least, less problematic than) their sonata siblings. This sonata-oriented approach is emblematic not only of the relative neglect of the slow movement in the literature on Classical form, but also of the widespread emphasis upon the 'heroic' aspect of Beethoven's works, which centres upon first movements and finales. Whole volumes have been dedicated to the exploration of Beethoven's 'heroic' style – Burnham (1995), Broyles (1987), Rumph (2004) – but none at all to lyricism in his works or to the examination of non-sonata movements. This study seeks to address this imbalance, suggesting that the exploration of lyricism in Beethoven's works is as critical to an understanding of his music as the analysis of its revolutionary character. Moreover, I argue for a reappraisal of the slow movement as a genre, rejecting Tovey's suggestion that the slow movement is merely a 'simplification' of a sonata structure and instead positing ways in which we may define the slow movement on its own terms.

Tovey is not the only writer to undermine the slow movement's entitlement to formal autonomy. More recently, James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy (2006) have analysed slow movements as formal 'deformations' of sonata principles, again asserting sonata form as the default structural frame with which other forms are compared. Their otherwise comprehensive survey of form in the works of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, omits a consideration of the slow movement as a separate formal entity. Elsewhere, other analytical writers are more generous: Robert Hatten (1994) takes the analysis of expressive musical gestures as his starting point, and this facilitates a discussion about a large number of Beethoven's slow movements. Few writers dedicate such detailed analysis to the slow movement, and Hatten even goes so far as to begin his study with a look at the slow movement of the 'Hammerklavier' Piano Sonata in B flat major, Op. 106, underlining the importance of lyrical forms to his discussion. Critically, Hatten recognises the need to approach these forms on a different basis from sonata types, and demonstrates that 'expression' is not an extramusical concern but a fundamental part of understanding the work. Michael Spitzer (2006), too, is keen to promote a more sensitive

---

<sup>3</sup> Tovey, Donald, *Beethoven* (London: Oxford University Press, 1944), p. 118



approach to analysis of lyric forms, one that embraces song and dance genres as independent entities, outwith the sonata aesthetic. Song also forms a central part of Joseph Kerman's analysis of Beethoven's String Quartets (1967) and, as such, reminds us of the increasing prevalence of lyric types in Beethoven's late works. Though he does not explicitly focus upon the slow movement, this is a feature echoed by Carl Dahlhaus, who detects a shift in priorities over the course of Beethoven's oeuvre:

'Beethoven, so to speak, relaxed the strict consequential logic of thematic-motivic working, in order to make room for a lyrical emphasis which permeated whole movements, instead of being limited to their second subjects... The lyricism that is confined to an enclave in the classical sonata became the predominant structural principle, causing a crisis for the idea of thematic process.'<sup>4</sup>

What Dahlhaus describes is a breaking down of the perceived boundaries within Beethoven's works, with lyricism outgrowing its formerly marginalised status. He later describes 'lyricism and motivic working' as seemingly 'mutually exclusive',<sup>5</sup> but goes on to show that in the late works – and in particular in the *Cavatina* of the String Quartet in B flat major, Op. 130 – the two 'prove to be in complete agreement'.<sup>6</sup> This is emblematic of Beethoven's growing concern for integration and interconnectivity across the whole work, something identified by writers including James Webster (1991), Richard Will (2002) and Daniel Chua (1995).

The Beethoven literature is not short of compelling accounts of the layers of musical connections within Beethoven's works, particularly within the late style. Writers such as Nicholas Marston (1986, 1995) and William Drabkin (1977) have given masterful accounts of the tonal and motivic planning in the late works, drawing heavily upon the sketchbooks, and presenting voice-leading analyses that reveal the deep-seated links between movements and even across works. My goal is not to refute their claims – indeed, I draw on them in my discussion – but rather to reorientate our perception of Beethoven's works towards an understanding that highlights the slow movement as a pivot in these interconnected structures. While my methodology is largely analytical, including voice-leading analyses where relevant (Op. 97 and Op. 127), this is supported by a detailed examination of the historical context of these works, drawing upon invaluable studies by the likes of Charles Rosen (1971, 1988, 2002), Richard Taruskin (2005), and Annette Richards (2001). Margaret Notley's (1999) slim though thought-provoking survey of the 'Classical Adagio' and W. Dean Sutcliffe's (2010) recent article on Haydn's symphonic slow movements are the most focussed examinations of the slow

---

<sup>4</sup> Dahlhaus, Carl, *Beethoven: Approaches to his Music*, trans. M. Whittall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 203

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 234

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 236

movement to date, and it is hoped that this thesis will build upon their tentative steps towards a conceptual theory of the slow movement. Of course, the relevant literature for a study of this kind is by no means limited to Beethoven: Richard Kramer's (2008) recent volume about the music of C.P.E. Bach provides new insights into the parallels between the music of the two composers, while the comprehensive study of variation form in Haydn's music by Elaine Sisman (1993), though slightly dismissive towards Beethoven, proves invaluable as a contextual resource. Historical theorists also form an important backdrop to the discussion, with original writings from A.B. Marx (trans. Burnham, 1997), E.T.A. Hoffmann (trans. Clarke, 1989), H.C. Koch (ed. Baker, 1983) and C.P.E. Bach (trans. Mitchell, 1951) used alongside the more recent historical survey by Joel Lester (1992).

The scope of a study of this kind is necessarily limited. Although I have used a basic analysis of every one of Beethoven's 79 instrumental slow movements as the basis for my theories, it is impossible to present a detailed account of each, nor is it possible to contextualise every slow movement within the frame of its work. Discussions of outer (fast) movements are limited simply by the length of this study, and are used for comparison where relevant.

In Chapter 1 I consider the history of the slow movement and examine the changing perceptions of the genre across the writings of both historical and contemporary theorists. At the root of the slow movement's transformation, I identify a shift in focus at the turn of the nineteenth century towards a more introspective, 'thinking' musical style – one which prioritises the slow movement as more than a mere 'pleasant' interlude. In turn, I consider the concept of 'slowness' itself and ask both what defines a 'slow' movement and how a slow tempo affects our perceptions of expression. Since no theory of the slow movement yet exists, I ask whether such a theory is possible and begin to look towards a meaningful evaluation of slow movement characteristics. Examining aspects of form, tonality, topic and tempo, I question to what extent the slow movement may be characterised as a formal parenthesis and conclude by considering the slow movement's particular affinity with self-expression.

Having laid the foundations for a broader understanding of the slow movement and its characteristics, Chapter 2 provides an overview of Beethoven's slow movements. In particular, I am keen to demonstrate that, while the slow movement is generally considered to be a fluid entity, often free from the constraints of sonata form or from particular tonal functions, many of Beethoven's slow movements may be grouped according to certain characteristics. Here I provide an overview of Beethoven's tempo indications, comparing these with the metronome markings reproduced by Rudolf Kolisch (1993) and examining how these correspond with Beethoven's chosen time signatures – and to what expressive effect. The tonality of Beethoven's slow movements, both internally and with relation to the work itself, forms a central part of this chapter. I show how a predilection for tonic or subdominant keys for the slow movement may

lend the movement a more relaxed character tshifts to more distant – and in particular, sharpwards – keys. Revealing that the dominant is a rare choice for the slow movement, I also show how this becomes manifested on an internal level, with modulations to the dominant key often either omitted or deliberately problematised. In turn, this facilitates a discussion about form and leads to a reinterpretation of Hepokoski and Darcy’s expositional model – showing that the slow movement does not merely present a ‘simplification’ of the sonata type, but often a deliberate reversal of its priorities.

Chapter 3 presents the opportunity to look in some detail at a form often associated with the slow movement: variation. I begin by tracing Beethoven’s early forays into variation during his study with Salieri, and ask to what extent his treatment of the genre differs from that of his contemporaries. Comparisons with Mozart yield a number of interesting discoveries, including the suggestion that Beethoven begins creating connections between movements, and in particular the use of variation as a process to fulfil this quest, through his study of Mozart’s works. A detailed analysis of the ‘Archduke’ Piano Trio in B flat major, Op. 97, forms the centrepiece of this chapter, and it is through this work that we explore Beethoven’s changing approach to the slow movement, discovering how it begins to function as the expressive pinnacle of the work as a whole. This leads to an appraisal of William Drabkin’s work on the Piano Sonata in C minor, Op. 111, and an exploration of how Beethoven’s changing approach to tonality and structure within variation movements culminates in the *Arietta*.

If the presence of an individual – and even an individual voice – is implied within the *Arietta*, then this is emblematic of a widespread concern with vocal topics throughout Beethoven’s slow movements. Chapter 4 explores whether this is an inherent component of a ‘slow movement style’ and traces the genesis of the form through possible vocal precedents. Since Beethoven is largely celebrated as an instrumental composer, this presents an interesting opportunity to explore the reciprocity between his writing for voice and for instruments, and to question why he has achieved so little recognition for the former. An examination of his vocal writing, particularly within his songs, leads to a comparison with the works of Schubert and thence to a consideration of the voice in the nineteenth century. Drawing on the concept of *Empfindsamkeit*, I examine the new preoccupation with the voice as a means of introspection and self-expression, and suggest ways in which this manifested itself in instrumental works. Exactly how one determines a ‘vocal style’ within an instrumental context is a pertinent question, and is answered partly by comparing a number of Beethoven’s works with vocal associations. That a soloist may imply an individual, and thereby also a voice, initiates a discussion about the concerto and returns us to aspects of variation form considered in the previous chapter. But since a voice may speak as well as sing, here I also consider moments of recitative-like expression in Beethoven’s works. Finally, I conclude the chapter with a look at

how 'songfulness' in Beethoven's works may go hand in hand, paradoxical as it may seem, with an interest in counterpoint, and contextualise this within Beethoven's precarious position on the cusp of Romanticism.

Chapter 5 draws together these different aspects of Beethoven's slow movement composition by examining a feature which looms large over the thesis as a whole: the fantasia. Its sense of immediacy and of improvised 'oration' draws parallels with the vocal topics identified in Chapter 4, while its paratactic formal unfolding also finds links with Chapter 3's discussion of variation form. But its formal freedom and emphasis upon gesture above structure has also seen the fantasia sidelined in many analyses in the same way as the slow movement, despite the centrality of *fantasieren* to composition in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. I begin by examining the works of C.P.E. Bach and the compositional processes advocated in his *Versuch*, before drawing comparisons with Beethoven's own *Fantasy*, Op. 77. In turn, I show how elements of surprise and interruption, so characteristic of the fantasia, find their way into Beethoven's slow movements, and ask what expressive effect these moments have upon our understanding of the form. Revealing that this is not just a symptom of the late style but also a characteristic of some of Beethoven's earliest works, I also find similar traits in the music of Haydn and Mozart. The fantasia's fluidity of form and apparent spontaneity also finds a partner in the cadenza, and I explore whether this seemingly parenthetical structure may inform the way we hear the slow movement. In particular, I return to a point raised in Chapter 4 – the proximity of counterpoint to lyricism – and show how these two apparently disparate strands are brought together to magnificent effect in the Piano Sonata in E major, Op. 109, a movement which forces us to rethink our perceptions about the origins of lyricism.

# Chapter 1

## **What is a Slow Movement? A Conceptual Theory**

'He looks into himself, submerges himself in this new world that he has found within himself: this is the thoughtful, quiet adagio.'<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Marx, A.B., *Musical Form in the Age of Beethoven*, ed. and trans. Burnham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 87

## Introduction

'The Adagio in German sonata forms belongs to that which is most beautiful, not merely in music but in art altogether'<sup>8</sup>. Ludwig Nohl's statement, as Margaret Notley has shown, epitomises a widespread 'Romantic' view that the Classical Adagio is a symbol of aesthetic beauty, 'richer than the entire rest of the [multi-movement] form'.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, this beauty is understood as representing an outward display of 'soulfulness' and 'inwardness'<sup>10</sup>. Nohl's critique is characteristic of his mid-nineteenth century viewpoint and points toward an image of the Adagio as a parenthesis – a process of suspension during which the listener may marvel at the movement's aesthetic qualities, before the more complex, form-driven music resumes. It is a prevalent (though perhaps outdated) viewpoint, bound up with a concept of lyricism as an aesthetic, rather than technical, mode of writing. Even contemporary writers cannot resist referring to slow movements in these rather unspecific terms, such as Owen Jander, who describes the slow movement of Beethoven's Violin Concerto as having 'a hauntingly poetic and subjective quality which is the essence of Romanticism'.<sup>11</sup>

That is not to say that, as listeners, we should not appreciate the less tangible qualities of music, many of which are difficult to describe accurately through words. However, there is a danger that in assigning a movement a 'lyrical' quality, or by referring to its 'soulfulness' or 'beauty', we may gloss over its other properties, perhaps even neglecting its importance within the wider cycle. As Maynard Solomon writes: 'we are often impelled to perceive the classical slow movement as a transitional stage in an overarching narrative'.<sup>12</sup> Whereas Michael Spitzer suggests that it was precisely within the Classical style that the lyrical qualities with which we tend to characterise the slow movement brought the movement to new prominence. He writes: 'The Classical cycle is a dynamic one, where lyric is gradually repositioned from an auxiliary or interlude to a goal.'<sup>13</sup> In fact, the slow movement may occupy both positions – functioning as both a vital transition and an expressive goal.

This may seem paradoxical but understanding what a slow movement 'is' or 'does' may be critical to realigning our perceptions of the cycle, and redistributing the imbalance of weight that tends to rest with the more 'dynamic' outer movements. In turn, this demands a reappraisal of 'lyricism' as a concept, and a look at the origins of the slow movement itself. Is tempo its

---

<sup>8</sup> Nohl, Ludwig, cited by Notley, Margaret, 'Late Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music and the Cult of the Classical Adagio', from *19th-Century Music*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Summer, 1999), p. 34

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Jander, Owen, 'Romantic Form and Content in the Slow Movement of Beethoven's Violin Concerto', from *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 69, No. 2 (Spring 1983), p. 159

<sup>12</sup> Solomon, Maynard, *Mozart: A Life*, (London: Hutchinson, 1995), p. 206

<sup>13</sup> Spitzer, Michael, *Music as Philosophy: Adorno and Beethoven's Late Style* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), p. 170

defining feature, or are there facets of the internal form that differ from outer movements? Is 'slow movement' a misnomer: for how slow is 'slow'? Or is it purely, as Nohl suggests, a matter of aesthetic beauty? We may even question whether the slow movement is a form at all – or whether it constitutes a genre, or even a concept. What, if anything, is distinctive about the slow movement?

## **Historical and Contemporary Theory**

Sonata form has been a privileged topic of analytical discussion in contemporary musical theory, with writers dedicating substantial volumes to the intricacies of its framework and its deployment in the works of Classical composers. This appears to represent a modern fascination with structural 'norms' in music, and a desire to ascribe Classical music to two camps: rule-abiding or divergent. As analysts, we are attracted to patterns and to 'solutions', so perhaps it is unsurprising that recent writings have focussed so keenly on the sonata form aesthetic – a recognisable blueprint from which we can make comparative analyses. But this represents a distinct shift in focus from the time at which these same works were written, and perhaps even a degree of assumed superiority on the part of modern writers, whose contemporary theories appear to have taken over from the more expressively oriented writings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A.B. Marx's characteristic portrayal of the Classical Adagio – where one 'looks into himself, submerges himself in this new world' – appears alien to today's 'technical' discussions about standing on the dominant, medial caesuras and cadential closure. That is not to diminish theories of sonata form, which have played a unique role in our growing understanding of Classical form – indeed, I will draw upon these theories over the course of this discussion – but simply to suggest that there may be another side to analysis, one which embraces irregularity and fluidity as characteristic of a genre in its own right.

So how has our perception of the slow movement developed over the centuries and what can historical theory lend to contemporary theory – and vice versa? As Margaret Notley has shown, the Classical Adagio enjoyed a privileged and revered status for writers of the late nineteenth century. But while Notley's account clusters around writings from the 1880s and 1890s which look back upon the growth and development of the Classical Adagio, over a century earlier, even as the seeds of the Adagio were being sown, contemporary writers were expressing similar sentiments. Writing in the early eighteenth century about the emergence of a newly 'melodic' style (the beginnings of the 'galant'), Johann Mattheson's writings focus upon the importance of melody over harmony – the first signs of a reversal of priorities. Where previous theorists such as Fux and Rameau had set out to ground their teachings in

thoroughbass and counterpoint, Mattheson represents the first step towards melodic priority and expressive effect. He writes:

‘As a rule, we pay far too little attention to the science of melody, and mix almost everything together under the science of harmony... and thus do not know, understand, or consider that this noblest and most pre-eminent part [of music] is not only the true basis of all the others, but is also certainly and truthfully the only solid essence by which the emotions can be moved.’<sup>14</sup>

Moreover, his directions for a successful melody encompass four main principles: facility, clarity, flow and charm. He does not elaborate as to the details of a melody’s desired length, phrase structure or formal framework, but rather to its less tangible, aesthetic qualities, which ‘follow nature’, as Joel Lester notes:

‘To possess *facility*, a melody must have something with which almost everyone is familiar. It follows nature and avoids forced progressions and great artifice or else hides these features well. *Clarity* results from projecting a single passion... *Flow* arises when there are no interruptions. And *charm* arises from using more steps than large skips.’<sup>15</sup>

Above all, Matheson argues for a more intuitive approach to composition, one that is founded upon expression rather than rules: ‘Music draws its water from the spring of nature and not from the puddles of arithmetic.’<sup>16</sup>

For Thomas Christensen, such statements about ‘nature’ are indicative of the questioning of ‘reason and intellect’ that came to the forefront of eighteenth century writings:

‘On the one side, there was an entrenched neo-classical tradition articulated by French writers such as Boileau and Batteaux... in which rationalised norms of decorum, style and genre governed the composition and function of art. On the other side, there was an emerging “sensualist” aesthetic favoured by British critics that was largely inspired by Locke’s pioneering work in empirical psychology... Attention turned from the objective conventions governing the art work itself to the more subjective conditions of its reception: our sensory perceptions and emotional responses.’<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Mattheson, Johann, cited by Lester, Joel, *Compositional Theory in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 162

<sup>15</sup> Lester, *Compositional Theory in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 163

<sup>16</sup> Mattheson, Johann, *Johann Mattheson’s Der vollkommene Capellmeister: A revised translation with critical commentary*, ed. and trans. Harriss (Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1981), p. 54

<sup>17</sup> Christensen, Thomas, *Aesthetics and the art of musical composition in the German Enlightenment: Selected writings of Johann Georg Sulzer and Heinrich Christoph Koch*, ed. Baker and Christensen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 4



This 'sensory' approach to the perception of music is echoed in the writings of Johann Georg Sulzer, whose writings focus upon the listener's immediate and instinctive response to music, above intellectual analysis. Christensen writes of Sulzer:

'Like morality, art had its roots in feeling since it was immediately apprehended by the soul (as opposed to the mind or raw senses). The idea of beauty, Sulzer believed, arises from a moral resonance in the soul, rather than either a rational judgement of the mind or an epicurean stimulation of the senses... And of the arts, none was such a pure expression of natural sentiment as music, for none acted more viscerally upon the inner senses of our soul.'<sup>18</sup>

In particular, Sulzer believed in the emotional power of song, whose combination of words and music, he believed, could most effectively encapsulate a specific emotional state. Though this appears to contradict the prevailing trend of nineteenth century writings which would follow (which praised instrumental music in particular for its *non-specificity*), in fact, Sulzer's reasoning lies in the same sphere. As Matthew Riley writes: 'When he contrasts this music with the concept of "song" (*Lied, Gesang*), [Sulzer] is arguing for the superiority of simplicity and emotional directness over empty showmanship. Sulzer even admits that wordless music, if written in the right way, can be regarded as *Gesang*.'<sup>19</sup> Like Mattheson, Sulzer argues for a directness in music, arguing in the *Allgemeine Theorie* that the listener should make judgements based on his immediate feelings and his soul's response.<sup>20</sup> While neither writer makes specific reference to the slow movement as a privileged part of the musical work, both prioritise feeling and expression over elaborate formal frameworks and virtuosic display.

Indeed, this is something echoed by Heinrich Christoph Koch, whose defence of the concerto condemned the empty 'acrobatics' often required of concerto soloists, instead making a plea for a 'passionate dialogue' ('leidenschaftliche Unterhaltung') between soloist and orchestra.<sup>21</sup> Koch's somewhat more robust theories, which continued to stress the prominence of melody (pace Mattheson) but anchored this within a firm grasp of harmony and counterpoint, would prove to be among the most comprehensive of his era. As Lester writes: 'He discusses the physical source of music, presents a comprehensive approach to harmony and counterpoint with several important innovations, and discusses aesthetics, all prior to an immensely detailed study of melody, of the larger structural aspects of compositions, and of compositional genres.'<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Christensen, *Aesthetics and the art of musical composition in the German Enlightenment*, p. 12

<sup>19</sup> Riley, Matthew, 'Civilizing the Savage: Johann Georg Sulzer and the "Aesthetic Force" of Music' from *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 127 (2002), pp. 3-4

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6

<sup>21</sup> See Simon P. Keefe, 'Koch's Commentary on the Late Eighteenth-Century Concerto: Dialogue, Drama and Solo/Orchestra Relations', *Music & Letters*, Vol. 79, No. 3 (Aug., 1998), pp. 373-4

<sup>22</sup> Lester, *Compositional Theory in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 273

Nevertheless, melody remained ‘the heart of a composition’<sup>23</sup> and, interestingly, Koch suggests that, following a movement’s initial theme (*Thema*), subsequent phrases should present ‘various expressions of this sentiment’<sup>24</sup>. Koch makes specific reference to the slow movement in his *Versuch einer Anleitung zur Composition*, but his characterisation of the genre is far more objective than that of the nineteenth-century writers, such as A.B. Marx. Koch notes of the symphony: ‘For the most part, the character of magnificence and grandeur belongs to the first allegro, the character of pleasantness to the andante, and of gaiety to the last allegro.’<sup>25</sup>

While Notley suggests that, for nineteenth-century writers, the slow movement represented the most privileged movement in the work, it seems that eighteenth-century writers thought rather differently. Indeed, as W. Dean Sutcliffe notes:

‘In 1765 Joseph Riepel had commented acidly that while “a slow movement such as an Adagio is sad... today most music lovers are no longer pleased to listen to sad things, except in church.” He clearly felt out of step with what had been a widespread reaction against the weight, pathos, and solemnity characteristic of baroque slow-movement style. It can hardly have been the case that listeners would no longer tolerate sadder affects as such, or that composers were never prompted to express them, but it seems that a lighter touch was now demanded. Sensibility meant a style of utterance that was less intrusive and more allusive.’<sup>26</sup>

Note, however, that Riepel and Koch’s remarks relate to two different tempo types – Koch to the *Andante* and Riepel to the *Adagio* – two altogether different tempo markings which, as we will explore in Chapter 2, may have implied quite separate affective connotations. The distinction is made manifest in their use of language, with Koch referring to the lighter, ‘pleasant’ *Andante*, and Riepel to the more weighty, ‘sad’ *Adagio*. In neither case, however, are we to deduce that the slow movement constituted the expressive centrepiece – this shift seems to have occurred in the early nineteenth century, perhaps even with the development of Beethoven’s works.

If the status of the slow movement changed at the turn of the century, then C.P.E. Bach’s works may be at the root of this transformation. For while Riepel suggested in 1765 that the listener ought not to become too melancholic when listening to a slow movement (such occasions being reserved for the church), Matthew Head has noted a trend towards precisely this type of melancholy or reflective state in the slow movements of C.P.E. Bach’s sonatas of the 1780s. In the *Larghetto* of his Sonata H. 273 (1781), for example, Head notes: ‘The obsessive

---

<sup>23</sup> Lester, *Compositional Theory in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 285

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 288

<sup>25</sup> Koch, Heinrich Christoph, *Introductory Essay on Composition*, ed. Baker (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 197-198

<sup>26</sup> Sutcliffe, W. Dean, ‘Expressive Ambivalence in Haydn’s Symphonic Slow Movements of the 1770s’, from *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (Winter 2010), p. 89

fixation on a single repeated-note motif throughout this movement further contributes to the work's introspective and meditative character. Such fantasy elements in Bach's sonatas evoke what might be called a thinking in tones, characteristic of early nineteenth-century piano music.'<sup>27</sup> Moreover, with improvisation implying this 'thinking in tones', Head notes that this type of meditation is most readily identified with the slow movement: 'If slow movements are a locus of improvisatory writing, there are, in comparison, relatively few instances in which outer movements assume an improvisatory style throughout.'<sup>28</sup>

Turn of the century writers were aware of this shift in focus, which signified a move towards a more introspective, 'thinking' musical style – a reflection of Enlightenment philosophies that had begun to permeate the musical sphere. While this began with the idealistic writings of Immanuel Kant in the late eighteenth century, his ideas soon spilled over into both literary and musical circles, having a profound effect upon new artworks. As Lewis Lockwood writes:

'A new world of German literary experience, in poetry, fiction, and drama, had arisen in the works of Goethe, followed swiftly and dynamically by Schiller. Goethe's plays and early novels, classics of *Sturm und Drang* broke through established narrative conventions to place sensuous and personal emotional experience at the centre.'<sup>29</sup>

No longer concerned with steering clear of overly sad or contemplative emotional states, the dawn of the Enlightenment signified the awakening of the newly inward-looking artist. In 1810, E.T.A. Hoffmann expressed this new focus on a more personal musical sphere, manifested as an 'infinite yearning', while writing about Beethoven's Fifth Symphony in the *Allgemeine Muzikalische Zeitung* (AMZ):

'Beethoven's instrumental music unveils before us the realm of the mighty and the immeasurable... Beethoven's music sets in motion the machinery of awe, of fear, of terror, of pain, and awakens that infinite yearning which is the essence of romanticism.'<sup>30</sup>

In turn, this opened up a new chapter in the history of the slow movement, which stood ready to provide a designated space for reflection and melancholy – the new 'Romantic' ideals. Thus, writers such as Hoffmann and A.B. Marx began to reinforce the slow movement's prominence as

---

<sup>27</sup> Head, Matthew, *Fantasy in the Instrumental Music of C.P.E. Bach* (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University: 1995), pp. 148-149

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 150

<sup>29</sup> Lockwood, Lewis, *Beethoven: The Music and the Life* (New York: Norton, 2003), p. 36

<sup>30</sup> See E.T.A. Hoffman's *Musical Writings: Kreisleriana, The Poet and the Composer, Music Criticism*, trans. Clarke, ed. Charlton (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 237-38

representative of these ideas, promoting it as the place where the artist ‘submerges himself in this new world that he has found within himself.’<sup>31</sup> For Marx, the slow movement affords the composer a similar degree of freedom to the fantasia, which he considered the highest form of art. Only here, he writes, ‘is the entire *Formenlehre* brought to its goal, and [only here] have we become – in, with and through [the *Formenlehre*] – free.’<sup>32</sup>

Since then, writers have largely shied away from confronting a theory of the slow movement, perhaps because writers of the ‘Romantic’ age sought to establish it as a specifically ‘unquantifiable’ or ‘otherworldly’ genre, one which defied logical interpretations. Modern theory’s preoccupation with sonata form has also sidelined musical genres which are not built on the same foundations. To impose rigorous formal analysis on lyrical forms, for example, may undermine the lyrical aesthetic – which may prioritise expressive character above formal structure. Each plays a part in the whole, but its aesthetic value may supersede the form. In their recent volume on *Classical Form*, for example, James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy do not include a chapter on the slow movement, instead referring to passing examples of slow movement forms that do not fit the more ‘normative’ blueprints. Theirs is a tome with a single agenda – sonata form – and they appear unwilling to confront other formal types, or even reinterpretations. William Caplin is more generous, allowing ten pages to an overview of slow movement formal types (sonata form, ternary, abridged sonata form, and theme and variations)<sup>33</sup>, but such a basic overview hardly constitutes a ‘theory’ – which ought to deal with tonal structures, expressive function and the very implication of tempo itself. Robert Gjerdingen is more attuned to the expressive effect of gesture and to the historical importance and implication of musical signals within the wider form, so his treatise on galant music may have more to offer to a theory of the slow movement.<sup>34</sup> In particular, his work on *partimenti* helps to facilitate links between the fantasia and slow movement. Meanwhile, Margaret Notley’s comprehensive summary of the slow movement as seen from a nineteenth-century perspective demonstrates its privileged status among nineteenth-century composers, but this has not gone on to inform a thorough, modern theory. Such a theory will, I hope, be begun over the course of these pages.

But while modern *Formenlehre* may have largely avoided a theory of the slow movement, other writers such as T.W. Adorno, Berthold Hoeckner, and Robert Hatten appear to

---

<sup>31</sup> Marx, A.B., *Musical Form in the Age of Beethoven*, ed. and trans. Burnham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 87

<sup>32</sup> Marx, A.B., *Die Lehre von der musikalischen Komposition : praktisch theoretisch*, 1841, Vol. 3 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1847), p. 326

<sup>33</sup> See Caplin, William, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)

<sup>34</sup> See Gjerdingen, Robert, *Music in the Galant Style* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)

be more attuned to its idiosyncrasies. As Hatten suggests, such genres invite specific interpretation from the listener, and are distinct from other 'formal' genres:

'Expressive genres serve to place interpretive activity in the proper realm. They are cued by basic oppositional features such as mode, high/middle/low style, texture, tempo, and thematic exploitation of familiar topics... The more clearly a work encompasses an expressive genre, the more one is able to specify its expressive significance. In this sense, expressive genres are marked in opposition to purely formal genres.'<sup>35</sup>

For Adorno, a successful musical analysis is more than just an account of the work's form and purely 'musical' issues, instead embracing its aesthetic value and expressive impression. He suggests that: 'Whoever lacks an appreciation for beautiful passages... is as alien to the artwork as one who is incapable of experiencing unity.'<sup>36</sup> While Adorno identifies the 'disappearance of the *largo*'<sup>37</sup> in Beethoven's late style and a gradual fragmentation (or 'abbreviation') of the slow movement in the late works, he also suggests that Beethoven's middle-late period works become saturated with the concept of subjective reflection. Moreover, this leads to a music of extremes – a type of fantasia-like juxtaposition and apparent spontaneity previously reserved for the slow movement, but which now pervades the whole form. Adorno writes of Beethoven's late music:

'His late work still remains processual; not, however, in the sense of development [*Entwicklung*], but in the sense of an ignition [*Zündung*] between the extremes which out of spontaneity does not tolerate a secure middle [*Mitte*] or harmony.'<sup>38</sup>

This suggests that, for Adorno, the slow movement may outgrow its own formal limits, instead becoming an integral part of the wider form. This, indeed, is my projection: that the slow movement outgrows its modest roots as a Baroque interlude to become the centrepiece of the nineteenth century sonata; and that this transformation takes place at the very heart of Beethoven's works.

---

<sup>35</sup> Hatten, Robert, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation and Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 89

<sup>36</sup> Adorno, cited by Hoeckner, Berthold, *Programming the Absolute: Nineteenth-century German music and the Hermeneutics of the Moment* (Princeton, N.J.; Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 18

<sup>37</sup> Adorno, Theodor W., *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*, ed. Tiedemann (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), p. 88

<sup>38</sup> Adorno, cited by Paddison, Max, *Adorno's Aesthetics of Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 237

## Tempo and Motion

'Slowness' is a relative state, but in music we have certain terms which are readily identifiable as indicative of a slower pace: *Largo*, *Larghetto*, *Adagio*, *Lento*, *Langsam* – to name a few. Such markings may be our most basic clues as to whether the movement in question is a 'slow movement' in the most general sense. But there are plenty of examples throughout the Classical style of other tempo indications, such as *Andante*, and even *Allegretto*, used to identify an internal movement that we might otherwise expect to be a slow movement. Although the positioning within the cycle may be what we expect from a slow movement, the tempo marking may be more indicative of a dance. Tempo alone, therefore, cannot be relied upon to define the slow movement as a genre.

But 'tempo' as an external marking (*Larghetto*, *Adagio* and so forth) may be different from the movement's internal sense of motion. An *Allegretto* may describe a sprightly dance with a strong sense of forwards propulsion, as in the case of the *Allegretto scherzando* from Beethoven's Eighth Symphony, but it may also describe a solemn funeral march, characterised by a sense of stasis, as in the case of the *Allegretto* from Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. The latter is a particularly interesting case, since the external tempo is overridden by the internal hypermetre. Note that although the *Allegretto* tempo indication and 2/4 metre imply a dance, the two-bar hypermetrical groupings of the theme slow the tempo down, such that each bar takes on the role of a single beat within the larger hyperbar (see figure 1.1). In this way, Beethoven 'slows down' the implied tempo from dance to funeral march. This is further exacerbated by the rhythm of the theme – the two crotchets in the second bar creating a 'long' second beat in the hyperbar.<sup>39</sup>

Figure 1.1

Hypermetre in Beethoven's Seventh Symphony

a) Notated metre in the *Allegretto*



b) Implied hypermetre in the *Allegretto*



<sup>39</sup> Richard Cohn has documented similar hypermetrical procedures in the Scherzo of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, though here the hypermetre produces a duple/triple conflict. See Cohn, Richard, 'The Dramatization of Hypermetric Conflicts in the Scherzo of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony', from *19th-Century Music*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Spring, 1992), pp. 188-206

These tempo features are qualitative distinctions, underlining the importance of acknowledging additional factors such as form, internal tempo and topic when creating a tempo definition, but they also have consequences for our understanding of the slow movement as a recognisable genre, and for our interpretation of 'slow' as a characteristic. We may find ourselves less inclined to hear a dance as befitting of a slow movement, since a dance is typically associated with movement, celebration and rhythmic repetition – characteristics not usually aligned with lyricism. The solemnity of the funeral march, by contrast, may be more readily identifiable with slow movement qualities, and in particular with the sense of subjectivity and 'inwardness' that Nohl describes.

Although it seems that this distinction between outward displays of celebration and inner soulfulness can be directly equated with 'motion' and 'no motion', or propulsion and stasis, in fact the distinction is more subtle, and can be refined to different modes of motion. The concept of motion in music is part metaphor and part necessity, for we cannot describe music without reference to movement. Nevertheless, as Roger Scruton notes, the very idea that music 'moves' in space is false. Summarising Victor Zuckerkandl, Scruton describes musical motion thus: 'Musical motion is pure motion, a motion in which nothing moves; it is therefore the most real motion, motion as it is in itself.'<sup>40</sup> We rely on the metaphor of motion to describe what it is that music does, for without this, as Raymond Monelle has shown, 'music becomes merely an infinitely ramified continuum'.<sup>41</sup> Within this continuum, however, we are able to discern different levels of the motion metaphor – levels which help us to understand different genres as distinct from one another. For even with the recognition that nothing 'moves' in music, we would still struggle to deny that an opening *Allegro* and a central *Adagio* are founded upon different modes of musical motion.

In as much as nothing 'moves' in music, neither can music be characterised by its 'stasis'. If we are to employ the metaphor of musical motion as our best means of describing the arrangement of tones within a melody or harmonic pattern, then music by its very nature implies momentum. The absence of momentum would imply silence on the one hand, or a sustained pitch (or pitches) on the other. We cannot, therefore, describe the slow movement as lacking in motion as a way of contrasting it with the outer movements. But this in turn highlights a salient point: that the slow movement is typically characterised by what it is not, rather than what it is, and, moreover, that it is usually characterised in opposition to the outer movements. As (traditionally) the only movement that is slow in tempo within the whole cycle, perhaps this is to be expected, but it has certainly reinforced Solomon's perception that the slow

---

<sup>40</sup> Scruton, Roger, *The Aesthetics of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997) p. 49

<sup>41</sup> Monelle, Raymond, *The Sense of Music* (Princeton, N.J.; Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 11

movement is often perceived as a 'transitional stage'. In motion terms, slowness can imply rest, relaxation and the dissipation of tension – factors which may certainly be interpreted as intermediary. But slowness may also entail moments of heightened tension, focussed expression and climax – features which reassert the slow movement's prominence within the cycle.

It is important to keep in mind what it is specifically that a slow movement offers that a faster movement does not. 'Slowness' in itself can be a useful musical feature. With a slower tempo comes the possibility of enhanced understanding, since the listener has more time to appreciate, digest and interpret the music being played. This may, in turn, allow for the exploration of more complex ideas, a greater variety of musical styles and, perhaps, a richer approach to texture and harmony. A movement that is slow may be less reliant on clear definitions of large-scale form since it is the intimate moment that is most immediately heard, and with the musical moment made longer by the slower tempo, our focus may shift inwards from large-scale structure to small-scale detail. Writing in 1868, Louis Ehlert observed this very point: 'The slower a theme is performed, the weightier, the more substantial and coherent, the more unassailable and altogether better it must be.'<sup>42</sup> More recently, W. Dean Sutcliffe has highlighted a similar feature, noting that a slow tempo may allow for a deeper level of reflection. He writes:

'We have a blind spot in the way we customarily talk of expression in music (and indeed in musical performance)... Logically, all sorts of feelings and moods can be expressed in music, but it seems deeply rooted in our conception of the art that what we could call reflective warmth is the central one. And this will feature most consistently in slower passages or movements. There may of course be good physiological and mental reasons for this. When we are still or move more slowly, we can reflect more readily, whereas a quicker pulse or rate of musical events is more likely to suggest activity and a less measured way of thinking or feeling.'<sup>43</sup>

Our expectations of the slow movement may, therefore, be founded upon our experiences elsewhere in life and may not be tethered to purely musical concerns. Our innate understanding that 'fast = activity' and 'slow = rest' may be difficult to detach from our reaction to tempo in music.

---

<sup>42</sup> Ehlert, Louis, cited by Margaret Notley, 'The Cult of the Classical Adagio', p. 34

<sup>43</sup> Sutcliffe, 'Ambivalence in Haydn's Symphonic Slow Movements', pp. 86-87



## Form

If it is difficult to define the slow movement purely in terms of tempo or momentum, then defining the genre by its form is altogether more complicated. Typically, the slow movement is defined in terms of what it is not: it does not follow a normative formal pattern, nor is it defined by particular tonal markers, which suggests that it is characterised by its formal and aesthetic freedom above all. In the Classical style, outer movements may usually be classified by their formal types and, more often than not, we have certain preconceptions about which forms we expect and where. We might usually anticipate an opening Allegro in sonata form, a central binary dance movement – often in the form of a Minuet (or Scherzo) and Trio – and a fast finale in rondo, sonata or perhaps even variation form. Certainly, these are generalised principles and there are any number of deviations from this pattern, but the slow movement cannot be categorised in such general terms. The slow movement may follow any of the formal types of outer movements – or none of them. An abridged ‘slow movement’ sonata form is just as common as variation form, binary form, ternary form or all manner of formal hybrids. This lack of definition may account for why, to date, no such theory of the slow movement exists: being defined by what it is not appears to make an overarching theory somewhat redundant.

This is not to say, however, that certain salient features do not begin to emerge when the slow movement is considered in the context of a comparative study. Although lyricism and artistic freedom form a backdrop to the slow movement aesthetic, as a genre it is attracted to particular ideas and continues to be influenced by other parameters in the work itself. The position in which the slow movement appears, for example, is just one way in which the movement might be affected in formal, tonal and expressive terms. The difficulty defining slow movement form lies in adequately refining our terminology in such a way that ‘lyricism’ is no longer synonymous with ‘formlessness’. Spitzer suggests a way of interpreting slow movement form that does not rely on a viewing it as a negative image of the outer movements. He interprets the two inner movements in a traditional four-movement cycle as representative of the two pillars of sonata form: dance and song.<sup>44</sup> These two genres, he suggests, are embodied within the sonata form dialectic as the contrast between first and second sonata form groups, but this is also played out on a larger scale within the cycle:

‘By having lyric (dance and song) movements in the middle, the cycle mirrors the narrative of the first-movement sonata form, raising it to an architectonic level. The dance-song pair corresponds,

---

<sup>44</sup> Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*, pp. 167-169

roughly, to the form's inner sections, the lyrical second group and forensic development, with the finale analogous to a recapitulation.<sup>45</sup>

The two genres enshrine opposite cultural values: dance represents bodily motion and social behaviour, and as such is the embodiment of an objective and conventionalised aesthetic. Song, by contrast, is the outlet for the individual and thus projects subjectivity as the basis of form. In turn, Spitzer hears this journey towards the song-like slow movement as a journey 'inwards', adding: 'One could even say that they go back to source, to "nature", given that the song and dance are historically older than sonata form and become theorised as its conceptual models in composition manuals.'<sup>46</sup> With a more critical look at the foundations of the slow movement, we may understand that Nohl's description of the slow movement as a vehicle for 'inwardness' or 'soulfulness' is not necessarily incorrect: it simply misses a deeper level of understanding. 'Soulfulness' means little to an analytical commentator if it cannot be grounded in musical specifics, and Spitzer's allocation of dance and song types goes some way towards developing an understanding of the slow movement's roots. But song is not a form – it is a topic and a genre – so to try to posit a theory of slow movement form requires a more detailed look at the internal structuring and characteristics of song types.<sup>47</sup>

Song as a topic within the slow movement will be dealt with later in this work, but let us briefly consider the formal implications of the slow movement as 'song'. In his overview of Classical formal types, Leonard Ratner describes a 'singing style', whose characteristics are certainly befitting of many slow movements: lyricism, moderate tempo, slow note values in the melodic line, and a relatively narrow melodic range.<sup>48</sup> But it is his more specific rendering of aria form that provides a more useful basis for formal definitions. Like the slow movement, Ratner notes that the aria draws together many stylistic and structural elements, but with the emphasis placed on the sharp definition of rhetoric and affect. The two parts of the traditional aria, according to Ratner, can be understood as a process of intensification, with section one outlining 'the general expression of the sentiment' and section two expressing 'a particular aspect of the sentiment'. What Ratner describes appears to follow Spitzer's own interpretation of the wider work: the process is one of 'homing in' and journeying inwards. But Ratner's theory is rather more specific than Spitzer's, echoing Koch's suggestion that subsequent phrases of a

---

<sup>45</sup> Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*, p. 167

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> We are reminded here of Donald Tovey's suggestion that fugue is not so much a musical form as a musical texture: 'Fugue is a texture the rules of which do not suffice to determine the shape of the composition as a whole.' See: Tovey, Donald Francis, *The Forms of Music: Musical Articles from the Encyclopaedia Britannica* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 36

<sup>48</sup> Ratner, Leonard, *Classic Music: Expression, Form and Style* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1980) p. 19

theme should present ‘various expressions of this sentiment’<sup>49</sup>, and implying a unity of sentiment throughout the movement. By comparison with our traditional concept of sonata form, which is a dialectical process of contrasts, Ratner’s interpretation of aria form relies upon a single subject. And while there may be two formal sections to the aria, Ratner implies that these sections simply express different parts of the same idea. Could it be, then, that this is one of the keys to a formal understanding of the slow movement: that it is a process of intensification rather than one of resolution?

While Ratner’s theory is compelling, it is rather too blunt to account for the quirks of Classical form. The Classical style is founded upon contrast, and the slow movement is no exception; on the contrary, as Chapter 5 explores, contrast may be one of the defining features of lyricism. Ratner’s suggestion that aria form employs a unity of *Affekt*, probing the same idea from two different angles, overlooks the contrasts inherent to Classical form and may derive from a Baroque understanding of aria structure. The aria may indeed trace a process of intensification – owing to features such as increased chromaticism, modulations and rhythmic variety in the central section – but this is not reliant on pursuing a single idea. Beethoven’s Piano Sonata in G major, Op. 31, No. 1, is a good example of an instrumental appropriation of aria form, following a decorated da capo outline with a tumultuous contrasting section at the centre. Here, the process of intensification is driven by the rippling broken chordal accompaniment that is introduced in the central section, creating an implied increase of tempo. This is coupled with a series of dramatic tonal excursions and a change of mode, but the *Affekt* expressed is not consistent with the opening, nor is the musical material itself linked to the outer sections. This is an excursion ‘into another world’ – considered in more detail in Chapter 4 – one that reinforces the perception that the slow movement is the site of expressive intensification rather than relaxation. So what of the emergence from this dark central episode and the return to the opening material as part of the da capo? In such cases, the da capo rarely represents a return to the status quo: rather, the expressive effect of the intervening episode leaves its mark, such that the movement in effect becomes through-composed and the da capo intensified with the memory of what has past.

If Ratner’s theory is somewhat misleading, it also follows historical precedents. As Notley has shown, when Richard Wagner introduced his concept of ‘unendliche Melodie’ in his *Zukunftsmusik* essay of 1860, the term was quickly applied to the Classical Adagio, a movement in which listeners and critics felt that they were journeying with the composer along a single, and unending strand of melodic development. Describing the analysis of Beethoven’s String Quartet in E minor, Op. 59 No. 2 by another well-respected and prominent nineteenth century critic, Theodor Helm, Notley writes: ‘Helm’s understanding of “unending melody” in this *Adagio*

---

<sup>49</sup> Ratner, *Classic Music*, p. 288

focused most fundamentally on the musical representation of the varying intensities of a single, sustained emotional and/or spiritual experience. Here the prevailing mood did not change abruptly or frequently – mercurial states of mind tended to be more appropriate within other movement types.<sup>50</sup> Helm’s critique may miss the finer detail of the slow movement’s trajectory – particularly since ‘abrupt changes of mood’ are altogether common thanks to the flexibility of its form – but his appraisal of a ‘sustained emotional experience’ certainly chimes with the idea of journeying ever more intensely inwards. The concept of ‘unending melody’ may also have applications among other common slow movement forms, such as variation sets and cavatina (or ‘abridged sonata’) form, which typically focus more keenly on a single subject. This is not to say that such movements are devoid of contrast: as we will observe in due course, the slow movement may juxtapose radically different stylistic elements and employ facets of dislocation commonly associated with the fantasia.

In fact, such moments of heightened contrast reinforce the intensifying procedure at the heart of the slow movement. Neither is it a contradiction in terms to suggest that lyricism implies intensification rather than relaxation. Take the ‘lyrical’ second group of sonata form: while writers often describe the second group of sonata form movements as ‘more relaxed’<sup>51</sup>, referring specifically to its tendency for more fluid phrasing and harmonic flexibility, in fact the second group may represent the point of highest tension in the movement. In tonal terms, the second group generates tension by deliberately and dramatically distancing itself from the tonic, something that is reaffirmed and sustained at the onset of the development section.<sup>52</sup> In expressive terms, while the first group’s main function will have been to outline the tonic and set forth a theme (or themes) that reinforces this, the second group gives way to a greater expressive intensity (often giving the second group the label ‘lyrical’) and allows for a greater focus upon the musical material. In addition, the greater rate of harmonic change, ‘looser’ formal phrasing and unpredictability of this more flexible thematic group, strengthen its intensity. As Hepokoski and Darcy suggest, the second group represents the critical point in the development of the sonata form movement: ‘Far from being passive or pejoratively “secondary” (in the sense of “lesser”), S takes on the role of the agent in achieving the sonata’s most defining tonal

---

<sup>50</sup> Notley, Margaret, ‘The Cult of the Classical Adagio’, p. 41

<sup>51</sup> Caplin uses the term ‘loose’, as opposed to ‘tight-knit’. This has replaced a now outdated distinction between ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ theme types, though both are rooted in a distinction between rigidity and fluidity.

<sup>52</sup> This view chimes with that of Heinrich Christoph Koch, who perceives parts 1 and 2 (the exposition and development) as one continuous section, whose motion contrasts with the stability of part 3 (the recapitulation) – thereby suggesting an arch-like outline of motion and return. This is in contradiction to many contemporary theorists whose characterisation of the expositional second group as ‘relaxed’ creates a dip in the form.

moments.’<sup>53</sup> Only with the return of the tonic at the recapitulation does the tension begin to dissipate and is resolution achieved as the second group is realigned to the home key. This applies equally to monothematic sonata form movements, such as those by Haydn, in which the tonal development is strengthened as the point of tension and resolution.

While fully-fledged sonata form structures can be found in the slow movement (such as the slow movement of Beethoven’s ‘Hammerklavier’ Sonata in B flat major, Op. 106), these are greatly outweighed by more song-like formal types which, as Ratner suggests, follow a process of intensification across the movement. This may account for why theme and variations are most commonly found within the slow movement – focussing (usually) upon a single theme and repeating, elaborating and ruminating upon it as the movement grows and intensifies. And while sonata frameworks become essentially self-contained, closed entities whose resolution takes place within the movement itself, the slow movement’s more open-ended contour reinforces its position as a vital process to pass through on the route to the finale. This is made clearest in the case of ‘un-closed’ slow movements which conclude on a caesura or dominant chord, before pressing *attacca* into the next movement. Note that this is more common in works from the late Baroque and early Classical eras, particularly in the case of dance suites and concertos (to which we will return in Chapter 5), becoming gradually phased out over the course of the Classical era as the slow movement becomes increasingly important within the cycle and evolves into a movement unto itself. Its formal roots, however, remain readily identifiable.

These contrasting frameworks also have implications for our concept of motion in music, and may also help to explain how we intrinsically hear slow movements as indicative of rest. The somewhat old-fashioned description of sonata form is of two contrasting subjects, which jostle together, are juxtaposed and combined, and eventually meet within the same tonality – a view that prioritises motion and activity. Though our understanding of sonata form has now developed to prioritise tonal exploration and intensity alongside thematic contrasts, even here we are confronted essentially with an opposition between tonic and dominant polarities, and the potential for further harmonic exploration around these two poles. Once again we have competing entities and goal-directedness – something that in itself implies motion. Phrase structuring also comes into play in any consideration of sonata form, and here we may once again invoke movement-related phraseology of sentences and liquidation, expectation and denial, tension and release. Motion in first movements therefore derives not just from tempo but from the dynamic way in which the form itself and its internal components are treated. All of these factors may also be part of a slow movement analysis, but more commonly we find that these factors are eclipsed by expressive concerns, reinforced by the

---

<sup>53</sup> Hepokoski, James and Darcy, Warren, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-eighteenth-century Sonata* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 117

absence of expectation. For while in sonata form movements, the tonic-dominant polarity creates an expectation of departure and return, the formal fluidity of the slow movement does not remove the possibility of contrast and motion, but simply the anticipation of these factors – hence inducing a sense of stasis. Thus, when we find ourselves drawn to describing a slow movement as ‘static’ or restful, we may not simply be referring to the tempo of the movement or to its relative note lengths, but rather to the thematic and tonal momentum of the movement. The slow movement may represent a ‘standing still’ in the very real sense that its thematic and tonal impetuses are grounded. Both thematically and tonally (as we will examine in due course) the slow movement reverses the forwards-looking drive of sonata form movements and dwells on the moment.

So what does this view of the slow movement mean for the form of the work as a whole? With expressive intensity at the heart of the slow movement and more objective thematic development the subject of the outer movements, we are impelled to realign our perceptions of the slow movement as a transitory part of the work, and to view it instead as the expressive centrepiece of the cycle. As Solomon writes: ‘Some opening movements are crafted to serve as prologues to an exploration of feeling and subjectivity and the weight of the composition resides in the slow movement.’<sup>54</sup> More specifically, he writes of Mozart’s slow movements: ‘they are indeed “central” in the most fundamental sense’.<sup>55</sup> The sonata form arc, of which the ‘intense’ second group and development represent the peak, therefore becomes representative of the work as a whole, with the slow movement featuring as the apex – the large-scale equivalent of the ‘lyrical’ second group. In some cases (as we will observe), this is exacerbated by harmonic intensification, formal ‘breakouts’ and extreme registral and textural contrast, thereby drawing attention to the power concentrated in the slow movement and reasserting its position as the work’s expressive centrepiece – rather than a formal hiatus. Indeed, Hepokoski and Darcy’s description of the sonata form second group chimes with slow movement characteristics. They write:

‘It is by no means the case that eighteenth-century S-themes are predominantly lyrical and *cantabile*, although many of them are... What we actually find in the music is a wide variety of thematic types. Additionally, individual S-spaces are anything but consistent in character. They often contain much inner surprise, wit, change, and contrast: sudden outbursts of *forte*, quick drops back to *piano*, unforeseen changes of mode, unprepared interruptions, concluding *forte* drives towards the cadence, and the like. No single adjective or thumbnail characterisation does justice to such a wide range of volatile possibilities.’<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> Solomon, *Mozart: A Life*, p. 206

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, *Sonata Theory*, p. 131

Of course, this 'centrepiece theory' has a flaw: what happens when the slow movement does not appear as an internal movement but rather, particularly in the case of Beethoven, elsewhere in the cycle? Slow opening movements are relatively uncommon, but when they occur they typically have the effect of an extended slow introduction – merely an extension of a common Classical formal type. The extended slow introductions of Beethoven's Cello Sonatas, Op. 5, and Op. 102, No. 1, are a case in point, although their status as 'movements' or 'introductions' remains ambiguous. The pre-Beethoven precedents include Mozart's Piano Sonata No. 4 in E flat major, K. 282, which opens with a fully-fledged slow movement (marked *Adagio*) that has implications for the rest of the cycle. A central slow movement becomes inappropriate after the opening *Adagio*, so the sonata continues with two central *Menuetto* movements, before closing with a traditional *Allegro*. Haydn's Piano Sonata No. 56 in D major also opens with a slow movement, but here the variation form somewhat disguises this, since the gradual diminution implicitly suggests a quickening tempo.

Slow finales, by contrast, have very few precedents but they do occur in Beethoven's later works (the Piano Sonatas in E major, Op. 109, and C minor, Op. 111, discussed in Chapter 3) and this must have implications for our understanding of the large-scale form. Slow finales are found in the works of Haydn, but these movements are not 'slow movements' according to our traditional understanding of the term. The String Quartet in C major, Op. 54, No. 2, for example, actually contains two slow movements: a 35-bar passacaglia, marked *Adagio*, and an *Adagio* finale. The first *Adagio* may be considered the 'slow movement proper', using the simplicity of the repeated ground bass to build layers of melodic and harmonic intensity over the course of the movement before closing, unresolved, on a dominant seventh caesura that runs *attacca* into the Minuet and Trio. The *Adagio* finale, by contrast, is simply a frame to a central section *Presto*, creating the aural effect of a slow introduction and solemn coda, somewhat peripheral to the *Presto* section that we expect to hear at this point in the work. The *Adagio* section that concludes the 'Farewell' Symphony (No. 45) in F sharp minor is another notable example, but once again this is not a fully-fledged slow movement, but rather a coda-like section attached to the main finale. The effect here is somewhat more comical, but it has much the same purpose as in the String Quartet – rounding off the work on a more sedate note. These examples contrast with the slow finales found in Beethoven's late oeuvre, in which the work expands and intensifies indefinitely. Examples of both slow introductions and slow finales will be examined in due course.

## Tonality

One of the key features of the slow movement, which closely elides with issues of form, is the absolute flexibility of its tonal structuring. The slow movement may be situated in any number of keys in relation to the work's tonic, and distant key relationships are not at all uncommon here. Unlike the outer movements, the slow movement is not required to affirm a beginning or an ending: when situated at the centre of the work, it occupies the very developmental space in which we might expect harmonic exploration. While slow movements in closely-related keys are common – such as the tonic major/minor, the subdominant, the relative major/minor and occasionally the dominant – these also sit alongside more far-reaching keys. Neither is this a Beethovenian innovation: Haydn's Piano Sonata Hob. XVI:52 in E flat major features a slow movement in E major, while C.P.E. Bach's Sonata in G major H.246 includes a central *Larghetto* in C sharp minor. Both types of key relationships – close and distant – have implications for our understanding of the slow movement. Movements which are situated in more distant keys may literally take the listener on a journey to another musical world, and posit the slow movement as a distant entity, somewhat removed from the outer movements. In turn, this may enhance the sense of 'soulfulness' and the 'inward-looking' nature of the movement, operating in a different sphere from the more objective, earthbound outer Allegros. C.P.E. Bach suggests that chromatic key relationships are a powerful means of taking the listener into an altogether different harmonic realm, and he advocates the use of abrupt modulations achieved through enharmonic 'deception' in the fantasia wherever possible.<sup>57</sup> Haydn's Piano Sonata No. 62 is an excellent case in point: the relationship between the tonic of the work (E flat major) and the key of the slow movement (E major) is just a quick chromatic shift away but, as C.P.E. Bach suggests, it is one which introduces an entirely new realm of harmonic possibilities and estranges the slow movement from the work's tonic. Sure enough, the slow movement evokes C.P.E. Bach with rhapsodic, fantasia-like figuration, sudden dynamic contrasts and unusual chromatic shifts.

Adorno has noted the 'distance effect' of such unusual key relationships in his analysis of the first movement of Beethoven's 'Archduke' Trio in B flat major, Op. 97, in which the second theme is situated in the submediant major (G major). He notes: 'The second theme is very far away – too far, for my sense of form.'<sup>58</sup> By contrast, slow movements situated in more closely-related keys, such as the subdominant major/minor or tonic major/minor (the two most common choices among my survey of Beethoven's slow movements explored in Chapter 2) may invoke a greater sense of rest or suggest a lack of distance travelled between movements. While

---

<sup>57</sup> Head, *Fantasy in the Instrumental Music of C.P.E. Bach*, p. 56

<sup>58</sup> Adorno, *Beethoven*, p. 96



estranged keys may also be indicative of more wide-ranging modulations and formal exploration within the movement itself, closely-related keys are more characteristic of the pastoral slow movement.

Within the slow movement itself, since sonata form structures are relatively uncommon, so too are tonic-dominant relationships. With these usually explored in detail in the opening sonata structure and, perhaps, in the closing Allegro, the slow movement offers the space for sometimes radical tonal excursions. As Ernst Kurth writes, this tonal flexibility is a result of the equally free formal design: 'Just as Classical composers... sought the greatest elevation above the earthly in the Adagio, so do their forms soar furthest beyond the fixed outlines there'<sup>59</sup>. With the fantasia acting as a formal model in many cases, chains of modulations are relatively common in the slow movement, as are abrupt changes of key that hinge upon a single chromatic adjustment. Beethoven's first Piano Sonata in F minor, Op. 2, No. 1, does just that, pivoting around a single a<sup>1</sup> in the left hand in bar 17 to effect an otherwise unprepared modulation to D minor. A slower tempo, it seems, allows for such rapid changes of key, since the aural effect is not nearly as sudden or disruptive as it might be in a faster movement. C.P.E. Bach in particular has laid the groundwork for this type of modulation, as he himself notes: 'It is one of the beauties of improvisation to feign modulation to a new key through a formal cadence and then move off in another direction.'<sup>60</sup> His keyboard sonatas may be a model for Beethoven's own harmonic forays, such as the slow movement of the first sonata in his 1779 *Erste Sammlung*, which moves through E minor, D major, C major and G major even within the first 12 bars. Nevertheless, C.P.E. Bach is keen to warn against tonal meanderings, noting that such rapid modulations should not be used excessively, or else the 'natural relationships will become hopelessly buried'<sup>61</sup>. An exploration of Beethoven's own approach to harmonic relationships and modulation in the slow movement will be dealt with in Chapter 2.

## Topic

The invocation of musical topics may be a powerful expressive tool in composition for conveying a particular emotion, or implying a specific context for the music. A mournful hymn, fast-paced gigue and regal fanfare all have specific and readily identifiable connotations which may invite a response in the listener. Could it be said, then, that in the slow movement, unconstrained by pre-imposed structures or expectations, the flexibility of its form may allow for a more widespread use of topics? From the funeral march touched upon earlier, to the

---

<sup>59</sup> Kurth, Ernst, cited by Notley, 'The Cult of the Classical Adagio', p. 38

<sup>60</sup> Bach, Carl Phillip Emanuel, *Versuch über die wahre Art das Klavier zu spielen (Essay on the true art of playing keyboard instruments)*, trans. Mitchell (London: Cassell, 1951), p. 434

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

barcarolle in the Piano Sonata in G major, Op. 79, and the rustic *Ländler* of the third 'Razumovsky' Quartet, Op. 59, No. 3, Beethoven's slow movements are rife with imported topics. But this follows a strong precedent set by his predecessors for topical exploration within the slow movement. Mozart's slow movements often lean on their foundations in dance music, such as the Piano Sonata No. 6 in D major, K. 284, whose central slow movement is a 'Rondeau en Polonaise'. The slow movement of his Piano Concerto No. 5 in G major, meanwhile, explores the *Romanze*, a popular poetic genre of the eighteenth century that found its way into music, and is described by Jacques Rousseau as 'an air to which one sings a simple poem of the same name'<sup>62</sup>. The slow movement of Haydn's Piano Sonata No. 62 in E flat major, meanwhile, mixes topics by opening in the style of the French overture, before this characteristic dotted rhythm gradually becomes the basis of a fantasia-like central section. The key of the movement itself (E major – the enharmonic flat supertonic) alludes to this sense of dislocation, and this is reinforced by the gradually unravelling textures and unusual chromaticism of the central section. The slow movement of his Piano Sonata No. 60 in C major also features intense passages of chromaticism, but this time within the context of a recitative and aria topic, decorated with Baroque ornamentation and stylised cadential figures.

Nevertheless, 'topic' in the slow movement can be difficult to extricate from genre and from a more general manner of writing. To suggest that song is often used as a 'topic' would miss the fact that many facets of the slow movement are implicitly 'song-like' and that lyricism itself is bound up with vocality – a point to which we will return later. Likewise, the use of the fantasia as a topic is difficult to quantify, since the slow movement actually shares part of its genesis with the fantasia. After C.P.E. Bach, the fantasia as a self-contained genre all but died out and began to find a home within the slow movement – a form that offered the same degree of flexibility in terms of form, harmony and expression. The two were also united by their lack of classification, as Matthew Head writes: 'The idea of a fantasia style is untenable because fantasias come in all styles.'<sup>63</sup> Just as the slow movement may often be glossed over because of its lack of formal definition, so too has the fantasia been sidelined by many critics for its apparent lack of clarity and, in some cases, the belief that it somehow constitutes a 'lesser' form of art. As J. N. Forkel disparagingly writes: 'The fantasia, although it may by accident be successful, is of secondary value, probably without much meaning and certainly not the highest form of art.'<sup>64</sup> As C.P.E. Bach's treatises demonstrate, however, behind the 'free' facade of the fantasia often lies the basis of a strong theoretical framework, disproving writers such as G. J.

---

<sup>62</sup> Rousseau, Jacques, cited by Jander, Owen, 'Romantic Form and Content in the Slow Movement of Beethoven's Violin Concerto', p. 162

<sup>63</sup> Head, *Fantasy in the Instrumental Music of C.P.E. Bach*, p. 12

<sup>64</sup> Forkel, J. N., cited by Annette Richards, *The Free Fantasia and the Musical Picturesque*, p. 38

Vogler, who claim that the fantasia is ‘too far from the well-planned’<sup>65</sup>. The fantasia relies on the fact that it is underpinned by careful structuring for, as Christian Gottlob Neefe suggests, ‘what kind of monstrosity would a musical piece become if we piled up idea upon idea without connection?’<sup>66</sup> Adorno has also suggested that the apparent fluidity of the fantasia’s composition actually enhances the expressive value of the work, something shared with the slow movement; it represents, for Adorno, ‘a moment of becoming at a standstill’<sup>67</sup>. In turn, the fantasia may distil the very essence of the musical artwork, as Berthold Hoeckner describes: ‘If, as images, artworks are the persistence of the transient, they are concentrated in appearances as something momentary. To experience art means to become conscious of its immanent process as an instant at a standstill.’<sup>68</sup> This image of expression so intense or so pure that it is static – ‘at a standstill’ – returns us to the idea of dynamic musical motion, or its apparent absence. Like the slow movement, the fantasia may be rife with contrasts but, unlike outer movements, it is not built around a dynamic view of form – something which, as we have observed, may affect our perception of musical motion. Both produce, in Adorno’s words, ‘the illusion of frozen time’<sup>69</sup>. As such both forms operate in a wholly separate sphere to sonata form structures, and as Annette Richards reminds us: ‘Given its lack of structural stereotype the fantasia makes little sense when judged on the same terms as other genres’<sup>70</sup>.

The fantasia bears so many integral similarities to the slow movement that it is therefore difficult to suggest that it may be imported as a topic. As with song, the slow movement absorbs the fantasia as a style. Certainly, the slow movement is attracted to certain genres, but this may be because, without a pre-defined formal structure, the slow movement may inhabit other bodies. It may masquerade as an aria one minute and a fantasia the next; it may impersonate a dance or adopt the look of a Bachian fugue. The slow movement is the master of such disguise, in which topics may exchange freely with one another uninhibited.

## Distance and Other-worldliness

The free exchange of styles within the slow movement seems to position it ‘outside’ the other movements in the work. While sonata form movements typically operate in an objective space that is driven by form, tonal planning and thematic development, the expression-led nature of the slow movement often invites critics to characterise its properties in terms of

---

<sup>65</sup> Vogler, G. J., cited by Annette Richards, *The Free Fantasia and the Musical Picturesque*, p. 34

<sup>66</sup> Neefe, Christian Gottlob, who later became Beethoven’s teacher. Cited by Sisman, Elaine, *Haydn and the Classical Variation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 17

<sup>67</sup> Adorno, cited by Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*, p. 260

<sup>68</sup> Hoeckner, *Programming the Absolute*, p. 17

<sup>69</sup> Adorno, cited by Hoeckner, *Programming the Absolute*, p. 18

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 39

‘other-wordliness’. Writing in 1862, Berlioz used this very word to describe Beethoven’s slow movements, continuing by saying: ‘There are no human passions, no more earthly images, no innocent songs, no tender whispering; there no sparks of wit flash, no humour bubbles over... he stands exalted above humankind and has forgotten it! Removed from the earthly sphere, he hovers alone and peaceful in the ether.’<sup>71</sup> Daniel Chua has also described the *Cavatina* from Beethoven’s String Quartet in B flat major, Op. 130 in similar terms: ‘[The *Cavatina* has] as its core an excursion into a different world whose emotional and structural contingencies eventually impinge upon the unfolding of the form.’<sup>72</sup> Neither is this a Beethovenian phenomenon; writing about the *Andante* second movement of Schubert’s ‘Great’ C major Symphony, Robert Schumann declared: ‘There is a passage in it where the horn is calling as if from afar... as if it had come from another sphere... as if a heavenly guest were creeping through the orchestra’.<sup>73</sup>

The tendency to describe the slow movement as an exalted entity is partly a result of the large-scale structure of the whole cycle and its tonal planning: outer movements must valorise beginnings and endings, announce or reaffirm the tonic and define the outer boundaries of the piece. Slow movements are by their very nature interior beings, which typically pursue distance from the tonic. As Hepokoski and Darcy suggest: ‘The slow movement can be understood as a site of transformation: a process to pass through in order to arrive at the heightened spirits of the finale.’<sup>74</sup> This ‘transformation’ is typically one of recession and distancing, a necessary process if the ‘heightened spirits’ of the finale are to be achieved. An effective tonic return cannot be created if there has not first been a deliberate excursion away from it, and this in turn invites us to perceive the tonal distancing in terms of spatial excursion. This transitional process is echoed by Joseph Kerman who, writing about the slow movement of Beethoven’s String Quartet in F minor, Op. 95, suggests: ‘[The slow movement] does not represent a resting place or a point of reflection but a newly intense stage on the journey that was initiated by the outburst at the very beginning of the quartet.’<sup>75</sup> This reinforces the suggestion made earlier that ‘transitional’ need not imply a lower level of importance – the slow movement as a process may represent a very meaningful part of the work’s large-scale form.

Positioned in this interior space, the slow movement also has different expressive possibilities from the outer movement. While the slow movement is not ‘formless’, the flexibility of its formal blueprint permits an alternative mode of expression, one which may seem remote from sonata form types. Like the fantasia, the slow movement invites us to think more

---

<sup>71</sup> Berlioz, Hector, cited by Notley, ‘The Cult of the Classical Adagio’, pp. 35-36

<sup>72</sup> Chua, Daniel, *The ‘Galitzin’ Quartets of Beethoven* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 193

<sup>73</sup> Schumann, Robert, cited by Hoeckner, *Programming the Absolute*, p. 64

<sup>74</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, *Sonata Theory*, p. 336

<sup>75</sup> Kerman, Joseph, *The Beethoven Quartets* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 176

creatively, positioning listeners in a different listening 'space'. As Annette Richards writes: 'The fantasia demands a kind of listening that indulges a free-ranging imagination, with its promise of intense emotions, morbid reflections and, not least, libidinous updraughts – it promises the sublime but threatens chaos.'<sup>76</sup> Moreover, this new mode of listening repositions the composer as just one part of the creative process, giving the work a quasi-spontaneous immediacy. As Richards goes on to say, there are 'gaps demanding interpretation, moments in which the listener becomes the principal player'.<sup>77</sup> The world that Richards describes is far removed from the goal-driven outlines of first movements and finales, whose prescribed tonal cues and formal markers make the exploration of such wide-ranging emotions somewhat inappropriate – if not altogether impossible. The slow movement, by contrast, invites us to explore such an internal space, prioritising lyricism above form. In turn this creates something of a diametric opposition, with conventionalisation marking the outer frames of the work, and lyrical subjectivity occupying the internal space. As Spitzer suggests, this may almost be defined in terms of the artificial versus the natural: 'Lyrical idioms... were valued by Classicism as tokens of a quasi-natural immediacy, at the opposite extreme to a comic rhetoric articulated through layer upon layer of conventional coding.'<sup>78</sup> The active role played by the listener in interpreting these forms enhances this state of 'naturalness', such that the music may appear to be still in the process of composition. Adorno, too, likens music that evokes connections with nature to something more remote and 'other-wordly': 'Authentic artworks, which hold fast to the idea of reconciliation with nature by making themselves completely a second nature, have consistently felt the urge, as if in need of a breath of fresh air, to step outside of themselves.'<sup>79</sup> Adorno's suggestion – that the 'authentic' artwork is one that engages with nature – has further resonance, implying that the slow movement should be interpreted not as a subordinate entity but rather as a privileged genre.

The apparent fluidity and immediacy of such artworks, seemingly embodied by the slow movement, has also led some writers to extend the concept of other-worldliness and suggest that such movements may even represent musical depictions of the sublime. Spitzer writes: 'The natural is an index of particularity, of the nonidentical, the momentary, and the transient, a 'standstill' of the dialectic which is both allegorical and sublime.'<sup>80</sup> Spitzer echoes the words of Adorno, who hears the sublime in the paradoxical musical moment, at once both becoming and stationary: 'Natural beauty is suspended history, a moment of becoming at a standstill.'<sup>81</sup> As Max

---

<sup>76</sup> Richards, *The Free Fantasia and the Musical Picturesque*, p. 99

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138

<sup>78</sup> Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*, p. 24

<sup>79</sup> Adorno, cited by Hoeckner, *Programming the Absolute*, pp. 29-30

<sup>80</sup> Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*, p. 260

<sup>81</sup> Adorno, cited by Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*, p. 260

Paddison notes, this perception of the ‘natural’ sublime is intrinsically linked with music that pursues freedom and non-conformity:

‘In the writings on aesthetics from the mid-eighteenth century there is a striking shift from a concept of nature associated with ‘natural beauty’, characterised by formal balance, clarity and order, to one associated with the natural sublime, characterised by the experience of formlessness, obscurity and disorder’.<sup>82</sup>

Paddison’s description chimes with the assertion that eighteenth century musical values gradually became realigned to enshrine lyricism as a goal, rather than an auxiliary interlude. Distanced from the ‘formal balance, clarity and order’ of sonata form types, the slow movement might embody this new concept of the sublime. This is also a view taken up by Richards, whose description of the fantasia’s relationship with the sublime is equally fitting for the slow movement. In her extensive survey of the fantasia and its relation to the picturesque, Richards explores the eighteenth century perception of beauty, and like Paddison she demonstrates that true beauty was a thing of ambiguous borders, treading a fine line between the natural and the artificial, the unruly and the ordered. It is the rough, unhewn surface of the carefully composed fantasia, therefore, that brings it closer to the sublime than other genres. She writes: ‘The picturesque eye, and hand, pursued a textured and roughed-up beauty which verged on the disorderly realm of the sublime.’<sup>83</sup> This will be explored in further detail as part of the examination of the fantasia in Chapter 5.

The idea that the slow movement can take place ‘outside’ the realm of the rest of the sonata is not just tied up with issues of tonality and form, but also relates to the slow movement’s close association with song and vocal genres. We have already examined the slow movement’s affiliation with aria form, as detailed by Ratner, and it is certainly true that many slow movements – particularly in the mid-eighteenth century – take their cue from the ABA outline of the da capo aria. While these movements become eclipsed towards the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century by more dramatic formal hybrids, the roots of ‘normative’ slow movement form lie in vocal genres such as this.<sup>84</sup> In the context of an opera, the aria has an interesting formal function: it is principally an expressive entity, in which the character(s) ‘steps out’ of the action of the opera to express his/her feelings – be they expressions of joy, lament, confusion, frustration or anger. As such, the aria operates in an external space, often one in which the character undergoes a process of transformation or

---

<sup>82</sup> Paddison, Max, ‘Nature and the Sublime: The Politics of Order and Disorder in Twentieth-Century Music’, from *Order and Disorder: Music-Theoretical Strategies on 20th Century Music (Collected Writings of the Orpheus Institute)* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2004), p. 107

<sup>83</sup> Richards, *The Free Fantasia and the Musical Picturesque*, p.12

<sup>84</sup> See Rosen, Charles, *Sonata Forms* (New York; London: Norton, 1988), pp. 27-28

resolves to take action. But this does not mean that the aria operates in isolation from its context; as James Webster notes, in late Mozart operas, ‘aria’ becomes synonymous with ‘goal’, ‘change’, or ‘culmination’, and its content may have implications for the dramatic action that follows.<sup>85</sup> This echoes Hepokoski and Darcy’s assessment of the slow movement as a ‘site of transformation’ and reinforces the perception that lyric types may serve functional purposes in addition to their expressive properties. Indeed, Webster also notes of Mozart that ‘the slow movements bear superficially the strongest resemblance to his arias’<sup>86</sup>. Rather than parentheses, whose extraction would not alter our understanding of the whole, both the slow movement and aria may therefore be understood as hiatuses, in which external temporality is briefly suspended. Extending this premise a step further, we might therefore suggest that the first movement takes the form of a recitative: a scene-setting first movement that paves the way for the depth of expression explored within the aria-like slow movement.

## The Individual

The slow movement’s connection with aria form also has other implications, linking it to the concept of personal, individual expression. This is something that grew in significance over the course of the eighteenth century, as the lyric genre turned inwards upon itself to move from a rather communal means of expression to an altogether more subjective one. As G. Gabrielle Starr writes of the early eighteenth century: ‘Lyric in the period took on a strongly social character, constantly measuring itself by (or mocking) standard of decorum, audience and authority... Lyric in the early eighteenth century is unstable as a larger critical or creative category.’<sup>87</sup> But over the course of the century, the focus on lyric shifted and turned towards a more personal means of expression:

‘A wide range of eighteenth-century novels absorbed and adapted lyric conventions in representing private experience. Patterns from the ode, elegy, epithalamium, and courtly lyric were used to structure emotional events and individual perception.’<sup>88</sup>

This literary trope soon spilled over into other art forms, and, as Notley notes, at the turn of the century the slow movement began to assume the same preoccupation with inwardness:

---

<sup>85</sup> Webster, James, ‘The Analysis of Mozart’s Arias’, from *Mozart Studies*, ed. Cliff Eisen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 196

<sup>86</sup> Webster, James, ‘Are Mozart’s Concertos “Dramatic”? Concerto Ritornellos versus Aria Introductions in the 1780s’, from *Mozart’s Piano Concertos: Text, Context, Interpretation*, ed. Zaslaw (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), p. 112

<sup>87</sup> Starr, G. Gabrielle, *Lyric Generations: Poetry and the Novel in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), pp. 72-73

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, p. 198

'With the canonization of the Classical repertory in the nineteenth century, the slow movement and especially the Adagio seems to have acquired loftier connotations for many listeners. In 1859 Adolf Bernhard Marx ignored any earlier implications of mere sentimentality and linked the slow movement more narrowly with introspection, declaring that after the act of assertive creation manifested in a first movement the composer retreated to the second in order to ask, "Who am I?"'<sup>89</sup>

Inward-looking music translated into more personal means of expression – and vice versa – with the development of the piano at this time going hand in hand with a new focus on individual outpourings. Where the piano had previously been an integral part of social performance, for which dazzling display pieces were written to impress the guests in the *salon*, the nineteenth century saw the piano's role change to become an integral tool at the hands of the newly inward-looking artist. As Richard Taruskin writes:

'In music, where domestic consumption was further stimulated by the mass-production of pianos and other household instruments, the "inward" spirit found expression in actual settings of lyric poems or "lyrics" in an intimate style... Even more private and *innig* were the instrumental equivalents of lyric poems – short piano pieces, sometimes actually called 'Songs Without Words', that evoked moods and stimulated reverie, according to romantic thinking, with even more unfettered immediacy than words themselves could do, whether read silently or sung aloud.'<sup>90</sup>

The piano hence became almost an extension of the self, a musical prosthesis that could directly channel the most personal means of self-expression – the voice – through an instrumental medium. Beethoven was by no means the first to use the piano in this way: the line could arguably be traced back to J.S. Bach, although his son, C.P.E. Bach, was perhaps the first to focus so intently on substance over form through his exploration of the fantasia – Taruskin calls it 'bourgeois romanticism's musical debut'<sup>91</sup>. But alongside the keyboard instrument's growing prominence as a vehicle for isolated introspection, new technical developments also enhanced its capability for exaggeration. The keyboard instrument underwent a huge transformation at this time, with both its pitch and dynamic ranges extended to increase the capabilities of the instrument. With the voice channelled through this newly-enhanced medium, expression could be exaggerated – doubled at the octave and embellished with virtuosic flourishes of which the voice is not capable, while at the same time the performer could evoke the sounds of the orchestra or ensemble that accompanied the singer – all on one instrument. Outward

---

<sup>89</sup> Notley, 'The Cult of the Classical Adagio', p. 35

<sup>90</sup> Taruskin, Richard, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, Vol. 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 34

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65



presentations of inwardness could now be magnified, enhanced and dramatically rendered in such a way that it touches upon the beginnings of romanticism.

In turn, song became an important topic within instrumental works, heightening the sense that the composer was somehow 'speaking' through the performer. Nancy November has demonstrated how vocal topics are absorbed into Haydn's early String Quartets Opp. 9 and 17, most notably in the slow movements: 'Scholars recognise operatic influences in these works, and praise the lyricism and singing qualities of the slow movements. Indeed, a notable feature is the invocation of the voice in the adagios.'<sup>92</sup> James Webster has also drawn comparisons between Mozart's piano concertos and his opera arias, noting the similar tendencies for 'speaking' expressiveness, improvised embellishments and cantabile, song-like melodies.<sup>93</sup> These musical depictions of the individual subject were echoed by writers of the time who saw vocal expression as the best means of channelling inwardness. Sulzer, for example, wrote that: 'The essential energy of music is truly found in song... Melody alone possesses the irresistible power of animated tones one recognises as the utterance of a sensitive soul.'<sup>94</sup> Song implies a voice, and this in turn implies the presence of an individual whose thoughts or feelings are expressed through the music, hence the suggestion that song could offer the most direct means of channelling one's inner 'soulfulness'. Scruton also notes the immediacy with which we naturally associate the invocation of the voice:

'It is doubtful that music conveys information as language does; but it shares with language another important feature – the fact of inhabiting the human face and voice. We hear music as we hear the voice: it is the very soul of another, a 'coming forth' of the hidden individual.'<sup>95</sup>

The new invocation of song and the internalisation of musical expression that developed during the late eighteenth century found itself perfectly at home within the lyrical slow movement, which offers perhaps the only space in the wider work for such outward expressions of inwardness to be explored. Moreover, the slow movement's structural and internal freedom allows the music to explore a more natural means of expression, as Spitzer suggests: 'Musical expression results through deviation from regularity and symmetry. Deviation produces the effect of musical 'speech', endowing the notes with 'poetic' content.'<sup>96</sup> This will be explored in more detail in Chapter 4.

---

<sup>92</sup> November, Nancy, 'Instrumental Arias or Sonic Tableaux? "Voice" in Haydn's String Quartets Opp. 9 and 17', from *Music and Letters*, Vol. 89, No. 3 (August 2008), p. 346

<sup>93</sup> See Webster, James, 'Are Mozart's Concertos "Dramatic"?'

<sup>94</sup> Sulzer, Johann Georg, *Aesthetics and the Art of Musical Composition in the German Enlightenment*, p. 94

<sup>95</sup> Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music*, p. 172

<sup>96</sup> Spitzer, Michael, *Metaphor and Musical Thought* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 235

# Chapter 2

## **Beethoven's Slow Movements: An Overview**

'Beethoven is the most tragic of composers.'<sup>97</sup>

---

<sup>97</sup> Tovey, Donald, , *A Companion to Beethoven's Pianoforte Sonatas* (London: Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, 1998), p. 282

## Introduction

As the preceding chapter demonstrates, slow movement characteristics are difficult to pin down. What may be true of one movement may not apply to the next and the formal freedom that characterises the slow movement as a genre makes creating a theoretical framework somewhat complicated. Nevertheless, the slow movement is unified by particular traits, as explored in Chapter 1, and these traits can be traced through the works of many composers into and during the Classical period. With this overview of Beethoven's slow movements, I intend to explore how Beethoven shaped the development of the slow movement in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and to trace the lineage of his ideas through the works of his predecessors and contemporaries. I also hope to demonstrate that while the slow movement may not be categorised by the same formal 'rules' as traditional sonata form movements, this does not make it an impossible entity to analyse. I hope to show that Beethoven explored a range of ideas that run through his slow movements and, in many cases, develop over the course of his oeuvre.

The present study surveys 79 slow movements from Beethoven's extensive output, considering aspects of form, key, tempo, topic, phrasing and expression as the basis of a preliminary analysis. The initial aim is to explore Beethoven's approach to the genre and to examine any characteristic features that emerge as the analysis progresses. Form is at the centre of this discussion, as I consider to what extent common structural ideas play a part in the slow movement and ask whether the emergence of prevalent formal types might benefit further analyses. I also consider issues of tonality both on a local and wider scale, and consider how the methods of expression and choice of topic affect the slow movement's function as either a point of rest or climax in the larger schema.

## Tempo

Any survey of this kind must deal with the question of which movements to include – and which to leave out. With this in mind, all of the works studied as part of the statistical overview within this section conform to certain criteria:

- Each movement is part of a multi-movement work, not a standalone piece
- Each movement must have a tempo of 'Allegretto' or slower – but any tempo reference to 'scherzo' makes the movement exempt
- Slow introductions are not included – although they are discussed

- If the work contains more than one slow movement (for example, Op. 130), both are included

Even with a set of criteria such as this, there are inevitable cases which present problems. As highlighted in the previous chapter, designating a slow movement as such according to its tempo marking can be an unreliable process: there are many ‘border-line’ cases. ‘Slow movements’ that run *attacca* into the next movement may sometimes be better interpreted as slow introductions rather than fully-fledged movements, however long they may be: our attention is again drawn to the extended slow introductions of Beethoven’s Cello Sonatas, Op. 5, and Op. 102, No. 1. The two Cello Sonatas Op. 5 are particularly interesting cases, since they both begin with extended slow introductions, both marked ‘Adagio sostenuto’. At 34 bars and 41 bars in length respectively, both might be considered substantial enough to be termed ‘slow movements’. But both also bear all the hallmarks of slow introductions: in addition to their position within the work, they are fantasia-like in style, neither has a categorisable large-scale form, and both end on dominant sevenths – preparing for the onset of the *Allegro*. The String Quartet in B flat major, Op. 18, No. 6, is a similar case: at 44 bars, the introduction to the finale, ‘La Malinconia’, is of comparable length to the two Cello Sonata introductions, and it too functions as an introduction. Comprising a ‘terse, almost faceless plotting of a precarious harmonic track’<sup>98</sup>, according to Richard Kramer, this winding chromatic interlude eventually reaches a pause on the dominant, paving the way for the *Allegretto quasi Allegro*, into which the *Adagio* runs *attacca subito*. There is little doubt that Beethoven intends ‘La Malinconia’ as an introduction (the second movement, an *Adagio non troppo*, fulfils the role of the slow movement), but interestingly, the sketches show that the finale was originally conceived without it. Op. 102, No. 1 is a more complex case, and is considered later in this section.

Cases such as the Cello Sonatas, Op. 5, and the Piano Sonata in C major, Op. 53 are interesting to analyse as border-line studies, but must be omitted from any statistical overviews. In Op. 53, Beethoven makes the decision easier by giving the *Adagio* the title ‘Introduzione’. But note that this movement replaced the original slow movement – a longer movement that was later published separately as the *Andante favori*, WoO 57. Writing about its substitution, William Kinderman writes:

‘The original slow movement was an expansive, luxurious *Andante favori* in rondo form that Beethoven is supposed to have removed for reasons of overall length. That there were other, more intrinsic reasons for the change speaks for itself. The substitute movement is an extended

---

<sup>98</sup> Kramer, Richard, ‘Ambiguities in *La Malinconia*: What the sketches say’, from *Beethoven Studies 3* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 29

introduction to the finale, to which it is directly linked; at the same time it makes a much stronger effect of contrast in relation to the outer movements than did the original slow movement. At stake in Beethoven's decision to substitute the *Introduzione* were issues of balance and integration in the sonata cycle as a whole.<sup>99</sup>

Since the *Andante favori* subsequently became a work in its own right, and the present study is concerned with slow movements in multi-movement works, it, too, is omitted from this study.

While in the majority of cases the definition of the slow movement is self-evident – take, for example, a three movement concerto in which the central movement is marked 'Adagio' in contrast to the two outer 'Allegros' – at other times the answer is more unclear. There are cases of multi-movement works in which there appears to be more than one slow movement (for example, the String Quartet in B flat major, Op. 130), while in other cases the contrasting movement may take the form of a minuet (Piano Sonata in F major, Op. 10, No. 2) or scherzo (String Quartet in C minor, Op. 18, No. 4), or even two Allegrettos side by side (Piano Trio in E flat major, Op. 70, No. 2, or the Eighth Symphony, which features an *Allegretto scherzando* and *Menuetto*). In the case of the latter examples, which incorporate two central 'fast' movements, one hears the influence of the Divertimento model, particularly as favoured by Haydn in many of his four-movement Divertimento suites (such as the Divertimento in B flat major, Hob. II:46 and Divertimento in E flat major, Hob. III:71). These suites typically favour movements that are either 'fast' or 'not slow'; that is to say that the *Andante* or *Allegretto* (two tempo markings which may be considered on the cusp between slow and fast) tempo markings are most common here. Beethoven's Serenade in D major, Op. 25, is a Divertimento in all but name, and of its six movements just one might be considered 'slow' – but this itself is marked *Andante* (the finale also includes an *Adagio* introduction). The implications of such works, which do not constitute a slow movement proper, will be considered in due course.

For the purposes of this overview, therefore, certain judgements must be made, and in some cases the choice is qualitative. Following the criteria listed above, I have chosen to include every 'potential' slow movement within the study, excluding those designated as slow introductions (such as the aforementioned Cello Sonatas), and those movements which include brief slow sections which are clearly intended as introductions (such as the introductions to the First and Second Symphonies, and the *Introduzione* in Op. 53). Movements marked *Allegretto*, such as the second movement of the Seventh Symphony, are included – but those which include a reference to a scherzo, such as the second movement of the String Quartet in C minor, Op. 18, No. 4, are not (*Andante scherzoso quasi Allegretto*). The data that I will analyse over the course of this chapter is based upon analyses of 79 slow movements (Appendix 1 comprises a list of the

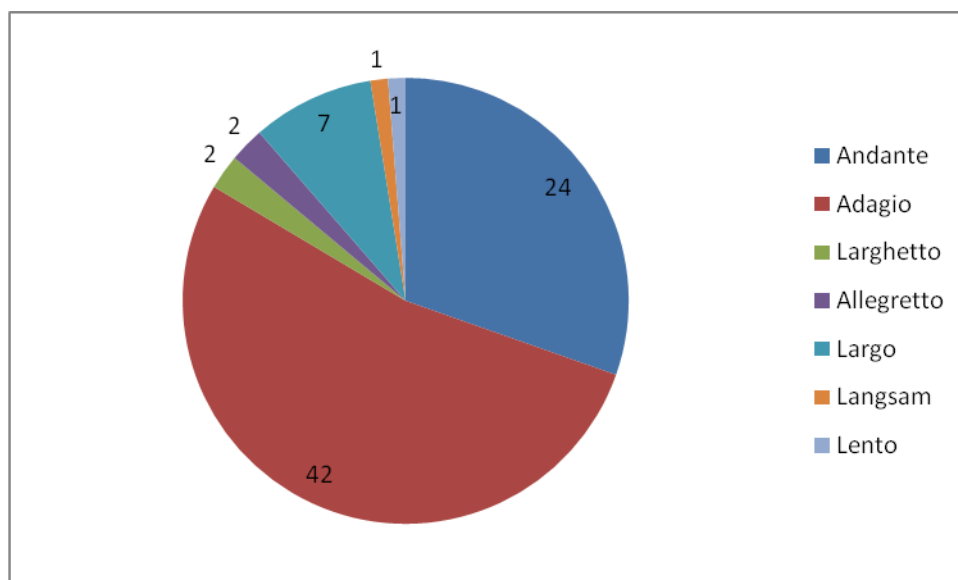
---

<sup>99</sup> Kinderman, William, *Beethoven* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 24

works studied). Figure 2.1 shows the proportion of tempo markings used by Beethoven across these 79 movements.<sup>100</sup>

Figure 2.1

Analysis of tempo markings in Beethoven's slow movements



Interestingly, Beethoven's slow movements seem to fall broadly into two groups, exemplified by the two most-used tempo markings: these being *Adagio* ('at ease' or 'leisurely') and *Andante* ('at a walking pace'), with the former outnumbering the latter by almost 2:1.<sup>101</sup> This represents a reversal of the trend in Mozart's works: of his 23 string quartets, for example, just six of the slow movements are labelled *Adagio*, while 16 are labelled *Andante*, with one *Larghetto*. Of his 18 piano sonatas, 11 are marked *Andante* and 7 are marked *Adagio*. Could it be that Beethoven's works represent the slowing-down of the slow movement?

For Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who ordered what he considered to be the five main tempos in order of their degree of movement, *Adagio* and *Andante* represent the second and third slowest tempo markings: only *Largo* ('large' or 'broad') is considered slower.<sup>102</sup> With Beethoven attributing more than half his slow movements the tempo *Adagio*, this seems to have been his 'staple' slow marking – neither too slow nor too fast. He reserved the slowest marking of all for just seven particular movements, all of which are for piano: the slow movements of the Piano

<sup>100</sup> Note that in some cases these represent simplified versions of the actual tempo markings. For example, *Andante* may also represent movements marked *Andante con moto*.

<sup>101</sup> Translations taken from Oxford Music Online.

[http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/00149?q=adagio&search=quick&pos=1&\\_start=1#firsthit](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/00149?q=adagio&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit)

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

Sonata Op. 2, No. 2, Piano Sonata Op. 7, Piano Sonata Op. 10, No. 3, Piano Concerto Op. 15, Piano Concerto Op. 37, Triple Concerto Op. 56, Piano Trio Op. 1, No. 2 and Piano Trio Op. 70, No. 1. That the piano should receive such special treatment is of particular note and draws us back to Taruskin's claim that the piano took on a new role during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as an outlet for the newly inward-looking artist. *Largo* may represent the least socially-oriented of the slow tempos, geared instead towards expansive personal expression. Indeed, of these seven movements, three make specific reference to an enhanced level of expressive articulation: *Largo appassionato* (Op. 2, No. 2), *Largo con espressione* (Op. 1, No. 2), *Largo assai ed espressivo* (Op. 70, No. 1).

*Andante*, by contrast, sits on the cusp of slow and fast tempo markings, according to Rousseau. He does not give an indication as to where *Allegretto* belongs, but since the term is understood as 'moderately fast' (but not as fast as *Allegro*) the implication is that it rests between *Andante* and *Allegro*. With *Allegro* and *Presto* occupying the two fastest spots in Rousseau's five-point scale, *Andante* – and by implication perhaps also *Allegretto* – represents the transition between slow and fast tempos and, as such, it may be that it is inaccurate to describe such movements as 'slow'. More accurately, movements marked *Andante* are of a moderate tempo – another category that is ill-defined by current terminology.<sup>103</sup> Movements which fall into this additional category include the 'slow' movement of the First Symphony, which is more fully described as *Andante cantabile con moto* and whose 3/8 metre at times gives the impression of a minuet. In fact, this is an unusual metre for a slow movement (see Figure 2.3) and its dance-like lilt adds to the impression of forwards motion denoted by the tempo marking; mixed with the march and fugal topics that emerge over the course of the movement, one is tempted to hear it not as a slow movement in the traditional sense, but more as a second internal dance movement, in the manner of Baroque dance suites. Other *Andante* movements include the *Andante con moto quasi Allegretto* from the 'Razumovsky' Quartet, Op. 59, No. 3, which Beethoven himself indicates is to be played 'quasi Allegretto'. This matches the perpetual rocking motion and harmonic restlessness that pervades the movement, something that Kerman characterises as 'restless brooding'<sup>104</sup>.

As David Fallows writes, *Andante* assumed a specific meaning during the mid-eighteenth century:

'It was a gentle relaxed tempo for Haydn and for W.A. Mozart, who wrote to his sister on 9–12 June 1784: "none of these concertos has an Adagio, but just Andantes" ("sondern lauter andante

<sup>103</sup> Caplin suggests that 'Andante is more rightly considered a moderate tempo, but movements indicated by this marking usually follow the formal plans of a "slow" movement.' See Caplin, *Classical Form*, p. 281

<sup>104</sup> Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets*, p. 145

seyn müssen"). This comment also exemplifies the common use of *andante* as a noun, describing a slow movement of only moderate solemnity.<sup>105</sup>

The qualitative difference is made clear in Beethoven's Quartet in B flat major, Op. 130, which appears to contain two slow movements: an *Andante con moto* and a 'Cavatina' marked *Adagio molto espressivo*. This is one of the few works in Beethoven's oeuvre to contain more than one 'slow' movement, and one is reminded again of the dance suite as a predecessor. The implication is that with one successive 'fast' movement after another, the listener is left hankering after a 'proper' slow movement – which the *Andante* does not fulfil. The *Cavatina* thus becomes the expressive centre of the Quartet, so much so that Beethoven lays bare his allusions to an individual voice that 'speaks' from within the movement, as Kerman notes: 'Vocality is more than evoked. It is practically transcribed.'<sup>106</sup> As the title suggests, this *Cavatina* also takes the form of a simple aria: fluid and expressive, with a declamatory *Beklemmt* section at its centre. Meanwhile the *Andante con moto* seems almost whimsical by comparison (indeed the opening is marked *Poco scherzoso*) and the sonata form outline, intricate canonic textures and staccato markings are more befitting of the 'moderate solemnity' that David Fallows ascribes to *Andantes* of this period. This work will be studied more closely in Chapter 5. We are reminded also of the Sixth Symphony, whose 'slow movement proper' is marked *Andante*, while the variation finale is marked *Allegretto*. As Chapter 3 will demonstrate, variation form is particularly common among slow movements, but in the case of the 'Pastoral' Symphony, Beethoven appears to make his intentions clear by mixing this form with rondo – a form more commonly associated with fast finales.

As the preceding discussion suggests, an *Allegretto* tempo marking may also imply a certain degree of ambiguity, being only 'moderately fast' and just a step above *Andante*. Beethoven uses the tempo marking *Allegretto* without any reference to a 'scherzo' for just two movements: the second movement of the Seventh Symphony and the second movement of the String Quartet in F minor, Op. 95. In both cases, the tempo marking appears to be used for particular effect, creating a subtle sense of agitation. In the Seventh Symphony, the second movement takes the form of a funeral march, with the *Allegretto* tempo finding a balance between a sense of unrest or agitation and a more despondent, dragging effect (note also the discrepancy between its tempo and implied hypermetre, as illustrated in Chapter 1). As a result the movement has neither the drive of a characteristic march, nor the repose of a restful slow movement. The theme's characteristic rhythm only exacerbates this tension, with the long

---

<sup>105</sup> Fallows, David, 'Andante' from Oxford Music Online:

[http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/00854?q=andante&search=quick&pos=1&\\_start=1#firsthit](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/00854?q=andante&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit)

<sup>106</sup> Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets*, p. 196



crotchet on the downbeat of each bar slowing the pace of the music, such that the march never quite seems to get going. I will return to this movement at the end of this section. The *Allegretto* from the String Quartet in F minor, Op. 95, meanwhile, matches the more agitated tempo with intense, highly-charged chromaticism with which the movement is loaded. The key of the movement itself (the sharpened submediant, D major) jars with the tonic of the quartet, creating a dramatic sharpwards shift away from F minor. As Rohan Stewart-Macdonald has shown, sharpwards shifts for the inner movements of a cycle are very uncommon in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, with composers typically opting for flatwards progressions that generate a sense of rest and relaxation – something I will return to in the next section.<sup>107</sup> Moreover, for a movement set in a major key the *Allegretto* is remarkably dense with chromaticism, generating a sense of increased tension at the centre of the quartet. This level of instability is also reflected in the form of the movement, in which the traditional ABA pattern is ruptured by a highly chromatic fugue in the central section. As Kerman notes, this movement represents a ‘crisis of expressive intensity’: ‘[The slow movement] does not represent a resting place or a point of reflection but a newly intense stage on the journey that was initiated by the outburst at the very beginning of the quartet.’<sup>108</sup> This is a view echoed by Robert Hatten, who suggests that it is only within the coda of the final movement that the accumulated tension of the work is finally dissipated, by means of the ‘utterly annihilating effect of the surprise ending for an otherwise tragic work’<sup>109</sup>. Beethoven’s choice of tempo marking for the movement – *Allegretto ma non troppo* – may deliberately reflect this intensity, separating it from more traditional, ‘restful’ slow movements.

In fact, Beethoven came to the conclusion that tempo markings were often insufficient and misleading, and this is reflected in his tendency to elaborate on the basic ‘Adagio’, ‘Andante’ terminology with additional directions – using ‘ma non troppo’, ‘e molto cantabile’, ‘con molto espressione’ and so forth. Writing to a friend and colleague Hofrat von Mossel in 1817, Beethoven explained his reluctance to rely on such terms and resolved eventually to dispense with them:

‘Honored Sir! I am heartily rejoiced to learn that you share my own opinion concerning the terms to indicate tempo, which have come down to us from the primitive barbarism of music; for, to take only one example, what can be more nonsensical than allegro which means once and for all gay – how far we often are from this conception of this tempo, so that the music itself says the

---

<sup>107</sup> See Stewart-Macdonald, R.H., “‘High-Encrusted Jewels’ and Their Puzzling Reflections: Large-Scale Sharpwards Movement and Multi-Movement Integration in Works by Haydn, Beethoven, Clementi, Hummel and Dussek’, from *New Perspectives on the Keyboard Sonatas of Muzio Clementi* (Bologna: Ut Orpheus Edizioni, 2006)

<sup>108</sup> Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets*, p. 176

<sup>109</sup> Hatten, Robert, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, p. 188

opposite of the indication... I have thought for a long time of giving up these nonsensical terms allegro, andante, adagio, presto, and Mälzel's metronome gives us the best opportunity to do so, I give you my word here and now that I will not use them in any of my new compositions.'<sup>110</sup>

In 1817, with the advent of Johann Nepomuk Mälzel's new metronome, Beethoven published a pamphlet detailing his metronome markings for most of his works. The first pamphlet, published by S. A. Steiner in Vienna and issued under the title 'Bestimmung des musikalischen Zeitmasses nach Milzel's Metronom. Erste Lieferung. Beethoven Sinfonien Nr. 1-8 und Septett von dem Autor selbst bezeichnet' ('Determination of musical tempo according to Malzel's metro-nome. First instalment. Beethoven Symphonies Nos. 1-8 and Septet, with the author's own indications') contained the metronomic indications for all the movements of Opp. 20, 21, 36, 55, 60, 67, 68, 92, and 93. The second instalment of the pamphlet issued shortly thereafter added to this the metronome markings for the string quartets composed before 1817: Op. 18, Nos. 1-6; Op. 59, Nos. 1-3; Op. 74; and Op. 95.<sup>111</sup> So specific was Beethoven with his metronome markings for each particular piece, and so consistent was he throughout his works, that we are now able to broadly categorise his tempo descriptions and assign them an accurate metronome indication. Figure 2.2 is a reproduction of Rudolf Kolisch's table of Beethoven's tempo indications.<sup>112</sup>

---

<sup>110</sup> Beethoven, Ludwig van, cited by Kolisch, Rudolf, 'Tempo and Character in Beethoven's Music', from *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 77, No. 1 (Spring, 1993), pp. 95-96

<sup>111</sup> See Kolisch, Rudolf, 'Tempo and Character in Beethoven's Music', from *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 77, No. 1 (Spring, 1993), pp. 93-94

<sup>112</sup> Reproduced from Kolisch, 'Tempo and Character in Beethoven's Music'

Figure 2.2

Outline of Beethoven's tempo indications

Meter	Tempo Unit	Adagio	Andante	Allegretto	Allegro					Presto, Prestissimo
					moderato	ma non troppo	(ordinario)	con brio	vivace/molto	
			= 60-63	= 100-120	= 120-138	= 144-176	= 152-200			= 224-288
		= 30-33	= 46-50		= 69-88	= 112-132	= 132-168			= 152-176
		= 32-40	= 50-66	= 66-76	= 84-90	= 92-96	= 120-132	= 144	= 144-160	= 160-184
					= 76-80			= 108		
		= 40-50	= 72-88	= 88-92			= 152-176			
		= 24-30	= 50-60	= 72	= 84-92	= 104-112			= 112-152	= 176-192
		= 36-44	= 60-76	= 100	= 116-144	= 152-168	= 180-216			= 240-300
					= 63-84	= 88-100	= 108-112	= 116-126	= 132	
		= 40-46	= 50							
		= 52	= 72	= 92-120	= 168					
				= 72-88						

As Kolisch's table demonstrates, tempo indications vary according to metre and the implied metrical subdivision, so it is not possible to classify, for example, all *Adagio* movements within the same metronomic band. Indeed, Kolisch details seven different 'types' of *Adagio*, which vary according to their metre and expressive character. Nevertheless, Kolisch includes within this category those movements marked *Largo* and *Lento* – apparently hearing little qualitative difference between these and *Adagio*. Note, however, that within any metre, Beethoven's *Allegretto* is in all cases at least twice as fast as *Adagio* – compelling us to question whether *Allegretto* movements can truly be considered 'slow movements'. Kolisch's table also highlights the proportion of slow versus fast tempo markings: there are five sub-categories within the *Allegro* bracket alone, and a further category for *Presto*, compared to just three slow/moderate tempi. Fast is therefore set up as the prototype, while slow is the exception. This has two interlinked implications: firstly, that as the more infrequent type, the slow movement will therefore appear more marked (and expressive) to the listener, but secondly that its infrequency has also caused it to be sidelined as an 'exception' within formal analyses. Robert Hatten touches upon this issue while discussing 'markedness' within music, following Michael Shapiro's concept for semiotic systems.<sup>113</sup> He writes:

'Wherever one finds differentiation, there are inevitably oppositions. The terms of such oppositions are weighted with respect to some feature that is distinctive for the opposition. Thus,

<sup>113</sup> See Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, p. 34

the two terms of an opposition will have an unequal value or asymmetry, or marked versus unmarked, that has consequences for the meaning of each term.’<sup>114</sup>

Hatten discusses markedness in relation to major/minor oppositions, noting that ‘minor has a narrower range of meaning than major, in that minor rather consistently conveys the tragic, whereas major is not simply the opposite (comic), but must be characterised more generally as nontragic’.<sup>115</sup> By the same token, ‘slow’ may have a narrower range of meaning than ‘fast’, implying a more limited range of ‘personal’ expression that includes melancholy, tragedy and the pastoral. Slow tempos are marked by their infrequency – the fact that they are less common than fast tempos its itself a distinguishing feature – but this is also coupled with other ‘marked’ traits which align themselves with slow tempos. The minor mode is one such trait, often aligned with slowness, as Hatten’s examples demonstrate: the very minor mode examples he uses from Beethoven’s oeuvre to illustrate his point are slow movements (the *Pathétique*, *Moonlight* and *Appassionata*). Moreover, the major mode movements that he notes have received ‘expressive’ titles – the *Pastoral* and *Les Adieux* – are also slow movements, suggesting that programmatic or topic-based markedness is also aligned with a slow tempo. In each case, the trait is marked by its opposition to the prototype: minor is less common than major, programme is used less frequently than not, fast is more common than slow.

But it could be that the slow movement’s markedness is exacerbated by other features too, with issues of tempo coupled with that of time signatures. While by far the most common choice of time signature in fast movements is 4/4 or ‘C’ time, Beethoven’s slow movements are also marked through the use of alternative time signatures. Just as Beethoven seems to have used the ‘staple’ tempo marking of *Adagio* for more than half of his slow movements, so too do his choice of time signatures cluster around two main time signatures: 2/4 and 3/4, with 3/4 by far the most common choice to match an *Adagio* tempo marking. 4/4 or C time is only the fourth most common choice of time signature. Figure 2.3 outlines the proportion of time signatures used by Beethoven throughout his slow movements.

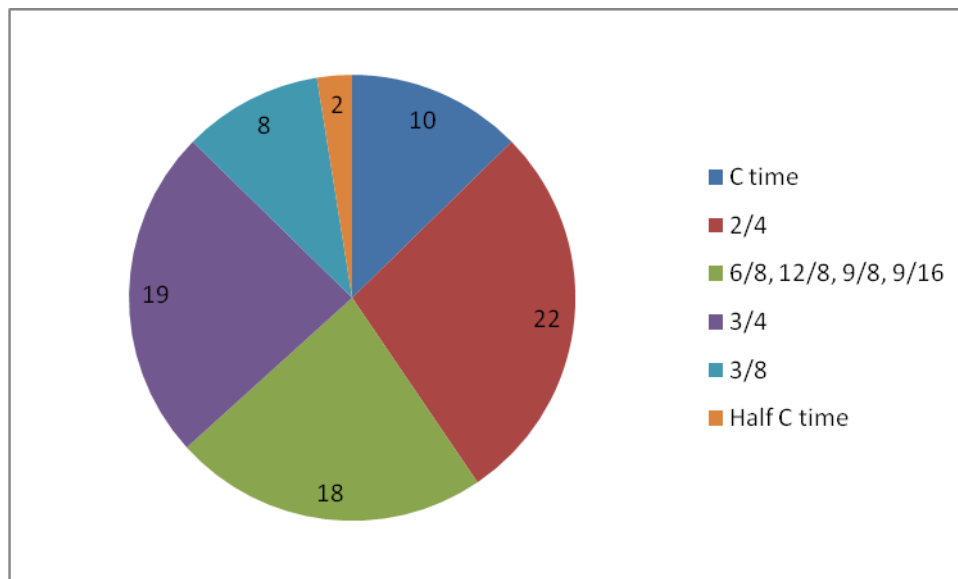
---

<sup>114</sup> Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, p. 34

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36

Figure 2.3

Analysis of time signatures in Beethoven's slow movements



As one might expect, the two movements in half Common time (both Piano Sonatas – Op. 14, No. 2 and Op. 27, No. 1) have tempo markings which match this implied sense of motion – both are marked *Andante*. Similarly, *Andante* movements account for five of the eight movements in 3/8. The prevalence of ternary metres, and indeed of compound metres, may indicate a link to the slow movement's roots in dance forms. As Taruskin reminds us: 'The free-standing orchestral symphony... was originally a genre of entertainment music, usually performed in the evenings, sometimes out of doors.'<sup>116</sup> When this entertainment music made its way into the concert hall, the relationship between dance music and 'art' music was symbiotic, such that the audience were keenly aware of the music's references. As Taruskin writes of Haydn:

'Haydn's concert audiences, both at home and abroad, thus heard actual ballroom dances in contemporary use (minuets, contradanses, waltzes) as part of the typical symphony. Concert music, however monumentalised or rarefied, still enjoyed some semblance of symbiosis with eighteenth-century daily life. The concert hall was not yet a museum.'<sup>117</sup>

The expressive implication of a slow movement in ternary metre for eighteenth-century audiences was that of a slow waltz or allemande, both of which were understood as poised, courtly dances that contrasted markedly to the whirlwind of the fast, ternary *Deutscher*. The slow waltz therefore indicated a sense of repose, pause and contemplation, while the Minuet

<sup>116</sup> Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, Vol. 2, p. 498

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 573

and Trio (which would increasingly be replaced by the Scherzo and Trio) began to absorb the more spirited ternary dances. The outer, faster movements, meanwhile, retained their associations with four-square dances such as the quadrille, galop, and polka.

Metre, Danuta Mirka reminds us, was not an arbitrary choice on the part of eighteenth-century composers, and contributed to the specific *Affekt* of the music in question. Noting examples in the works of Haydn (Op. 64, No. 2 and No. 6), Mirka demonstrates that a change of metre, when coupled with a change of key, could at a single stroke 'twist' the style of topic presented within the movement.<sup>118</sup> Interestingly, she suggests a clear distinction between the *Affekt* presented by duple and ternary metres: 'Duple metres were associated mostly with sacred music, triple metres with the world of human passions.'<sup>119</sup> She notes the 'fleeting glimpse' of duple metre in the minuet of Mozart's String Quintet K. 515 which, she suggests, 'brings a flavour of the singing style characteristic of a slow movement.'<sup>120</sup> While song and self-reflection might seem to fall into the category of 'the human passions', it seems that Mirka's broad suggestion is that song-like slow movements are characterised by a duple metre, while ternary metre evokes a dance. At the same time, however, she suggests that duple metre can also be evocative of the momentum-driven topics: 'In the minuet of K. 614... a similar sensation creates an allusion to march.'<sup>121</sup> Can duple metre equally suggest such differing topics? Interestingly, the distinction may be tied to the subdivision of the metre, as encapsulated within the slow movement of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. Here, Beethoven 'twists' its 2/4 metre from the opening march into a more lyrical, song-like 'trio' simply through the shift from simple to compound subdivision. Note that the same trick is used in the 'March funebre' of the 'Eroica' Symphony, Op. 55, a movement whose form closely matches that of the Seventh. Once more, a more lyrical, *maggiore* 'trio' generates new momentum through the shift from duple to compound subdivision.

Mirka's suggestion that duple metre may evoke 'the singing style characteristic of a slow movement', however, is questionable – at least in the context of this study of Beethoven. Here we find that most of Beethoven's song-like slow movements are in fact in triple metre: including the aria-like slow movement of the String Quartet in F major, Op. 18, No. 1 (9/8), the *Cavatina* of the String Quartet in B flat major, Op. 130 (3/4), the hymn-like *Andante* from the Piano Sonata in E major, Op. 109 (3/4), the Italian opera aria of the Piano Sonata in G major, Op. 31, No. 1 (9/8) and the Barcarolle (pace Hatten) of the Sonata in G major, Op. 79 (9/8). Meanwhile, the slow movements for which Beethoven chooses a duple metre are often marked not by their

---

<sup>118</sup> See Mirka, Danuta, *Metric Manipulations in Haydn and Mozart: Chamber Music for Strings, 1787-1791* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 250

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

‘singing style’ but by their characteristic ‘dragging’ effect – as seen in the march of the Seventh Symphony (with its ‘long’ second bar), in the ‘March funebre’ of the ‘Eroica’ Symphony, and in the *Andante espressivo* of the Sonata in E flat major, Op. 81a, where the same ‘long’ second beat in the melody seems to repeatedly threaten to stall the music (a mirror, perhaps, of the reluctant absence expressed in the title). Something similar occurs in the slow movement of the ‘Appassionata’ Sonata in F minor, Op. 57, where although the topic is technically that of singing (the hymn), it is not lyrical, but sombre and sustained, pausing every other bar as each return to the tonic coincides with the lengthened rhythm.

Mirka devotes little attention to the implication of compound metre in eighteenth century music, but it is an important topic for the slow movement – more than 20% of Beethoven’s slow movements use a compound metre (6/8, 9/18, 12/8, 9/16), while a further 10% use a 3/8 metre. Such metres may imply the *pastorale* (in the case of the Sixth Symphony) or a leisurely song by a Venetian gondolier (as in Op. 79), and regularly, as the above examples demonstrate, an aria topic. This is bolstered by the *Arietta* from the Piano Sonata in C minor, Op. 111, whose metre might otherwise be notated as 3/8 though Beethoven has deliberately chosen 9/16. While this may in part be connected with the theme’s gradual diminution and ‘collapse’ into extended trills later in the movement,<sup>122</sup> it also produces an unusual metrical effect where, as Spitzer suggests, ‘the perceived metre conflicts with the notated one, producing trickles of additive, duple patterns’<sup>123</sup>. The implication of compound metre within the slow movement, perhaps, is that the compound subdivision of the beat produces a more relaxed, lilting effect. This would appear to mirror on an internal level the prevalence and expressivity of ternary metre within the slow movement, producing a more lyrical dance-like effect that contrasts with the predominant four-squariness of first movements and finales. Moreover, it suggests a resurgence in the understanding of the expressivity of metre, which had previously been brushed aside by Koch as merely a matter of notation. As Mirka writes, Koch states ‘as a matter of course that no difference exists between metres whose time signatures have same numerators yet different denominators, such as 2/2 and 2/4 or 3/2, 3/4 and 3/8.’<sup>124</sup> In fact, he argues that those metres with a longer principal beat (2/2 and 3/2) should be used for slow movements, so that ‘tones in slow tempo can be designated with corresponding rhythmical values and thus the sign and the signified brought into closer relation.’<sup>125</sup> Yet Beethoven wrote no slow movements using time signatures where the main beat is any slower than a crotchet. In fact, his predilection for ‘shorter’ time signatures (2/4 rather than 4/4, for example) suggests that his perception of metre differed significantly from that of Koch. Could it be, for example,

---

<sup>122</sup> See Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*, pp. 156-162

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160

<sup>124</sup> Koch, cited by Mirka, *Metric Manipulations in Haydn and Mozart*, p. 228

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

that performing a 'quick' time signature at a slow tempo exacerbates its slowness, since for every 2/4 bar performed the time taken may exceed our perceptions? Indeed, this suggestion chimes with Mirka's perception of the *tempo giusto*, which indicates the possibility of including several affects within the same piece (and time signature). As Mirka writes:

'An affect requiring a slower tempo can be notated with larger rhythmical values in a fast piece and an affect requiring a swift tempo can be notated with smaller rhythmical values in a slow piece. It follows that changes of rhythmical values of *Takteile* may represent not changes of metre but changes of tempo.'<sup>126</sup>

In particular, Mirka's study reveals the differences between notated and implied tempo, something that Kolisch's comparative study also highlights. Kolisch's table is useful for drawing our attention to Beethoven's intended metronome markings, but it also highlights the functional differences between so-called 'slow' tempi. As Kolisch notes, we may, at times, be tempted to bring our own perceptions to bear on tempo indications, since terms such as *Andante* and *Adagio* may seem open to interpretation: 'It seems that German Romanticism, and the traditional performances inspired by it, believed that one could only do justice to the "profundity" of the Beethoven Adagio by means of an extremely slow tempo.'<sup>127</sup> He highlights the particular case of the *Larghetto* from Beethoven's Violin Concerto which, though titled *Larghetto* was originally conceived as an *Andante*.<sup>128</sup> Though Beethoven gave no metronome marking for this movement, he marks the only other instance of a *Larghetto* tempo (in the second movement of the Second Symphony) as quaver = 92. However, as Kolisch points out, over many years performers have instead interpreted *Larghetto* as the diminutive form of *Largo* and performed it far slower than it was ever intended – almost twice as slowly, according to Kolisch.

So what is the expressive effect of works which appear to contain no slow movement at all? And since 'slowness' is a qualitative matter, can a movement be considered slow in genre but not in tempo? The Piano Sonata in E flat major, Op. 31, No. 3 comprises a *Scherzo* and *Menuetto* as its central movements, but the *Menuetto* appears to take the role of the slow movement. It is slower than most of Beethoven's minuets, marked 'Moderato e grazioso' and, as Rosen notes, it has 'three strong beats to the bar instead of the one to the bar'<sup>129</sup> observed in his earlier minuets. Moreover, the tone of this minuet tends towards the lyrical: 'The outer part of the minuet... is one of Beethoven's most sophisticated lyric inspirations... This calls for a

---

<sup>126</sup> Mirka, *Metric Manipulations in Haydn and Mozart*, p. 229

<sup>127</sup> Rudolf Kolisch, 'Tempo and Character in Beethoven's Music', p. 102

<sup>128</sup> Ibid, p. 113

<sup>129</sup> Rosen, *Beethoven's Piano Sonatas*, p. 177



cantabile style at that point that overrides all the articulations to the end, and carries out a surge of lyrical power.’<sup>130</sup> The second movement of the Seventh Symphony may also straddle this boundary between slow and fast, since its tempo marking – *Allegretto* – seems to jar with the subject matter of the musical material. Meanwhile, as we observed in Chapter 1, its ‘real’ tempo is ‘slowed down’ by the implied hypermetre. As Kolisch shows us, *Allegretto* within Beethoven’s works is twice as fast as *Adagio* and he uses this tempo indication on just two occasions, suggesting that it implies at the very least a ‘moderate’ tempo – perhaps even one that is ‘quite fast’. But alongside the implied hypermetre, the funeral march topic at the heart of this movement seems to slow our perception of the tempo. We hear a sombre funeral procession and a despondent dragging of the feet. Although by bar 27 a new countermelody has been introduced, the same repeated two-bar rhythm begun in bar 3 remains consistently present until bar 100. This unique, rhythmic drone effect reinforces the sense that the music is not moving onwards – and even, as the whole orchestra is silenced in bar 98, that it may be slowing to a stop. This functional slowing of the printed tempo is coupled with specific slow movement tropes: formally, the movement is underpinned by a series of variations, while the topic is one of lament (with perhaps even the added implication of singing) – both traits that are associated with the slow movement. However, the movement also has at its centre a ‘maggiore’ section, which emerges brightly in A major, signifying its distinction from the preceding march with a lyrical, cantabile melody and chains of lilting triplets. Forwards motion is restored and the implication is that of a contrasting Trio section – suggesting that the movement is caught between its status as both slow movement and Minuet/Trio.

Beethoven takes this question of genre a step further in the Eighth Symphony, by designating what ‘ought’ to have been the slow movement as part-scherzo – he marks it *Allegretto scherzando*. But while the second movement of the Seventh Symphony straddled boundaries, the second movement of the Eighth bears no similarities to the slow movement other than its position within the cycle and its abridged sonata form structure. The movement is a musical joke (as the ‘scherzando’ marking suggests) which plays on the concept of time and speed – so it is fitting that Beethoven should choose to parody the question of timing by replacing the slow movement with a ‘fast’ one. According to Beethoven’s biographer, Anton Schindler, the movement incorporates the canon ‘Ta ta ta Lieber Maelzel’, WoO 162, which was composed in honour of the inventor of the metronome, Johann Maelzel. Beethoven’s ‘trick’ is a good one, for the metronome marking of the movement (quaver = 88) is slower than that of the ‘slow movement’ of the Seventh Symphony (crotchet = 76), but the rhythmic diminution of the theme and accompaniment, coupled with the impression given by the tempo marking (‘scherzando’) suggest an altogether faster movement. The difference is therefore qualitative –

---

<sup>130</sup> Rosen, *Beethoven’s Piano Sonatas*, p. 177

the second movement of the Eighth bears none of the hallmarks of the slow movement demonstrated by that of the Seventh, instead conforming more readily to those of a scherzo.

While the Eighth Symphony is one of the few examples in Beethoven's output to 'phase out' the presence of the slow movement, elsewhere the slow movement begins to outgrow its formal limits and integrate itself across the whole cycle. The Cello Sonata in C major, Op. 102, No. 1 feels the presence of the slow movement at every turn. At the very opening, we hear the slow movement in the 'wrong place' – as an extended *Andante* that straddles the boundaries between introduction and fully-fledged movement. It bears the same tempo marking (quaver = 88) as the *Allegretto scherzando* in the Eighth Symphony, and its fantasia-like unfolding, with caesuras (bars 5, 10, 24 and 28), extended trills (bars 16-20) and five-bar cadenza (bars 23-27) is characteristic of introductions, rather than of the slow movement. But while extended slow introductions such as this one typically begin in a minor key and unwind through a series of mysterious chromatic turns to allow the first movement proper to emerge 'into the light' (take, for example, Mozart's 'Dissonance' Quartet, K. 465), the opening *Andante* of Op. 102, No. 1 does not fulfil these characteristics. In fact, it reverses them: here, the introduction is in a stable major key, before plunging into a tumultuous minor key *Vivace*. Unlike the opening of the 'Dissonance' Quartet, the *Andante* is more lyrical than exploratory, stable in the tonic of C major with very little chromaticism, and with a clear thematic line that is exchanged between cello and piano. As Lockwood writes: 'Its opening material is smooth, diatonic, evenly paced, melodically pure and flowing... the opening markings, "teneramente" and "cantabile" determine the quality of style-feeling beyond any doubt.'<sup>131</sup> The slow introductions of the Op. 5 Cello Sonatas, though longer than the *Andante* of Op. 102, No. 1, conform far more readily to the introduction style, with rapidly alternating dynamic contrasts, intense chromaticism, virtuosic figuration and a more declamatory and tentative opening line in place of a readily identifiable 'theme'.

The categorisation of the *Andante* from Op. 102, No. 1 is more ambiguous, something that Lockwood suggests is characteristic of the sonata as a whole. He writes: 'the odd formal structure of No. 1 raises questions about how many movements it really has, since here are five large segments but only two full final cadences – one at the end of the A-minor first movement, the other at the end of the whole work.'<sup>132</sup> Indeed, at the onset of the *Adagio* at the 'centre' of the sonata – the 'correct' place for the slow movement – the listener is led to believe that this in fact is the work's real slow movement, and that the opening *Andante* was an introduction after all. But when this *Adagio* segues into a *Tempo d'Andante* and recalls fragments of the opening, the listener is thwarted once again – Beethoven seems to be reinforcing the opening *Andante* as a

---

<sup>131</sup> Lockwood, Lewis, 'Beethoven's Emergence from Crisis: The Cello Sonatas of Op. 102 (1815)', from *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 16, No. 3, p. 307

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 306

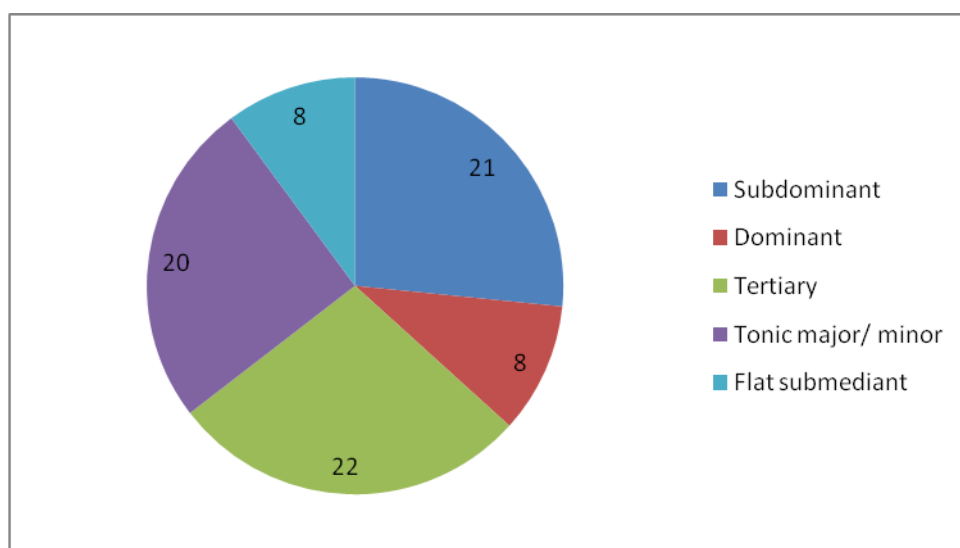
prequel to the slow movement. Like the ‘slow’ movement of the Seventh Symphony, therefore, which serves a dual function as both slow movement and minuet/trio, the slow movement of Op. 102, No. 1 serves as both introduction and slow movement – spreading itself across the whole cycle. This is reinforced by the final *Allegro vivace*, which returns us to the tonic of C major – the key of the slow movement. So while Kolisch’s tempo indications suggest that Beethoven’s tempo prototype is ‘fast’ and that the slow movement is typically marked as an exception, in this sonata the ‘rogue’ element is the fast movement, which is all but overtaken by the pervasive slow genre. We are reminded of Adorno’s suggestion, highlighted in Chapter 1, that the late works become saturated with the concept of subjective reflection and my projection that this, in turn, sees the slow movement integrate across the whole form. I return to this idea later in the chapter, with reference to the issue of the fantasy model.

## Tonality

Just as Beethoven’s slow movements fall broadly into two main tempo categories – *Adagio* and *Andante* – so too can we define the tonality of these slow movements according to two basic categories: stasis and motion. However, these categories are not equally split, as the ensuing analysis demonstrates. Figure 2.4 outlines the tonic keys of Beethoven’s 79 slow movements, in relation to the key of the work itself. Mediant and sub-mediant keys are grouped together under ‘Tertiary’ relationships.

Figure 2.4

Analysis of tonic keys in Beethoven’s slow movements



The two most prevalent key choices, which make up just over half of the total, are the subdominant (major or minor) and tonic major or minor – keys which typically reflect a degree of rest and relaxation. A move to the subdominant between the first movement and slow movement represents a flatwards shift and may thereby position the slow movement in a more restful, contemplative space. The same is true of a change of mode from the tonic major to minor, while slow movements that remain in the same key as the work's tonic may exemplify a sense of stasis for having 'moved' nowhere at all. There are just two slow movements in Beethoven's oeuvre that exert a shift from the tonic minor to the tonic major: the Fifth Symphony, and the Piano Sonata in F minor, Op. 2, No. 1.

While introductory slow movements may 'skew' some of the tonic major/minor data due to their inherently different form and function (movements that appear at the very opening of a work, unsurprisingly, tend to be situated in the tonic), opening slow movements account for only 6 of the 23 movements in the tonic. Although this tonic may be obscured or abandoned very quickly (as in the case of the Cello Sonata in F major, Op. 5, No. 2, for example), in order to create a sense of resolution when the tonic re-enters at the start of the following movement, such examples nevertheless augment the number of movements in the tonic category. The Cello Sonata in C major, Op. 102, No. 1 is a difficult case, since the 'introductory' *Andante* appears to be in C major, while the *Allegro* that it precedes (ostensibly the first movement 'proper') is in A minor – another twist in Beethoven's reversal of expectations in this unusual sonata. Interestingly, there is similar tonal ambiguity in Beethoven's 'Kreutzer' Violin Sonata, Op. 47, which follows the same slow-fast-slow-fast formal outline. Here, a gentle slow introduction begins in A major but after only four bars quickly gives way to A minor. This paves the way for an angry Presto in A minor, whose own tonal contour mimics that of the introduction by moving through E major before reaching E minor. Only the finale restores A major as the rightful tonic.

Of the 15 slow movements set in the submediant, 11 of these also represent flatwards shifts to the relative minor. The four exceptions, which seek brighter keys than the tonic, are as follows: Piano Sonata in E flat major, Op. 7 (slow movement in C major), Piano Sonata, Op. 31, No. 2 in D minor (slow movement in B flat major), Piano Trio in G major, Op. 1, No. 2 (slow movement in E major) and the String Trio in G major, Op. 9, No. 1 (slow movement in E major). Altogether, just 22 of the 79 slow movements analysed (27%) are situated in keys brighter than the work's tonic, making flatwards progressions far more common for an internal slow movement. Notably, the movements in the dominant account for just eight of these 22 moves to brighter keys, which may seem a surprising statistic given the prevalence of tonic-dominant relationships within the Classical style. Instead, it seems the dominant is typically reserved for the more buoyant inner dance movements, being too 'bright' and forwards-looking for the more

‘soulful’ slow movement. This is an observation echoed by Rohan Stewart-Macdonald, as noted earlier, who extends this tonal characteristic to the rest of the Classical style.<sup>133</sup>

Interestingly, this dominant evasion also seems to be echoed on an internal level, with Beethoven frequently avoiding, delaying or complicating modulations to the dominant within the slow movement. As a tonal cue, the dominant proves to be variously avoided, understated or altogether absent, creating wider implications for the large-scale form of the movement and for the movement’s place in the work as a whole. Further research proves that this Beethovenian tendency is not without precedent, suggesting that the role of the dominant in the slow movement may differ significantly from that of first movements and finales. This is certainly due in part to the different formal functions of the slow movement, which tend not to follow normative sonata patterns. Hepokoski and Darcy define the exposition of a sonata form movement as a teleological process that has one central mission: ‘Laying out the strategy for the eventual attainment of the ESC: a structure of promise.’<sup>134</sup> This goal-oriented process falls into three central phases: a Primary theme zone (P) which ‘launches’ the movement and proposes the main idea; the Transition (TR), which continues the forwards drive by increasing the sense of momentum and ‘accepting’ the theme set forth in P; and finally a Secondary theme zone (S) (which may or may not be followed by a Postcadential Appendix – C), which ‘relaunches’ the thematic drive of the movement in a newly-attained key, finally leading to the Essential Expositional Closure (EEC) – the goal of the exposition. The EEC fulfils the promises set out in the exposition: ‘This is the most important generic and tonal goal of the exposition, the moment when S attains a satisfactory perfect authentic cadence (PAC) in the new key and gives way to differing material.’<sup>135</sup>

Unlike outer movements, however, the slow movement will not necessarily follow this goal-oriented pattern. In fact, full-scale sonata form movements, containing clearly defined P and S spaces, are remarkably uncommon among Beethoven’s oeuvre. More typically, the slow movement is based around an abridged sonata model – although this in itself is open to interpretation, and may indicate the absence of either a development (also known as ‘cavatina’ form), a full-scale recapitulation, or rather an incomplete exposition in the context of the above-defined P-TR-S pattern. Further formal possibilities include sonata rondos, a ternary ABA structure, theme and variations, or any number of hybrids involving these options. Hence, with traditional, ‘textbook’ sonata form movements noticeably absent, Hepokoski and Darcy’s teleological expositional structure comes under threat in the slow movement. Indeed, one of the most common hybrid structures in Beethoven’s slow movements features an altogether blurred

---

<sup>133</sup> See Stewart-Macdonald, “High-Encrusted Jewels”

<sup>134</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, *Sonata Theory*, p. 17

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

S space, usually elided with the transition and typically developmental in function (compensating for the lack of a self-contained development section, common in truncated slow movements). William Caplin focuses on the elision of the TR and S spaces in his brief discussion of slow movement form and acknowledges that this is one of the most common means of formal truncation in the exposition: 'A slow movement typically employs phrase-structural procedures that either produce compressions or inhibit expansions... Standings on the dominant are generally held in check, and form-functional fusion (especially of a transition and subordinate theme) is regularly employed.'<sup>136</sup> However, he does not address the complications that arise from this formal deformation, other than to note that such elisions 'often pose difficulties of analysis'.<sup>137</sup> His concern over the ability to 'distinguish with certainty where one function ends and the other begins'<sup>138</sup> overlooks the dramatic tonal implications of this formal conflation. For a blurred S space in turn compromises the dominant arrival, thereby usurping the drive towards the EEC.

Dominant evasion in the slow movement may also have its roots in fantasy form, in which anticipated goals are variously avoided or denied as a means of creating a fluidity of expression. Thwarting the recognised rules may be one of the key ways that the slow movement reacts against the more limited formal boundaries of the outer movements. The slow movement from the Piano Sonata in E flat major, Op. 81a ('Les Adieux') is a good example of Beethoven's evasion of the dominant within an 'abridged' sonata form movement. As suggested above, the lack of a central development section in this cavatina form complicates the S space, but the overall harmonic planning of the movement also diverges from our expectations. The movement begins with harmonic uncertainty, the opening theme hovering between C minor and G minor; it is not until bars 7-8 that a PAC confirms C minor as the tonic. Thereafter, another repetition of the theme begins but soon dissolves into rapid scalar figuration (possibly TR) that pushes towards the dominant. As a new theme begins at bar 15 (see Figure 2.5), the dominant (G major) is implied as the new key, but with only weak perfect cadences on the final quaver of the bar (bars 15 and 17), there is no affirmative resolution into the new key. Four bars later, the allusive perfect cadence appears on the strong downbeat of bar 19, but here the resolution is to G minor, and with the dominant now swept aside, the subdominant recapitulation begins in bar 21.

---

<sup>136</sup> Caplin, *Sonata Form*, p. 209

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 201

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

Figure 2.5

Beethoven: Piano Sonata Op. 81a, 'Les Adieux', bars 17-21

15

G: V ----- I

17

V ----- I

Gm: V -----

19

--- I

Recap.

If the firm PAC into G minor is understood as the misguided goal of this exposition then it must also be understood as the EEC, albeit a 'deformational' or 'failed' EEC since it occurs in the 'wrong' key. Indeed, such a failed expositional closure may account for the fact that the recapitulation subsequently occurs in the subdominant rather than the tonic. Hepokoski and Darcy note a similar instance in the slow movement of Beethoven's Piano Trio, Op. 1 No. 2, and suggest: 'In this case these expositional problems produce an even more dire nonresolving recapitulation later in the piece.'<sup>139</sup> In fact, both of the examples given by Hepokoski and Darcy on the topic of 'failed' expositions as a result of EEC-substitutes are slow movements. Their concept of expositional 'failure' on the other hand, reaffirms the limitations of their sonata-driven terminology – since what appears to be normative in slow movements must be assigned to the category of sonata deformation.

Elsewhere, Hepokoski also suggests that 'non-resolving recapitulations' (those that do not conform to the recapitulatory norm) are employed to create the suggestion of 'failure': 'In a nonresolving recapitulation the composer has crafted this rhetorical recapitulatory revisiting, or new rotation, of previously ordered expositional materials to convey the impression that it

<sup>139</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, *Sonata Theory*, p. 179

“fails” to accomplish its additional generic mission of tonal closure.’<sup>140</sup> On the contrary, subdominant recapitulations, such as that identified in the slow movement of ‘Les Adieux’, may be used for their specific expressive effect. Just as the slow movement may avoid modulation to the dominant as a means of stemming the forwards propulsion of the movement, so too may subdominant recapitulations flatten the tonal landscape by subsuming the recapitulation into a cycle of fifths, and thereby reinforcing the movement’s sense of stasis. But this too has its roots in fantasy form, thwarting the listener’s expectations and providing a more fluid tonal discourse.

The suppression of the dominant as a key area takes several different forms in Beethoven’s works, but it is nevertheless a common trope. While in Op. 81a the dominant is replaced by the dominant minor, in the *Largo con espressione* from the Piano Trio in G major, Op. 1, No. 2 (one of the two examples Hepokoski and Darcy give of ‘failed expositions’), the dominant is reached as the new key, but it is immediately undermined in a way that impacts upon the rest of the movement. From bar 20 the dominant (B major) is well-prepared with pedal notes on the secondary dominant and a final unaccompanied flourish to herald its arrival, preceding the initiation of what appears to be a new theme (see Figure 2.6).

---

<sup>140</sup> Hepokoski, James, ‘Back and Forth from Egmont: Beethoven, Mozart, and the Nonresolving Recapitulation’, from *19th-Century Music*, Vol. 25, No. 2-3 (Fall/Spring 2001-02), p. 128



Figure 2.6

Beethoven: Piano Trio, Op. 1, No. 2, bars 20-27

20

Violin

Violoncello

Piano

Dominant pedal . . .

23

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

B: V - - - - [cadenza]

25

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

- - - - - I

However, rather than establishing the dominant as the new tonic, this dominant arrival is undermined by a transition to G major just 9 bars later (see Figure 2.7), in which key it remains until the recapitulation of the first subject 13 bars thereafter.

Figure 2.7

Beethoven: Piano Trio, Op. 1, No. 2, bars 33-35

G: V7 ----- I

In the corresponding part of the recapitulation, the dominant is once again undermined, this time by modulations to C major and A minor. While traditional (sonata form) second groups are often chromatic and even modulatory, it is unusual for them to close in a key other than the dominant, since their main function is to establish and prolong the dominant arrival. Indeed, Hepokoski and Darcy use this example to illustrate instances of failed expositions as a result of EEC-substitutes (as mentioned previously), and note that the expressive effect of such a deformation is as though the S space has ‘gone astray’. In this particular instance, however, there may be wider reasons for the deformation: the swerve to G major (the mediant) might be perceived as an internal reflection of the tertiary relationship between the key of the work itself (G major) and the slow movement (E major). Likewise, as well as providing the logical ‘fifth below’, the modulation to C major and its relative minor, A minor, can be understood to extend this set of tertiary shifts.

This method of dominant evasion, in which the dominant is cast aside in favour of another key, is not limited to Beethoven, as Hepokoski and Darcy demonstrate.<sup>141</sup> The slow movement of Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 14 in E flat major features an S space that begins in the dominant (F major) but, after a series of harmonic upheavals, the final expositional PAC takes place in A flat major – the flattened leading-note key. Like Beethoven, Mozart has clear reasons for choosing to modulate to an apparently distant key, as he searches for a major key

<sup>141</sup> See Hepokoski and Darcy, *Sonata Theory*, pp. 178-179

resolution from the minor hues which saturate the S space and threaten to close the exposition in the dominant minor. Unlike Beethoven, however, Mozart ‘corrects’ the deformation in the recapitulation.

Dominant evasions may, as I suggested earlier, be part of a recognised trend in the slow movement to head flatwards and to explore a more subdued, contemplative, or ‘inwards-looking’ space. But as I outlined in Chapter 1, the slow movement is not always a point of rest within the larger work: indeed, the slow movement may also represent a point of extreme tension and this can often be traced back to tonal planning. While in some cases a flatwards shift may open up a more relaxed tonal space, in others it may lead to more complex and intense formal planning. The substitution of the dominant minor in place of the dominant major, for example, is rather uncommon but it can have dramatic implications for the formal development of the movement – as demonstrated in the case of Op. 81a above. The slow movement of Beethoven’s String Quartet in B flat major, Op. 18, No. 6, follows a similar pattern: set in the subdominant major (E flat major), after an opening section grounded firmly in the tonic, the contrasting central section introduces an increased level of chromaticism that eventually shifts firmly to the dominant minor (see Figure 2.8).

Figure 2.8

Beethoven: String Quartet, Op. 18, No. 6, bars 17-20

The image shows a musical score for four string instruments: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. The score covers bars 17 to 20. The key signature changes from E-flat major (three flats) to B-flat minor (three flats, but with a different harmonic context). The bottom of the page indicates the key signature change: Ebm: Bbm: V---I.

After just four bars of this dark new key, however, the melody begins to liquidate and dissolves into E flat minor, before again collapsing into fantasia-like figuration towards the onset of the recapitulation. While this is problematic for the formal stability of the movement, it also has a destabilising effect in the context of the work as a whole, since the choice of the subdominant

for the slow movement (the ‘first level default’, according to Hepokoski and Darcy<sup>142</sup>) should have lowered the tension of the opening movement and opened up a more relaxed subdominant space. The chromatic *minore* section has quite the opposite effect, destabilising the formal structure of the movement and edging it towards the level of fantasy. It also alienates the movement even further from the opening *Allegro*, since, in a movement set in the subdominant, the dominant key will recall the tonic of the sonata itself. While Hepokoski and Darcy suggest that these appearances ‘are fated not to last. They exist on a different conceptual plane, bracketed, fragile, ephemeral’<sup>143</sup>, in this instance these fragile glimpses are altogether non-existent, thereby widening the gap between the two movements.

In more extreme cases, such as the first of the ‘Razumovsky’ String Quartets, Op. 59, No. 1, dominant minor substitutes can create a complex and altogether unusual harmonic framework for the movement. Here, the resolution to the dominant minor deepens the chromatic sonority of the movement and imbues it with another layer of melancholy. The movement itself is in F minor (the tonic minor of the quartet) and modulates to the dominant minor for the arrival of the second group. Unusually, this generates an exposition that is altogether devoid of major keys, creating a sense of suppression that demands a release elsewhere in the movement. After the exposition, this release is found in the development section, in which there is a strong major key presence, while in the recapitulation this sense of release is echoed by the tumbling free cadenza that carries the movement onwards into the *Allegro*.

But while the majority of Beethoven’s slow movements do follow a flatwards shift, those that move to a brighter key than the tonic prove particularly interesting to the analyst, and may share common character traits. Our attention is drawn back to the String Quartet in F minor, Op. 95, mentioned earlier in this chapter, which sits in the unusual key of the ‘naturalised submediant’. This disjuncture between F minor and D major causes problems for the internal harmonic planning of the movement: its brightness must be balanced out within the movement itself, so it is not surprising that the dominant (A major) is avoided altogether, presenting problems for the movement’s form.

Figure 2.9

Beethoven: String Quartet, Op. 95, bars 1-4



<sup>142</sup> See the section on ‘Key Choice in Slow Movements: Major-Mode Sonatas’, *Sonata Theory*, pp. 323-4

<sup>143</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, *Sonata Theory*, p. 324

An early hint at the dominant (see Figure 2.9) from a chromatic inflection in the isolated cello part (G sharp rising to A, bars 3-4) is never realised and the opening section closes, after some unsettling interrupted cadences, in the tonic in bar 34. Throughout this opening section, however, small chromatic inflections offer a tantalizing glimpse of the havoc that unfolds in the central, fugal section. Although the fugue begins steadily, the subject itself is imbued with chromaticism, which increases in complexity as the texture builds. By the time that all four voices are present, tritones begin to emerge in the upper voices (bars 51-54) and the increasingly charged chromaticism begins to destabilize the harmony (see Figure 2.10).

Figure 2.10

Beethoven: String Quartet, Op. 95, bars 51-54 (brackets denote tritones)

At bar 64, following chains of tritones and dramatic *sforzandi*, the fugue appears to collapse before a reminder of the cello's opening material eventually sets the fugue off once more at bar 78 to 'try again'. This time, however, the fugue appears to conclude more successfully, with a return to D major in bar 112 to coincide with the recapitulation of the theme. In this movement, the tonic-dominant polarisation is replaced by a diatonic-chromatic contrast but this has serious implications for the form of the work: the chromatic complications force a ruptured arch of AB|B<sup>1</sup>A<sup>1</sup> design. After an attempted final cadence, the sudden intrusion of a diminished seventh chord – a reminder of the bitter dissonance witnessed in the fugue – forces the *Allegretto* to collapse into the *Allegro assai*.

Elsewhere, shifts to brighter keys seem to create similar complications. In the slow movement of the Piano Sonata in E flat major, Op. 7, for example, the dominant is not just absent but *conspicuously* absent, its omission felt through the presence of tonal markers that signify the hole left by its departure. On its surface, it appears that the structure of this movement can be broadly interpreted as ternary, delineated thematically by the chorale-like parenthesis that forms the B section (bars 25-50) and contrasts with the more arioso style of the framing A

sections. However, Beethoven contradicts this formal outline with the internal structuring. While the A section closes with a strong perfect cadence in the tonic (C major) in bar 24 (see Figure 2.11), the B section does not begin in the dominant; moreover, the only brief reference to the dominant comes immediately before the recapitulation in bars 49-50. Beethoven appears to be playing with the rules, and instead making reference to aria form – which closes in the tonic at the end of the first section and does not move to the dominant for the contrasting central section. The ‘arioso’ style of the outer frames is thus contextualised within its rightful form. One is reminded of Mozart’s aria ‘Dove Sono’ from *The Marriage of Figaro*, which does the opposite: playing with sonata form in the context of an aria, by modulating to the dominant for its central section.

Figure 2.11

Beethoven: Piano Sonata, Op. 7, bars 23-25

C: V<sup>7</sup>-----I                      Ab: (V) ----- I

Instead, the central section moves to the flattened-submediant (A flat major), before passing through F minor and D flat major; G major is nowhere in sight. While the shift to the flattened-submediant is a bold move, particularly as it is barely prepared beforehand, the subsequent modulations in the central section are nevertheless to closely-related keys and, once in the realm of A flat major, G major clearly has no place there. In fact, the form of this movement aligns closely with Caplin’s ‘Large Ternary’ form, a model that is differentiated from its ‘Small Ternary’ sibling by two significant factors: in the former, the A section closes in the tonic rather than a new or ‘subordinate’ key; secondly, the Large Ternary’s central B section may avoid any reference to the dominant altogether.<sup>144</sup> This form is used almost exclusively in the slow movement and, as Caplin notes, is analogous to the ‘three-part Adagio form’ described by Edwin Ratz in his *Musikalische Formenlehre*.<sup>145</sup>

However, Beethoven deliberately problematises this ternary form by drawing attention to the dominant’s absence across the movement via a simple, recurring G-F sharp motive: an

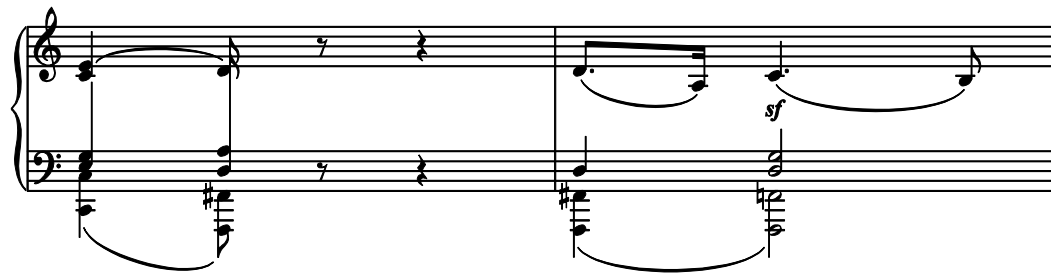
<sup>144</sup> See Caplin, *Sonata Form*, p. 211

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., p. 281, N. 18

incomplete 'tonic – leading-note – tonic' gesture that longs to resolve itself and effect a modulation to G major. The chromatic F sharp appears for the first time conspicuously, doubled at the octave, in the bass in bar 3, but its resolution to G is denied, and it resolves downwards to F natural in the following bar (see Figure 2.12).

Figure 2.12

Beethoven: Piano Sonata, Op. 7, bars 3-4



In the second phrase of the A section, the G-F sharp unit returns (bars 9, 11 and 13) and seems to point towards a move to the dominant, but the incomplete 'tonic – leading-note – tonic' figure in the right hand is repeatedly thwarted by a skip up to a repeated d<sup>1</sup> (see Figure 2.13). In turn, this 1-bar unit is interrupted each time by an *arioso sforzando* intrusion – a rhetorical gesture that implies an emphatic 'no!' in response to the attempted modulation. After three repetitions of the same abortive unit, the phrase disintegrates and the first phrase returns.

Figure 2.13

Beethoven: Piano Sonata, Op. 7, bars 9-13



The G-F sharp unit returns again towards the end of the B section (bars 37-38 and 39-40), this time in a forceful and intrusive attempt to infiltrate the form, but here it is doubled at the octave in both hands, forming one of the most dramatic interruptions of the movement and obtrusively interrupting both the melodic and accompanimental lines. When the same G-F sharp figure is repeated two bars later, it is coloured by an A flat upper-neighbour note in an apparent reference to the 'wrong' tonic of the B section. But, just as the F sharp of this melodic unit failed

to resolve upwards to the intended tonic of G in Section A (bars 9, 11 and 13), so too does this prominent F sharp fail to resolve in the 'correct' fashion (see Figure 2.14), instead resolving chromatically downwards to an F natural in bar 41 as preparation for the brief excursion into B flat major (bar 42) – a move that recalls the prominent F sharp – F natural unit of the opening (bars 3-4).

Figure 2.14

Beethoven: Piano Sonata, Op. 7, bars 37-42

37

*f* *pp* *p* *sf* *pp* *pp*

Bb: V<sup>7</sup>-----I

The dominant thus remains an elusive goal, one which is continually denied by interruptions that problematise the natural form of the movement and is eventually left hanging as an unfulfilled promise when the movement ends. The rhetorical impact of these interruptions will be considered in Chapter 5.

## Form

The tonal characteristics of the slow movement outlined in the previous section necessarily have implications for our understanding of the movement's form. The prevalence of dominant evasion, for example, will present complications within the context of a sonata form framework, and the intense chromaticism often witnessed in the slow movement may be difficult to marry with our traditional definitions of form. But this does not mean that the slow movement should be sidelined as 'formless'. While the slow movement may have its roots in balanced aria form structures, as demonstrated by Ratner and Rosen, Beethoven's slow movements represent a manipulation of this form and the quest to explore new formal territories. Though it is impossible to speak of a 'slow movement form' in the same manner that we might categorise a 'minuet', it is possible to identify common characteristics through Beethoven's slow movements and to trace recognisable formal structures beneath what may appear to be blurred surfaces.



Caplin suggests: 'Slow movements commonly employ one of the following formal types: sonata, sonata without development, large ternary, theme and variations, or five-part rondo.'<sup>146</sup> He adds in a footnote that in a small number of cases the simple small ternary form may also be used, and that 'in extreme cases, the slow movement can seem like an introduction to the next movement'.<sup>147</sup> His statements, while broadly true, seem to rest on examples taken primarily from the works of Mozart and Haydn (indeed, he cites just one example from Beethoven in the course of this chapter) and overlook the developments in form that emerge across Beethoven's oeuvre. Far from 'extreme', introductory slow movements account for four of the 79 slow movements in my study, and unembellished sonata form structures are altogether rare. Many Classical slow movements may be 'constructed in conventional sonata form'<sup>148</sup>, but not in the works of Beethoven: here, hybrid structures are the norm and filing them into one single category is far from easy.

However, one facet of Caplin's overview is consistent with Beethoven's works:

'Most notably, a slow-movement sonata often fuses the transition and subordinate-theme functions, eliminates the entire transition (a technique favoured by Mozart), or reduces the size of the development section (favoured by Haydn).'<sup>149</sup>

This is the most common means by which Beethoven compromises the traditional sonata form model within the slow movement and is consistent with his techniques of dominant evasion. If a modulation is avoided, as I have suggested, to reverse the sense of forward propulsion that such a modulation implies, then the formal areas in which we might expect this to take place – the second group (S), transition (TR), and subsequent development section – will consequently be altered. This is certainly due in part to the need for formal compression within the slow movement, since a slower tempo will naturally imply an extended duration – unless the form is compressed. But as well as preventing the slow movement from extending into an over-lengthy movement, the blurring or fusing of these areas also reduces the teleological drive more commonly associated with this structure and sidelines the S space. Indeed, while abridged sonata form models are the most common formal type to be found in Beethoven's slow movements, these are closely followed by ternary structures which, as I demonstrated previously, do not modulate during the opening section and may also avoid a reference to the dominant in the central section altogether.

---

<sup>146</sup> Caplin, *Classical Form*, p. 209

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., p. 281

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., p. 209

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

While Caplin suggests that such abridged forms simply represent ‘modifications’ of ‘conventional sonata form’, in fact they have far more dramatic implications for our perception of the form, since the S space forms an integral part of the sonata framework. As Hepokoski and Darcy point out: ‘what happens in S makes a sonata a sonata’<sup>150</sup> While the S space does not necessarily need to encapsulate a new thematic idea, its proportion to the preceding sections and means of satisfactory closure are important if it is to have the desired rhetorical impact. As Hepokoski and Darcy suggest: ‘An S consisting of only a short, perfunctory phrase or ‘naïve’, problem-free period can give the impression of a letdown or unexpectedly facile articulation of a proposed EEC.’<sup>151</sup> The examples I gave previously of dominant complications demonstrate several methods of unsatisfactory closure: weakened perfect cadences, chromatic inflections that obscure and undermine the new tonic, reintroduction of P material, ill-defined and transitory S space, and a curtailed dominant arrival. All these ‘problems’ obscure and undermine the S space, throwing greater weight on to the preceding P zone and suggesting that Hepokoski and Darcy’s S-weighted model might in fact be reversed in the slow movement. As noted earlier, their expositional model is unequivocally S-driven, as they acknowledge: ‘Because of its role within the larger structure S is the most privileged zone of the expositional rotation.’<sup>152</sup> Rather than the now-outdated conception of S as a functional opposite to P, Hepokoski and Darcy suggest that P and S form a relay, in which S serves a culminatory function: P drives towards S, and S provides the space for the all-important EEC. What is more, this EEC, in turn, sets up our expectations for the culmination of the sonata as a whole, thus: ‘S takes on the role of the agent in achieving the sonata’s most defining moments.’<sup>153</sup> Caplin’s model is also end-weighted, as exemplified by his suggestion that of the five cadential goals in the exposition<sup>154</sup>, only one of them is compulsory: full confirmation of the new key by means of a PAC during the S space.

In Hepokoski and Darcy’s sonata form model, S is characteristically more lyrical, stable and well-grouped than P, acting as the goal of stability to which the dynamic P space strives. They suggest that anything less is a deformation: ‘Regardless of its phrase-structure, one thing is *de rigueur*: S must be harmonically and tonally stable. If not... then one is dealing with the deformation of a generic norm.’<sup>155</sup> But in the slow movement, as we have seen over the course of these examples, S is typically problematised, ill-defined and rarely harmonically stable.

---

<sup>150</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, *Sonata Theory*, p. 117

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 166

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> His five expositional cadential goals are: 1. Partial confirmation of the tonic key by means of an HC; 2. Full confirmation of the tonic by means of a PAC; 3. Destabilisation of the tonic key by means of an HC or dominant arrival; 4. Partial confirmation of the new (‘subordinate’) key by means of an HC or dominant arrival; 5. Full confirmation of the new key by means of a PAC. See Caplin, *Sonata Form*, p. 196

<sup>155</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, *Sonata Theory*, p. 129

Hepokoski and Darcy's expositional trajectory *towards* an end-goal of stability is reversed in the slow movement: here, decay and deformity emerge from stable beginnings, eroding the S space and compromising its tonal and structural function. These contrasting expositional structures are emblematic of the movements' differing roles in the sonata structure. First movements and finales are goal-oriented structures, with first movements designed to set up the dynamic drive of the work itself, while the finale must clearly push towards a satisfactory close. The slow movement, by contrast, functions as a self-contained space for reflection, pause, and even formal freedom; its drive is inward-looking. Hepokoski and Darcy's teleological model provides a sense of expectancy and compulsion, concepts that are foreign to the slow movement aesthetic.

The slow movement is governed principally by lyricism rather than formal design, such that structural and tonal markers may become of secondary importance in its large-scale framework. Hybridic forms are therefore extremely common within the slow movement, with the means of expression taking precedence over structural rigidity. So to try to define the slow movement in the same terms with which we describe outer movements, may go against the very nature of the genre, as Notley suggests:

‘The Adagio often seems to have constituted an elevated genre unto itself, distinguished not only by its tempo but also by its melodic style and quality of expression. If this is so, then much current slow-movement analysis (which focuses so often on large-scale structural innovations and peculiarities) might inadvertently have reversed the original, nineteenth-century priorities. Formal innovation per se may not have been the primary goal at all. Rather, seemingly unusual forms within Adagios may have resulted secondarily, perhaps almost incidentally, from more fundamental conceptions of the phrase-to-phrase attributes of the “Adagio” texture itself.’<sup>156</sup>

Notley's statement highlights the fact that formal innovation within the slow movement may be better understood as a by-product of dramatic expression, rather than the goal of the genre. The slow movement's formal design may differ according to its context, its placement within the work, the particular means of expression or the genre of the piece itself. Variations, for example, are most prevalent within Beethoven's concertos, since here traditional variation diminution techniques invite increasing virtuosity and allow the soloist to demonstrate their skills. But even here Beethoven manipulates the form for particular expressive effect. In the *Larghetto* from the Violin Concerto, Op. 61, as Jander has shown, variation form may be spliced with the *Romanze*, which is characterised above all by its simplicity: both in form, which typically follows the lead of strophic poetry, and in melody, phrase structure and harmonic planning. Rather than

---

<sup>156</sup> Notley, ‘The Cult of the Classical Adagio’, p. 35

a traditional set of unfolding melodic variations, in the *Larghetto* it is the bass-line that is the subject of these variations, recurring each time with a new melodic decoration, while the *Romanze* topic creates a new air of introspection, channelling this through the presence of a voice. As Sulzer writes: 'Nowadays one gives the name *Romanze* to little narrative songs in the extremely naive and rather antique tone of the old rhymed Romances. The content of these songs is a narrative of passionate, tragic, sentimental or merry content.'<sup>157</sup> The repetitious nature of the variations lends the movement an air of simplicity, with each repetition of the 10-bar phrase suggesting a new, slightly altered strophe in the imagined poem. With the bass remaining constant, the movement seems static: as though the soloist were simply musing idly on the potential of this theme. Indeed, the chaconne-like means of variation induces another level of stasis: the harmony. Largely alternating between tonic and dominant chords, the theme only hints briefly at D major – the dominant – before closing once again in the tonic. This only reinforces the sense of calm that pervades the movement; with no chromaticism to speak of and no propulsion to modulate, the sense of forward motion is reduced and the movement becomes a space of quiet introspection.

This mixing of variation form and vocal expression is common to Beethoven's concerto writing and is emblematic of the new type of introspective soloistic writing that I touched upon in Chapter 1. While Taruskin notes that this led to a wealth of contemplative piano miniatures and 'Songs Without Words', this development also bled into other genres such as the concerto, which acted as magnified versions of these small-scale 'soul pieces'. At the most basic level, the concerto offers the potential to replicate opera and, more specifically, aria in purely instrumental form: that is by offering a soloist plus supporting accompaniment. But the affiliation with song goes further than this, and is again linked with the growing tendency towards introspection and self-expression that characterised the growth of romanticism. Taruskin suggests that this is markedly demonstrated by the progression through Beethoven's concertos for piano, in which the Fourth, he argues, represents 'a romantic watershed'<sup>158</sup>. More specifically, it is the slow movement of the Fourth that suggests this most clearly, with a dialogue (in the most literal sense of the word) between soloist and orchestra that indicates a move away from earlier display pieces. In this work, for the first time, the relationship between soloist and orchestra becomes one of opposition: rather than the orchestra acting as a subservient accompaniment to the soloist, orchestra and soloist now become somewhat alienated from each other, as the lonely romantic 'hero' turns in on itself. This alienation is expressed through a dispute, a reincarnation of a scene from the *Orpheus* legend, according to A.B. Marx. Marx's critique of the movement is littered with references to vocality, and he also

---

<sup>157</sup> Jander, 'Romantic Form and Content in the slow movement of Beethoven's Violin Concerto', p. 161

<sup>158</sup> Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, Vol. 3, p. 275

notes the romantic futility of the two, unbalanced forces: ‘The opposition of a single person, who has no weapon and no force except the depth of his feeling and the irresistibility of his plea, against the assembled force of a chorus, who deny and resist each advancing step.’<sup>159</sup> What is more, both Marx and Jander identify a number of sources that appear to have influenced Beethoven in his composition of this movement – all of them operatic (and hence vocal).<sup>160</sup> The marrying of variation form and song is no coincidence, since their cumulative, repetition-driven forms both give the impression that the music is ‘talking *to* itself *about* itself’, to use Jander’s terms.<sup>161</sup> Both evoke a protagonist, someone who is sharing these ideas and repeating, distorting and ruminating on them as the work progresses. This topic will be examined in more detail in the next chapter.

As the concertos demonstrate, the slow movement’s form is affected by its function and so too by its position within the larger work. The slow movements of the concertos, each appearing in the traditional central position, offer an introspective space for reflection, which is evinced in their strong connection with vocal topics. But the affiliation with variation principles with which this is combined is almost unique to the concerto; nowhere else in Beethoven’s oeuvre is such a strong connection between form and genre exhibited. Only the cellos sonatas test this theory, with four of the five sonatas using slow movements based on introductory models. There are two precursors for slow introductory movements: the fantasia-like slow introduction which acts as a structural upbeat to the opening Allegro, and the opening Adagio, derived from the *sonata da chiesa*. Many of Haydn’s early symphonic forms use the *sonata da chiesa* structure (Adagio – Allegro – Minuet and Trio – Presto) and, indeed, Mozart’s String Quartet No. 1 in G major uses the same formal outline, but over time this becomes supplanted by the more normative symphonic structure which repositions the slow movement (Allegro – Adagio – Minuet and Trio – Presto). Taruskin credits Haydn with establishing the latter as the norm.<sup>162</sup>

The first two of Beethoven’s Cello Sonatas, Op. 5, No. 1 and No.2, are both comprised of just two movements, both shifting their ‘slow movements’ to the front of the sonata to act as extended slow introductions to the opening Allegros. As detailed earlier in the chapter, both fulfil the characteristics of fantasia-like slow introductions, but since both also fulfil the role of the slow movement (since there is no further slow movement in the work), these introductions are more than just short, peripheral entities: both modulate (to the dominant and relative major respectively) before the onset of developmental sections and, in the case of No. 2, a quasi-

---

<sup>159</sup> A.B. Marx, cited by Jander, Owen, ‘Beethoven’s “Orpheus in Hades”: The “Andante con moto” of the Fourth Piano Concerto’, from *19th-Century Music*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (Spring 1985), p. 197

<sup>160</sup> See Jander, ‘Beethoven’s “Orpheus in Hades”’

<sup>161</sup> Jander, Owen, ‘The “Kreutzer” Sonata as dialogue’, *Early Music* (February 1988), p. 40

<sup>162</sup> Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, Vol. 2, p. 520

recapitulation. Meanwhile, while the third and fourth sonatas, Op. 69 and Op. 102, No. 1, do have slow movements in the more 'conventional' internal position, both of these slow movements close on fermatas and run on *attacca* into the finale. Both are just 18 bars long, and come to rest on what prove to be a dominant chords that act as upbeats to the finales – such that their status as self-contained movements is called into question. The case of Op. 102, No. 1 has already been examined, with the 'slow movement' as a self-contained concept being called into question here. Indeed, the rather more free format of this sonata is reflected in the title 'Freie Sonate' that Beethoven himself attributed to the work. Although the two Op. 5 sonatas are early works, written some time before the 'freie' sonata, retrospectively the three cello sonatas that precede Op. 102, No. 1 might be understood as gestures towards this more integrated sonata style. Writing about the Op. 102 sonatas, Beethoven's last accompanied instrumental works for any solo instruments, Lockwood suggests:

'Beethoven's clear intent is to make the two sonatas as different as possible in outer form and expression, thus renewing an earlier way of forming a contrasting pair of works of the same general type in direct sequence.'<sup>163</sup>

Although the slow movement of the fifth Cello Sonata, Op. 102, No.2, also closes on a dominant chord and runs *attacca* into the finale, unlike the preceding sonatas it is the only one of the five to contain a fully established slow movement in ternary form. Formally, the work also differs dramatically from its predecessors, for while in the slow movement theme, modulation and structure are clearly defined, the four introductory slow movements of the preceding Cello Sonatas are characterised by a fantasia-like tendency for formal fluidity. Indeed, Lockwood also hears the fantasia within Op. 102, No. 1: 'It is as if Beethoven and his cellist were improvising together a fantasia replete with unpredictable and dialectically opposed segments.'<sup>164</sup>

This is echoed elsewhere in Beethoven's oeuvre, most notably in the two piano sonatas 'quasi una fantasia', Op. 27, No. 1 and No. 2, which both open with slow movements. Like Op. 102, No. 1, the first of the 'quasi una fantasia' sonatas is formally continuous, with each movement running *attacca* into the next, such that it is difficult to determine exactly where one movement ends and the next begins. Moreover, the parallels between the two works (Op. 27, No. 1 and Op. 102, No. 1) are reinforced by the inclusion of two slow movements: in both cases, the work opens with an *Andante* introductory movement, while an *Adagio* precedes the finale. Since it is common to include two slow movements within a fantasy, with each serving a different function, this reinforces the sense that Op. 102, No. 1 is indeed a 'freie Sonate'. We are

---

<sup>163</sup> Lockwood, 'Beethoven's Emergence from Crisis', p. 307

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., p. 319

reminded here of Mozart's *Fantasy* in C minor, K. 475, which also contains two slow movements: an opening *Adagio* and a central *Andantino*. Like Op. 102, No. 1, the opening movement of Mozart's *Fantasy* also conflates its roles as both introduction and slow movement, bearing the fantasia-like hallmarks of an introduction but coupling this with a defined binary form. As Charles Rosen writes about Op. 27, No. 1: 'For the first time in Beethoven's work, the movements are paradoxically well-formed independent movements in completely rounded structures that are nevertheless unintelligible played on their own. They interpenetrate each other.'<sup>165</sup> As Rosen goes on to say, the opening slow movement is also emblematic of Beethoven's forays into new formal territories: 'With this sonata Beethoven began an experiment, to which he continued to return and develop through the years, of displacing some of the weight of the work from the opening movement to the finale.'<sup>166</sup>

In fact, this period of Beethoven's writing clusters around works that reposition the slow movement as an introduction: the Op. 26 sonata from the same year also opens with a slow movement, albeit in this case a clear (and closed) set of variations. Only three other works in Beethoven's oeuvre open with a 'slow movement': I use the inverted commas deliberately, since the first of these is the Piano Sonata in G minor, Op. 49, No. 1, which opens with an *Andante*. Like the 'quasi una fantasia' sonatas, Op. 49, No. 1 is comprised of just two movements (an *Andante* and a *Rondo*) but unlike the Op. 27 pair, the form of this *Andante* suggests that it was not conceived as a 'slow movement' in the traditional sense. We are reminded again of Rousseau's five-point scale, with *Andante* sitting at the cusp between slow and fast tempi: while the *Andante* of Op. 27, No. 1 fulfils the functions of a slow movement, despite its position at the head of the sonata, the *Andante* of Op. 49, No. 1 does not. Indeed, the well-defined sonata form of this opening movement, with a repeated exposition, a modulation to the relative major and a clear (albeit brief) development section suggest that Beethoven intended this to be a normative opening movement at a more moderate tempo. Since Beethoven wrote the Op. 49 set as pedagogical works and apparently had no intention of publishing this sonata himself, we might also surmise that the slower tempo makes allowances for the sonata as a piece 'within the range of small hands and young players'<sup>167</sup>. The opening movement of the Piano Trio in G major, Op. 1, No. 2 also opens with a 'slow movement', but like the Op. 5 Cello Sonatas, this *Adagio* is really an extended introduction to the *Allegro vivace* that begins in bar 27. This introductory movement is again saturated with fantasia-like figuration in the piano, with florid scales, mordents, trills, dynamic contrasts and rapid registral displacement – finally coming to a close on a dramatic *fortissimo* dominant seventh before spiralling onwards *attacca* into the Allegro.

---

<sup>165</sup> Rosen, Charles, *Beethoven's Piano Sonatas: A Short Companion* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 153

<sup>166</sup> Ibid, p. 156

<sup>167</sup> Tovey, *A Companion to Beethoven's Pianoforte Sonatas*, p. 141

The last of Beethoven's works to open with a slow movement is the String Quartet in C sharp minor, Op. 131. Unlike Beethoven's other introductory slow movements, the opening *Adagio* does not explore fantasia-like figuration and textures, but its relationship to these movements is developed in other ways. Op. 131 is a natural successor to the likes of Op. 27, No. 1 and Op. 102, No. 1 for its intertwined, continuous formal framework, as Nicholas Marston notes: 'These are not so much individual movements in the Classical sense but rather interdependent sections of a single long movement.'<sup>168</sup> Moreover, Marston echoes Rosen's suggestion that such works may redistribute the weight of the work away from the opening movement: 'Beethoven makes Op. 131 a strongly end-directed work by withholding a full-scale sonata-form movement until the finale.'<sup>169</sup> Spitzer also perceives in this succession of movements a 'natural teleology'<sup>170</sup> that is implicit within the opening fugue's subject. For Spitzer, the quartet is built upon the process of *Fortspinnung*, a process that begins in the Baroque fugue of the opening movement and whose trajectory is the Classical sonata: 'Beethoven's cycles, then, are allegories of freedom, of breaking free and pushing on through a conceptual barrier.'<sup>171</sup> The germ of this transformation begins in a slow movement – a fact that is of no small consequence, since it is the slow movement that enshrines the lyric subject at the heart of the Classical style. As Marston has shown, 'end and beginning are palpably connected in this quartet'<sup>172</sup>, with a transformation of the opening fugal subject – a rising, searching, 'ricercare' subject – in the final movement to a cascading, lyrical, cadential motif. While at the centre of this transformational arch is a second slow movement, a set of *Andante* variations no less, which as Spitzer suggests 'put lyric first'<sup>173</sup>. Shining luminously in the relative major they represent the turning point of the quartet, when the lyrical voice is set forth, as Kerman writes: 'The voice is direct and unconstrained. In the variation tune, lyricism unfolds with perfect freedom, simplicity, and certainty.'<sup>174</sup> But there is one further slow movement still to come: a short 28-bar *Adagio* that precedes the finale. As such, the C sharp minor quartet represents a turning point in our understanding of the slow movement, since Beethoven encapsulates within a single work the three slow movement types: the introductory slow movement, pushing the traditional sonata-allegro to the work's end; the central reflective/transformational slow movement, with a focus on interiority; and the slow movement as structural upbeat – a brief,

---

<sup>168</sup> Marston, Nicholas, 'The sense of an ending': Goal-directedness in Beethoven's music', from *The Cambridge Companion to Beethoven* (ed. Stanley), p. 94

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*, p. 170

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., p. 169

<sup>172</sup> Marston, 'Goal-directedness in Beethoven's music', p. 94

<sup>173</sup> Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*, p. 178

<sup>174</sup> Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets*, p. 334



outwards-facing glimpse of a slow movement. No other slow movement types exist within Beethoven's output.

While Op. 131 is distinctive for its comprehensive 'cataloguing' of slow movement types, the String Quartet in A minor, Op. 132, also presents a remarkable new way of looking at the slow movement. Here, fleeting glimpses of 'slow' music punctuate the opening movement, in what cannot be called another slow movement 'type' but which act as 'calling cards' to the slow movement genre. These brief, recitative-like bursts of slowness seem to demand more expressivity from the movement – a moment of pause and rest that is otherwise lacking. They call our attention to the difference between a slow movement and a slow tempo – with the need for rest, pause and even relaxation, sometimes demanded briefly of the music. We are reminded of A.B. Marx's suggestion that underlying even the simplest musical structure is the basic premise of rest-motion-rest (*Ruhe-Bewegung-Ruhe*)<sup>175</sup>. While Marx equates this process with tonic-scale-tonic, it might also have applications within the context of tempo and genre. Tellingly, Marx gives the name of this basic three-part form *Liedform*, suggesting that he directly associates this process from rest to motion and thence back to rest with vocal genres. Certainly, it bears links with aria form which, as we will come to see in Chapter 4, is typically founded on the same three-part structure, both tonally and expressively: the framing outer sections of aria form both close in the tonic, with a move to another key for the central section – this is coupled with (typically) a more tumultuous, heart-searching section at the centre. As noted in Chapter 1, this may also be the underlying process at the heart of slow movement form: a process of 'homing in' and journeying inwards. The opening movement of Op. 132 encapsulates this very premise, contradicting our expectations of traditional opening movements in which a slow introduction serves as a precursor to the fast prototype. Here, the slow movement is the foundation to which we return, moving from a slow-moving *Assai sostenuto* to *Allegro* and thence back to *Adagio*. Could it be, therefore, that rather than slow punctuating fast in this opening movement, in fact quite the opposite is true? As Kofi Agawu writes: 'The slow and regular half-note figuration that dominates the first eight bars is followed, or rather interrupted, by a rapid sixteenth note figure in the first violin (mm. 9-10).'<sup>176</sup>

A unique feature of Beethoven's late style is the repositioning of the slow movement within the cycle. As Spitzer has shown, in all late works of four movements or more (with the exception of Op. 127), the slow movement is repositioned from second to third place – exchanging positions with the scherzo. This has dramatic implications for our understanding of the slow movement's function within the work: 'After the scherzo's journey "outward", the slow

---

<sup>175</sup> See Burnham, Scott, 'The Role of Sonata Form in A. B. Marx's Theory of Form', from *Journal of Music Theory*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Autumn, 1989), p. 254

<sup>176</sup> Agawu, V. Kofi, 'The First Movement of Beethoven's Opus 132 and the Classical Style', from *College Music Symposium*, Vol. 27, (1987), p. 34

movement's reflective tone marks the reversal of the cycle, a turning back into the seriousness of interiority and the closure of a frame – clinched by the finale's cyclical *re-turn*.<sup>177</sup> The slow movement is therefore moved out of the shadow of the first movement and reasserted as a crucial part of the teleological cycle. Op. 131 is emblematic of this shift, reaffirming the slow movement's priority by using it to a) announce the movement's principal material, b) effect the material's transformation and c) usher in the work's curtain call. As Spitzer has suggested: 'Lyric is gradually repositioned from an auxiliary or interlude to a goal.'<sup>178</sup>

---

<sup>177</sup> Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*. p. 168

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

# Chapter 3

## Variation Form in Beethoven's Slow Movements

'Variation is not a special case, but a fundamental process of composition.'<sup>179</sup>

---

<sup>179</sup> Schachter, Carl, *Unfoldings: Essays in Schenkerian Theory and Analysis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 19

## Introduction

As Chapter 2 illustrated, one of the characteristic traits of Beethoven's late works is to reposition the slow movement and to transfer its lyrical properties onto the other movements in the cycle. Works such as the late String Quartet in C sharp minor, Op. 131, which comprises not one but three types of 'slow movement' are emblematic of this gradual colonisation of the form by lyricism. While the slow 'outbursts' that interrupt the String Quartet in A minor, Op. 132, reveal that even opening sonata form movements are not immune to the overpowering presence of lyric in the late style. With this in mind, variation – as a repetitive lyrical form – becomes of increasing importance in Beethoven's works, functioning as an emblem of the lyric style and allowing the slow movement to signpost itself in other movements. Its principles of repetition, elaboration and introspection gradually outgrow their limits within the confines of the form, to become a more widespread genre, one which imports itself into other contexts.

The opening movement of the Piano Sonata in A flat major, Op. 110, for example, like the lyrical 'out of context' outbursts of Op. 132, imports variation topics within the structure of a sonata form movement. This occurs on two levels: the structure of the primary group is itself variation-based, with the opening 4-bar phrase elaborated and extended across bars 5-11, which in turn is subjected to a process of diminution and elaboration through bars 12-19. Beneath this melodic variation process, Spitzer notes that the building blocks of the theme return to a point of absolute simplicity and directness – the starting point of many a variation. The melodic contours outline alternating thirds and fourths, which in turn generate a harmonic progression that is based on 'essential oppositions, typically between chords I, IV and V.'<sup>180</sup> But the transformation process that these simple building blocks undergo over the course of the movement – and indeed the work – is one of variation:

'After reducing musical material to its basic oppositions, it then reverses the relationship between these oppositions, turning black into white, negative into positive, marked into unmarked. In schematic terms, the three dimensions of the musical landscape are interchanged: up becomes down, inside becomes out, under becomes over.'<sup>181</sup>

While Spitzer demonstrates that these features are essentially the characteristics of variation, he misses their context within a wider network of slow movement calling cards. This transformation – or 'illumination' – presents the work as a piece of lyricism, in which new aspects of the music are contemplated, probed and ultimately 'revealed' to the listener as the work progresses. This outwards and upwards approach, of *Steigerung* rather than an arc of

---

<sup>180</sup> Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*, p. 77

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., p. 78

departure and return, is lyrical to the core. But Op. 110's lyrical qualities extend further. As Charles Rosen notes: 'in a strict sense, there is no development, but only a retransition back to the tonic'<sup>182</sup> – a harmonic calling card borrowed from the slow movement. Meanwhile, the momentary modulations that take place at the start of the recapitulation trace a flatwards progression (another slow movement trait), moving first to the subdominant and thence 'continuing eloquently in the subdominant minor, notated as C sharp minor'<sup>183</sup>. Finally, when the tonic returns once more, it is suitably abrupt, or 'ambiguous and mysterious' in Rosen's words<sup>184</sup>, drawing parallels with the slow movement's fantasia-like approach to modulatory functions. While harmonically, the subdominant chord, IV, looms large across the sonata.<sup>185</sup> It is a crucial harmonic detail, since the subdominant is readily recognisable as the 'slow movement key' – both for its 'pastoral', flatwards relationship to the dominant (see the section on dominant evasion in Chapter 2) and for its position as one of the most popular slow movement keys among Beethoven's oeuvre – accounting for over a quarter of his slow movements.

This, then, is lyricism's breakthrough at the heart of the late style. Lyricism – that is to say the slow movement – is foregrounded in Op. 110 and realigned from 'the parenthetical lyric moment' to centre stage. This is Beethoven's own illumination – revealing to the listener that the slow movement is not a genre but a 'fundamental process of composition', that what was once captured at the heart of the work in its own self-contained form now pervades the whole musical artwork. Variation is at the heart of this transformation, acting as an agent for the spread of lyricism in the late style, as we will see as we trace the development of Beethoven's variation works over the course of this chapter. But the roots of this lyrical growth lie in some of Beethoven's earliest works, among them the variation 'exercises' he created as early as the 1780s while studying opera with Salieri – with vocality providing another reminder of the close ties between variation and lyricism.

For some, however, the idea of variation has not always been held in such high esteem and has often been characterised as a somewhat 'lower' form of composition. 'Essentially static and decorative, almost always composed in one key... variations presented a problem to the dramatically conceived classical style.'<sup>186</sup> Rosen's account of variation form chimes with that of Caplin, who classes it as the 'least complex' of Classical forms, presenting 'the fewest problems of formal analysis.'<sup>187</sup> Such remarks may have done variation form a disservice – glossing over the transformative processes that may take place within such a structure and overlooking the

---

<sup>182</sup> Rosen, *Beethoven's Piano Sonatas*, p. 236

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., p. 237

<sup>185</sup> Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*, p. 76

<sup>186</sup> Rosen, Charles, cited by Marston, Nicholas, 'Analysing Variations: The Finale of Beethoven's String Quartet Op. 74', from *Music Analysis*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (Oct 1989), p. 304

<sup>187</sup> Caplin, *Classical Form*, p. 217

potential for innovative – and indeed dramatic – formal structuring. This is something that Marston is at pains to reinforce in his analysis of the finale of Beethoven’s String Quartet in E flat major, Op. 74, in which he highlights the dangers in treating each variation as a distinct and repetitive entity, tethered to the same background structure.<sup>188</sup> But Caplin’s comments may account for his decision to classify theme and variations as a ‘slow movement form’, a movement for which, he suggests, ‘composers often select a formal type... that is inherently simpler than those used for fast movements’.<sup>189</sup> But if the basic principle of variation form is essentially a simple one, its practice may be altogether more intricate and complex, often resulting in subtle formal manipulations and dramatic structural twists. This chapter explores Beethoven’s use of variation form across his slow movements and puts both Rosen’s and Caplin’s statements to the test.

## The ‘neue Manier’

As Glenn Stanley has shown,<sup>190</sup> Beethoven’s early output clusters around a wealth of unpublished variation works for solo piano, a result in part of the variation ‘epidemic’ taking place in Vienna at the time but perhaps also, as some critics have suggested, a reflection of Beethoven’s desire to explore and learn within the framework of this relatively simple genre.<sup>191</sup> But as Stanley’s study of his variation output between the years 1783-1802 demonstrates, the variations in the final group of his study (1799-1802) represent the ‘most ambitious and most complex of the entire period’,<sup>192</sup> something which suggests that Beethoven’s variation sets were progressive, making steps forward as his relationship with the genre developed. Indeed, Stanley suggests that the variations sets are ‘a kind of laboratory’<sup>193</sup> and that each foray into the genre led to further innovations, both within the genre and beyond.

If Beethoven’s ‘laboratory’ is to be identified within his variation movements, then it is also here that we may most closely perceive the exhibits of his musical inheritance. For as Elaine Sisman has demonstrated, the emergence of Beethoven’s ‘entirely new manner’ was not an abrupt and hitherto unimagined event. That ‘the required figurative elaboration of the theme restricted Haydn’s and Mozart’s freedom and resulted in only a few stereotyped designs’<sup>194</sup> is, as she suggests, an oversimplification of history and an underestimation of the contribution brought to the genre by Beethoven’s predecessors. Beethoven’s variation writing began its life

---

<sup>188</sup> See Marston, ‘Analysing Variations’

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., p. 209

<sup>190</sup> Stanley, Glenn, ‘The “wirklich gantz neue Manier” and the Path to It’, from *Beethoven Forum* 3 (1994), pp. 53-79

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., p. 54

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., p. 57

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Sisman, *Haydn and the Classical Variation*, p. 2

with the music of Mozart, stemming from an early fascination with Mozart's works during the 1780s. Alongside the many variation sets he wrote around this time on Italian opera arias, are a number of early variation sets upon Mozartean models: including the Variations on 'Se vuol ballare' from *The Marriage of Figaro*, WoO 40 (1792), the Variations on 'La ci darem la mano', WoO 28 (1796) and the Variations in F major on 'Ein mädchen oder Weibchen' (1798). Beethoven also made copies of Mozart's works during this time, and Lockwood has shown how early Beethoven works such as the Piano Quartet in E flat major, WoO 36 (1785) trace strong connections with Mozartean models. Lockwood draws particular attention to Mozart's Violin Sonata in G major, K. 379, as a model for the aforementioned Piano Quartet, noting not only the similarity in key structure, tempo and metre sequences but also the lyrical 2/4 variations movement with which both works close.<sup>195</sup> To Stanley, this comes as no surprise, since he depicts Beethoven's early forays into variation as a crucial part of his learning as a composer. He writes:

'Contemporary theorists generally agree that variations, because of their essentially simple form, provided "the most suitable specimens for the first studies of an inexperienced artist." By 1792 Beethoven's inexperience might have been relative, yet his desire for study with Haydn and consultation with other teachers indicates his awareness that he still had something to learn.'<sup>196</sup>

Stanley further suggests that before Beethoven the 'true path' of variation form had yet to be explored, and that despite the wealth of variations on the musical landscape at this time, most were 'aesthetically barren', leaving Beethoven a window of opportunity.<sup>197</sup>

While it may be an overly critical assessment of his predecessors to suggest that pre-Beethoven variations works are 'aesthetically barren', it is true that Beethoven forged a new path (or 'neue Manier') in variations over the course of his career. But this was not without taking suitable lessons from those around him and Stanley appears to underestimate the value of his inheritance. Contrasting sonata and variation form procedures, Rosen writes of Mozart's variation works:

'Sonata form assumes a series of structural transformations of harmony and melody, with new material added to old, and the old material restructured, not merely repeated and varied;

---

<sup>195</sup> Lockwood, Lewis, 'Beethoven before 1800: The Mozart legacy', from *Beethoven Forum* 3 (1994), pp. 39-52

<sup>196</sup> Stanley, 'The "wirklich gantz neue Manier"', p. 54

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55

variation form in Mozart, on the contrary, depends on an unchanging underlying structure, in which a single melody is repeated with changing ornamentation and texture.’<sup>198</sup>

Rosen’s description of Mozart’s variation procedure is of the ‘melodic-outline’ variety, one of the two variation types Sisman identifies as favoured by eighteenth-century composers.<sup>199</sup> This variation type is one that is endorsed by Rousseau, who compares the embellishments to embroidery, through which ‘one must always be able to recognise the essence of the melody’.<sup>200</sup> This melody-driven approach to the variation process is characteristic of Beethoven’s early variation works, such as the *Andante* from the Piano Sonata in G major, Op. 14, No. 2 (1799) whose binary theme, diminution variations and close affinity with the original theme bear all the hallmarks of the Mozartean variation. Sticking closely to the theme throughout, Beethoven uses the transformative process of the variations to ‘correct’ the anomalies and defects of the theme, which, according to Timothy Rhys Jones, is typical of Beethoven’s perception of the variation genre: ‘His variation sets... have a strong sense of goal orientation, working towards an idealised version of the theme.’<sup>201</sup> This is echoed by Stanley, who understands Beethoven’s variation process as the fulfilment of two principal goals: ‘(1) correcting weaknesses in a theme; (2) clarifying and transforming a theme’s fundamental structure’<sup>202</sup>.

While this would be an oversimplification for many of Beethoven’s late works, it appears to ring true for his early movements in variations form. In Op. 14, No. 2, various forms of ‘correction’ take place throughout the movement, with each new variation picking up on a different element of the original theme and ‘polishing’ it so that the theme is ultimately transformed. The movement is completed by a summatory, ‘de-cluttering’ variation, which pares down the piano texture to a simple 2-part counterpoint, in which the original bass-line of the theme is restored once more, this time made melodically prominent by the use of strong legato lines and expansive phrasing. In doing so, Beethoven seems to ‘solve’ an apparent weakness within the theme, namely the imbalance between the two hands. While the preceding variations have attempted to ‘correct’ this by shifting the theme to the left hand and designating the right hand as an accompaniment, for the first time they are now truly equal – the right hand has the theme, but it is disguised as an accompanimental figure, while the left hand has the accompaniment, disguised as a melody. Elsewhere, order is also restored: the off-beat syncopation is now happily integrated within the accompanimental/thematic semiquavers of

---

<sup>198</sup> Rosen, Charles, *The Frontiers of Meaning: Three Informal Lectures on Music* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994), pp. 86-87

<sup>199</sup> Sisman, Elaine, ‘Tradition and Transformation in the Alternating Variations of Haydn and Beethoven’, from *Acta Musicologica*, Vol. 62, Fasc. 2/3 (May - Dec., 1990), pp. 152-182

<sup>200</sup> Rousseau, cited by Rhys Jones, Timothy, ‘Variation Form’ from Oxford Music Online: <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e7067>

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> Stanley, ‘The “wirklich gantz neue Manier”’, p. 57



the right hand, and the dramatic *sforzandi* now serve an important purpose, omitted from section A and used for the first time to outline the strong beats in the codetta's rising sequence (bars 81-82) that signals a strong C major cadence. In one final 'correction', the repeat of the opening theme (beginning in bar 85) is this time altered to avoid a move to the dominant and close, rightfully, in the tonic.

While this early Beethoven movement is typically Mozartean in its melodic-outline framework, Beethoven inherited much more from Mozart than just an approach to melodic elaboration. Mozart also lays some very important groundwork for experimentation with variation movements, and in his Sonata in A major, K. 331, shifts the variations to the forefront of the sonata as the opening movement. This is a rarity, since sonata allegros are the *de facto* choice for first movements, and as such this may represent the very first sign of an evolving approach towards integration between sonata and variation ideals. Noting its significance, Beethoven mimics it in his Piano Sonata in A flat major, Op. 26: the only opening variation movement in Beethoven's oeuvre. Apparently laying bare his homage to Mozart, he echoes not only the variation movement's position, but also compound metre and the tempo marking of Mozart's model. On a larger scale, both sonatas are also free of sonata structures, something that Rosen suggests makes Op. 26 'the first of the thirty-two to have no example of what would later be considered a standard sonata form'.<sup>203</sup> And like Mozart, Beethoven lays out all of the movements in the tonic key. The result of such tonal planning, according to Rosen, is 'a set of characteristic pieces' and the start of 'Beethoven's efforts to give an unmistakable individuality to each new work, as if he were not simply writing a new sonata but redefining the genre each time'.<sup>204</sup> By genre, Rosen means the sonata – but he could equally be referring to the form of variation. For although Caplin suggests that variations are a slow movement form, Beethoven tests this with Op. 26, having taken up the first movement gauntlet laid down by Mozart. While Mozart's first movement variations challenge our perceptions of formal layout within the larger work, structurally they unfold as any traditional series of variations might do: via gradually intensifying diminution techniques. Having eventually reached saturation point by Variation 5 with demisemiquaver figuration, Variation 6 'breaks out' into an *Allegro*. It is a pivotal moment, as a repositioned slow movement turns seamlessly into an opening *Allegro*. Mozart's trick is a clever one, but Beethoven can do better. Despite the many ways in which Beethoven pays tribute to Mozart in Op. 26, formally he breaks the mould, shaping his variation set into a sonata form curve. While Variations 1 and 2 look set to initiate a series of diminution variations *pace* Mozart, Variation 3 sets a new course that lends the movement a more arch-shaped structure. In the centre of this arch, the central variation (Variation 3) represents the furthest point of

---

<sup>203</sup> Rosen, *Beethoven's Piano Sonatas*, p. 150

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*

departure from the original theme. Thematically, Beethoven uses Variation 3 to take the listener on a journey that develops the theme to the point of abstraction, extending the variation process beyond the more 'traditional' techniques of Mozart's movement. While harmonically, the *minore* variation represents the first move away from the tonic major in the movement – a quasi-development section at the very centre of the movement.

After the textural, harmonic and thematic obscurity of the *minore* Variation 3, Variation 4 seems intent on reinstating the relationship with the original theme, and with it the triumphant return of the tonic. This recapitulation effect is continued in Variation 5, the final variation in the movement, which marks the return to the theme proper, with the reinstatement of the turn figure (see bars 4, 12 and 30) and, in the two presentations of A<sup>1</sup> (bars 9-16 and 27-34), an almost note-for-note presentation of the theme itself in the lower voice of the left hand, including the original A<sup>1</sup> melodic embellishments. Like Mozart's movement, which disguises itself as a slow movement but 'breaks out' into an Allegro at the final curtain, Beethoven superimposes a fast-movement form onto his slow movement. Perhaps it is easy to read a *minore* variation as a contrasting development section in every variation set; indeed, Sisman notes that 'Rosen argues that every Classical form takes on sonata-like features, including, by the time of Beethoven's *Appassionata* sonata, Op. 57, variation form.'<sup>205</sup> She also gives examples of 'variation expansion' in works such as Haydn's String Quartet in E flat major, Op. 33, No. 2, which displays a mixture of variation, rondo and sonata form characteristics.<sup>206</sup> But Sisman is dismissive about leaping to such conclusions about the organisation of variations:

'The assumption that return after contrast, even a melodic/tonal return after tonal contrast, is indicative of sonata style strikes me as biased and unwarranted... Our willingness to read sonata form into such a piece reflects the enormous prestige of the form and the consequent stake in identifying its organic character wherever possible.'<sup>207</sup>

Despite Sisman's understandably wary attitude towards sweeping formal characterisations, her attitude is somewhat puzzling. She appears unnecessarily dismissive of what appears to be a clear and evolving concern with the interplay between variation and sonata forms. While this may not take flight until Beethoven's late works, the signs are there far earlier and a number of features in Op. 26 warrant the comparison with sonata form. At the heart of this formal interplay, is the mirror effect Beethoven creates between the movement's small-scale and large-scale forms. The theme itself presents an internal reflection of the contour of the variation set, with what might be understood as a low-level splicing of variation and sonata form tropes. The

---

<sup>205</sup> Sisman, *Haydn and the Classical Variation*, p. 10

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107

theme falls two distinct sections, creating a rounded binary structure of AA<sup>1</sup>BA<sup>1</sup>, with the two A<sup>1</sup> sections forming only slightly embellished versions - or 'variations' - of section A. Section A is characterised by a number of prominent features: (1) a rising fourth from dominant to tonic (as heard in bar 1 - later developed into a sequential figure, bars 13-14); (2) appoggiaturas on the first beat of the bar (as in bar 2, bar 4 and bar 8); (3) the demi-semiquaver upbeat turn figure (as heard in bar 4); (4) almost entirely homophonic movement between the two hands; (5) no modulation.

Section B (bars 16-26), meanwhile, acts almost like an internal development section, pulling apart the two hands to create independent lines, introducing harmonic sequences (bars 17-20) and passing modulations (bars 21-26 pass briefly through F major, C minor and E flat major, before returning to the home tonic), a new trill figure (bars 23 and 25) and introducing a new rhythmic impetus through syncopation in the bass-line (note the similarity with Op. 14, No. 2). Though the distinctive turn figure is omitted from this section in its original guise, bars 17-20 seem to allude to it, splicing a slowed-down version of the turn with the rising fourth figure, thereby also disguising the latter. Beethoven also alters the harmonic rhythm between the two sections, creating an increased sense of propulsion in the central B section. This is not only due to the movement created by the harmonic sequences and passing modulations in the B section, but also a result of the rate of harmonic change within this part. To illustrate, section A begins with a change of harmony just once a bar (moving from root position tonic in bar 1 to a second inversion dominant in bar 2 and returning to a first inversion tonic in bar 3), but this speeds up gradually towards the structural cadences (introducing a change of harmony twice a bar leading to the imperfect cadence in bar 4, before increasing a change of harmony each beat in bars 6-7 as the first iteration of the theme comes to a close). The initial one-per-bar rate of harmonic change in section A creates a feeling of stasis within the opening bars, something that is enhanced by the homophonic movement and relatively compact melodic line. By contrast, section B presses forwards immediately, with the cross-barline syncopation, rising sequences and two-part counterpoint enhancing the fact that from bar 16 the harmony now changes at a rate of two-per-bar (note also that the changes take place on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> beats of the bar, with this new harmonic upbeat helping to push the momentum forwards), with a similar increase to three-per-bar across the passing modulations (bars 22-24).

If we 'zoom out' once more to look at the sonata form contour of the movement, we also see that the *minore* variation (Variation 3) itself is not simply a case of major-minor conversion: instead, Beethoven seems deliberately to explore the theme's harmonic boundaries in an overtly developmental manner. Bar 2 of the original theme, for example, is supported by dominant harmony, but Beethoven adjusts this in Variation 3 to become a first inversion of chord VII - a diminished triad in the minor key. Avoiding the dominant in this case sidesteps the

possibility for a major chord and creates further dissonance, something that is rife throughout this variation. Similarly, in bar 5, Beethoven replaces the original subdominant-tonic harmonies with a diminished chord on E flat – only the structural harmonies that mark the beginnings and ends of sections remain intact. That is, both the arrival on the dominant at the end of section A (bar 8) and the closure on the tonic at the end of the A<sup>1</sup> sections (bars 16 and 34) are retained. Likewise, the passing modulations in section B are still audible, though here the music passes through D flat minor (bars 17-18) before returning to A flat minor in bars 19-20.

Neither can the placement of this variation set within the work be underestimated; like Mozart, who reminds us that his variation set is really a precursor to the *Allegro*, Beethoven appears to remind us that this is not a slow movement – merely an opening movement that employs a slow tempo. That Beethoven should choose a set of variations for this opening movement is indicative of lyric's growing presence across the whole sonata cycle, which begins in these 'middle' period works and becomes increasingly prominent towards the late style. While hitherto only one of Beethoven's piano sonatas (the Sonata in C minor, Op. 13, 'Pathétique') had opened with a slow tempo – and in that case it is clearly laid out as a *Grave* introduction to the opening *Allegro* – Op. 26 represents the first stage in Beethoven's experimentation with the repositioning of the 'slow movement' and the reweighting of lyric within the work. Note that the next two sonatas – Op. 27, Nos. 1 and 2 – both open with slow movements. And while both of the Op. 27 sonatas are 'quasi una fantasia' (as explored in Chapter 2), both also superimpose ternary structures upon the unfolding fantasia form – an echo, perhaps, of the same device in Op. 26.

Sisman appears to underestimate the importance of this formal interplay in the works of both Mozart and Beethoven: as we will see, this 'sonata type' of variation movement becomes increasingly important towards Beethoven's late works. But while Beethoven may have learned these features of formal shaping and his approach to the melodic-outline variation from Mozart, Haydn's own approach to variation, by contrast, was rather more varied:

'[Haydn's] early variations (before the first slow-movement sets in 1772) showed a more or less steady progression from variations over a constant bass, to constant-harmony variations, to sets that contained a preponderance of melodic-outline variations.'<sup>208</sup>

The most influential aspect of Haydn's variation technique for Beethoven, however, was his design for alternating variations, as Sisman has extensively discussed.<sup>209</sup> Beethoven was one of very few imitators to take on Haydn's alternating model, adapting it for all of his slow

---

<sup>208</sup> Sisman, 'Tradition and Transformation', p. 157

<sup>209</sup> See Sisman, 'Tradition and Transformation'

symphonic variation movements, among others.<sup>210</sup> But the root of his fascination with this particular technique may lie at the heart of Beethoven's slow movement aesthetic – namely, that Beethoven typically eschews practices which invite the music to 'stand still'. Indeed, this may be what makes Beethoven's slow movements so unique: that they offer much more than the traditional pastoral or consoling 'quiet adagio'<sup>211</sup> at the centre of the work. Rather, the slow movement for Beethoven becomes the crux of the work's expressive intensity, challenging our perception of what it is that the slow movement 'does'. Even in single variations such as the *Andante cantabile* from Beethoven's String Quartet in A major, Op. 18, No. 5, Beethoven 'breaks the rules': 'Beethoven breaks Classical decorum... he defamiliarises the theme. In a variation movement of 1799 one might diverge very widely from the theme, but a general propriety of familiarity asserted that the beginning was not the place for such a technique.'<sup>212</sup> This is not something that Beethoven learned from Mozart, nor indeed from Haydn, indeed Sisman suggests that with this type of technique 'Beethoven was staking his claim to a new decorum.'<sup>213</sup> But Haydn's tendency for surprise and his alternating model may have provided the impetus for such extremes of contrast within a superficially 'repetitious' work. It is no surprise therefore that Beethoven should look to alternating structures for further inspiration. Alternating variations – by contrast with single theme models – offer the possibility for heightened contrast, reduced repetition and a broader range of expressive material. It may be no coincidence, therefore, that four of Beethoven's nine movements in alternating variation form are to be found within his symphonies – where textural contrast and the rich orchestral palette may be used to heighten the effects of the double variation.<sup>214</sup>

Indeed, Leon Botstein has demonstrated the intricate ways in which Beethoven uses his orchestral palette to such effect, writing:

'His orchestration undermined the symmetries of symphonic form and his symphonies sounded as if they eschewed repetition and developed organically – but in an evolving linear, albeit revolutionary, manner. The symphonies rebelled against the expectation of sameness and surface coherence. Listening to Beethoven became an evolutionary and transforming journey.'<sup>215</sup>

---

<sup>210</sup> The alternating variation model is used in Op. 55, Op. 60, Op. 67, Op. 92, Op. 125, Op. 74, Op. 132, Op. 130 and Op. 70, No. 2.

<sup>211</sup> A.B. Marx, *Musical Form in the Age of Beethoven*, p. 87

<sup>212</sup> Sisman, 'Haydn and the Classical Variation', p. 241

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., p. 242

<sup>214</sup> The alternating variation is found in the following symphonies: Third Symphony, Op. 55/iv; Fifth Symphony, Op. 67/ii; Seventh Symphony, Op. 92/ii; Ninth Symphony, Op. 125/iii.

<sup>215</sup> Botstein, Leon, 'Sound and structure in Beethoven's orchestral music', from *The Cambridge Companion to Beethoven*, ed. Stanley (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 183

But it was Haydn too who provided the starting point for Beethoven in this respect, since he was the first composer to use variation form in the slow movements of his symphonies – while there are variation slow movements in Mozart’s piano concertos, there is none to be found in Mozart’s symphonies. Thus while Mozart may have provided Beethoven with many of the thematic and formal tools with which he would later develop his own variation technique, Haydn may have taught Beethoven the expressive potential of variation. Sisman suggests that ‘Haydn achieves his most intimate voice in variations’<sup>216</sup>, perhaps because the promise of repetition allows for the possibility of deviation, which in turn endows ‘the notes with poetic content.’<sup>217</sup> So while Mozart may have helped Beethoven to shape his outer variation movements, Haydn may have revealed to Beethoven the potential for the expressivity of variation within the slow movement.

## Variation as Slow Movement

In Chapter 1 I discussed the matter of tempo in relation to the slow movement, and the implications of ‘slowness’ upon form. ‘Slowness’ turns form inwards upon itself, zooming in upon the particular, individual moment, which in turn is magnified by its tempo. The slow movement is a genre concerned with detail, and allows the listener the rare chance fully to perceive the intricate moments of the music, while casting off preoccupations with a dynamically structured large-scale form. As such, it is not difficult to understand why Caplin should choose to classify variation form as distinctly aligned with the slow movement. But Caplin is wrong in suggesting that variation is a simple form. Variation form intensifies and augments the very principles at the heart of the slow movement, prizing detail above structure and transformation above return. While sonata form may trace an arch-like outline, that passes its themes through their own reflection before returning to their original guise, variation form is a process of refraction that disperses the theme outwards. This process of intensification and transformation, unlike the cyclical nature of sonata structures, is more akin to the intensification procedure I outlined in Chapter 1. If we understand variation as a lyrical form, then variation sets that appear in the ‘wrong’ position, as we saw with Op. 26, may consequently be formally adapted to suit their context – moulded into a sonata form arch. We are reminded again of Hepokoski and Darcy’s insight that: ‘The slow movement can be understood as a site of transformation: a process to pass through in order to arrive at the heightened spirits of the finale.’<sup>218</sup>

While sonata form is prized for its unity of form, as Michaelis wrote in 1803, variation form is founded upon diversity of ideas:

---

<sup>216</sup> Sisman, ‘Tradition and Transformation’, p. 165

<sup>217</sup> Spitzer, *Metaphor and Musical Thought*, p. 235

<sup>218</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, *Sonata Theory*, p. 336

'Variation demonstrates freedom of fantasy in treatment of the subject, excites pleasant astonishment in recognising again in new forms the beauty, charm, or sublimity already known, attractively fusing the new with the old without creating a fantastic mixture of heterogeneous figures... Variation arouses admiration insofar as everything latent in the theme is gradually made manifest, and unfolds [into] the most attractive diversity.'<sup>219</sup>

That is not to suggest that variation form represents a disparate series of unconnected ideas: like the free fantasia (as explored in Chapter 5), variation form is supported by a unified undercurrent – the theme – which acts as the platform for the movement's exploration. It shares with sonata form the desire to test the limits of the theme, but while sonata structures achieve this through juxtaposition, variation form does so through embellishment and transformation. Moreover, where sonata form is a dynamic structure, variation form is founded upon the idea of repetition – and this may be what most closely aligns it with the slow movement. As an unmarked internal space, the slow movement offers the possibility to explore 'unendliche Melodie' and the chance to dwell, ruminate and expand upon a single idea.

It is this very principle, however, that has seen variation form so maligned by writers over the years. As Sisman suggests: 'Its common practices do not accord with several cherished assumptions about musical value... Variations seem artificial and arbitrary, incapable of a sustained organic structure, and thus violate one of the central tenets of German Romanticism.'<sup>220</sup> It is a criticism that is also frequently levelled against the slow movement – which to many writers often constitutes little more than a passing triviality on the route to the finale. As Margaret Notley writes: 'Johann Georg Sulzer had assigned to the outer Allegros the "expressions of grandeur, passion, and the sublime" considered suitable for the symphonic genre as a whole; the "andante or largo movement that comes in between the first and last allegro movements does not have so determined a character."<sup>221</sup> Even Hepokoski and Darcy's statement ('a process to pass through in order to arrive at the heightened spirits of the finale') may carry these undertones. To many writers this concept of 'standing still' is a backwards-looking process in the context of the Classical style, so foreign is it to the new vogue of sonata form. But as Sisman has shown while citing the author of [Rhetorica] Ad Herrenium, repetition has its own values: 'The frequent recourse to the same word is not dictated by verbal poverty; rather there inheres in the repetition an elegance which the ear can distinguish more easily than words can explain.'<sup>222</sup> Arnold Schoenberg has also reinforced the importance of such repetitive structures: 'In music the repetitions of certain of the smallest parts (motives, *gestalten*, phrases)

---

<sup>219</sup> Sisman, Elaine, "'The spirit of Mozart from Haydn's hands": Beethoven's musical inheritance', from *The Cambridge Companion to Beethoven*, p. 60

<sup>220</sup> Sisman, *Haydn and the Classical Variation*, p. 1

<sup>221</sup> Notley, 'The Cult of the Classical Adagio', p. 35

<sup>222</sup> [Pseudo-Cicero] cited by Sisman, *Haydn and the Classical Variation*, p. 4

primarily make possible the perception of these small parts as belonging together. Remembering is based upon recognition and re-recognition.<sup>223</sup> Moreover, in the context of variation form such repetition is not a like-for-like series of presentations, but rather a gradual process of elaboration and transformation – something that is at the heart of the lyric style. Variation is a process of self-reflection which allows music to ‘speak’; as Spitzer writes: ‘Discourse, then, is a dialogue of the present with its past.’<sup>224</sup> This dialogue generates a process of reinterpretation that offers a lyrical alternative to a dynamic process of juxtaposition.

‘Repetition’ itself is a misleading term, since it undermines the possibility of deviation from a recognised starting point, and it is this very digression that imbues music with its expressive potential. Patterning and deviation are common to all formal types in the Classical style, with the interruption of an established phrasing, say, throwing the listener off course and drawing attention to a particular feature of the music. The same is true of harmonic planning, such as interrupted cadences, sudden chromaticism and unusual modulations – these all alter the anticipated course and thereby endow the music with ‘meaning’. In variation form, however, this expressive potential is heightened, since the established patterning is typically more rigidly enforced. As Sisman writes: ‘While the principle of repetition may seem among the sturdiest possible, it is actually surprisingly fragile, because at any moment a greater-than-usual contrast can upset the perception of a repetitive form and seemingly reorganise the whole.’<sup>225</sup> Such instability ‘belongs’ in the slow movement, whose malleable template can accommodate such disturbances. The accumulation of these factors – instability, surprise, transformation, self-reflection and intensification – mean that it is no surprise that in each of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven’s oeuvres, variations are most commonly found in the slow movement. Moreover, such movements are most often situated at the centre of the work – outer variation movements, and particularly opening variation movements, are rare. Beethoven wrote just one opening variation movement out of a total of 35 movements in variation form (Op. 26); Mozart wrote only two out of 37 variation movements – the early String Quartet K. 170 and the Piano Sonata K. 331 (or four, if one includes the *Divertimenti*) and although Haydn wrote some 18 opening variation movements, his total number of variation movements outnumbers those of Mozart or Beethoven by almost a factor of four.

But while slow movements are most commonly found as internal movements, and so too are variations, variation finales are far more widespread than opening variation movements. This may in part be due to variation form’s naturally affinity with the rondo – a common finale form that celebrates the repetition and recurrence of a central theme. But could it also be that

---

<sup>223</sup> Schoenberg, Arnold, *The Musical Idea and the Logic, Technique, and Art of Its Presentation* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2006), p. 131

<sup>224</sup> Spitzer, *Metaphor and Musical Thought*, p. 109

<sup>225</sup> Sisman, *Haydn and the Classical Variation*, p. 4



variation form is so uncommon for opening movements due to the inherent nature of its structure? Opening movements must perform certain functions, chief among them being to define the work's tonality and to set the pace and mood of the work. Both of these functions are most readily achieved by a fast movement, in which form and harmonic planning may take precedence over melodic detail. One must 'zoom out' to best take stock of these large-scale impressions. A slow opening movement (here I exclude slow introductions), meanwhile, may offer too much melodic detail for the immediate clarity of form and harmony to be received by the listener. It is interesting to note that in Op. 26, Beethoven's only work to begin with a set of variations, the opening movement is absolved of its responsibility in setting the tonality of the work, since each subsequent movement is also in the tonic – there is therefore no need to make tonal definition the main focus of the opening movement.

While I have established many of the areas of contrast between slow movements and opening allegros, it appears that there are a number of areas of similarity to be found between slow movements and finales. Formally speaking, the finale treads the same boundaries as the slow movement – at once reflective and backwards looking, and at the same time pushing forwards towards its ultimate goal: the end of the work. Like the slow movement, the finale is therefore often both a point of relaxation, typically signified by the looseness created by the episodic character of rondo form, and a place of 'working out' and resolving the issues hitherto unsolved in the work – a further stage in the work's process of intensification. Take, for example, the C major march 'breakouts' first heard in the slow movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, which appear to interrupt the series of variations, conflict with the key of the movement (A flat major) and disrupt the *dolce* character of the main theme. This march topic is picked up once more in the work's finale, though with C major established as the new tonic of the work, the march now appears in the 'correct' key. Though the march is not recalled note-for-note, Beethoven confirms the link with the slow movement both rhythmically, through the fanfare-like dotted rhythms of the upbeat figure, and instrumentally, re-using the brass-dominated texture. The finale thus looks backwards to the 'anomaly' raised in the slow movement, and forwards towards the work's triumphant conclusion in the newly established major mode. It is this dual aspect of the finale that may make it so much more common than first movements as the site of variation sets. On the one hand, with the tonic of the work (usually) restored in the finale, the movement is afforded a sense of space, one in which it may dwell to the work's end. The repetitive nature of variation form and its propensity for remaining in a single key throughout suits this sense of relaxation. While at the same time, the movement may drive forwards to its conclusion through the additive, episodic nature of variation form, coupled with the implied *accelerando* that results from a series of gradual diminutions.

But while variations are most commonly associated with slow movements, and finales often appropriate variations, the reality is that variation finales rarely constitute 'slow movements' at all. Variation finales typically follow altogether more complicated or adulterated versions of the traditional variation model. Moreover, they are not usually 'slow'. The variation finale of Beethoven's Third Symphony, for example, is marked *Allegro molto* and uses a double variation model, with the interaction of two intertwining themes making reference to the more normative sonata finale model. While the finale of the Ninth Symphony is also headed *Presto* (though it oscillates between tempos) and, famous for its formal complexity, juxtaposes several variation segments with a double fugue and numerous vocal segments that are apparently unconnected to the variations themselves. The complications of these variation finales are unique in their scope but they are not without precedent.

Sisman suggests two intrinsic distinctions between variation slow movements and variation finales which coincide with the conclusions drawn thus far: firstly, that 'finale themes of variations contain less figurative detail than the slow-movement themes'<sup>226</sup> and secondly, that in many cases variation finales are 'longer and more intricately plotted than the slow movements'.<sup>227</sup> The finale of Mozart's Piano Concerto in C minor, K. 491 fits the bill: marked *Allegretto* (a tempo marking noted earlier as 'on the cusp') it contains at its centre 'a vast "middle section," in which variations refer to each other, and in which changes of character and generic allusion are more pronounced.'<sup>228</sup> This middle section, Sisman goes on to conclude, 'seems a compendium of characters, genres, topics, and styles, alluding to conventions that force a reappraisal of paratactic form.'<sup>229</sup> While such a formal design draws obvious allusions with a sonata form development section, it is even more interesting to note that the finale also recalls the key scheme and orchestration of the work's *Larghetto* slow movement. While summatory finales are quite common, and self-referencing may add to the sense of culmination that the finale strives towards, one cannot escape the sense that Mozart is drawing attention to the use of this 'slow movement form' in an alternative place within the work. The 'joke' is reinforced by the fact that the slow movement is in rondo form – a form more common to finales than slow movements, reinforcing the suggestion that the two movements may have swapped places. Neither is this backwards-referencing of variation finales an isolated occurrence among Mozart's works.

The finale of Mozart's Piano Concerto in G major, K. 453, is also marked *Allegretto* and here the traditional variation model is 'complicated' by the splicing of variation form with a rondo outline. But this *Allegretto* section proves to be just the first half of this two-part finale,

---

<sup>226</sup> Sisman, *Haydn and the Classical Variation*, p. 231

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., p. 233

which Mozart demarcates with a double barline, a fermata and the indication: 'Presto. Finale.' Consequently, we are left wondering whether this is the beginning of the 'finale proper' and whether the variation section was intended to serve simply as a 'slow' introduction. Sisman writes of this surprising addition:

'Supplanting the variations is an exciting five-part series of sometimes discontinuous events, all of which contain repeated and occasionally varied material... Indeed, the finale seems to reverse the inevitable full cadences in the variations by giving thematic passages (the finale-theme and variation-theme sections) half cadences only.'<sup>230</sup>

But Sisman fails to spot the missing link: namely, that Mozart appears to be playing a formal game in which the finale masquerades as a slow movement. The 'extra' finale apparently serves both to echo and to question the preceding set of variations – ostensibly questioning its validity as a suitable finale. While in an unusual twist, the features that Sisman highlights (discontinuous events, delayed resolutions and thwarted cadences) are characteristics identified earlier as common to the slow movement. And in a striking parallel with K. 491, this finale too finds itself referring back to the 'misplaced' slow movement, which, according to Roman Ivanovitch, provides the model for the theme of the variations. Indeed, Ivanovitch also draws parallels between the 'complicated' sonata form of the internal slow movement in this concerto and its follow-up in the segmented finale. Ivanovitch's response, and indeed the thrust of his paper, is to posit that: 'Variation can be understood as a vital mode of Mozart's musical thinking, an impulse evident not merely in movements labelled "theme and variation," but in his output as a whole.'<sup>231</sup>

What Mozart seems to begin in these works, and which Beethoven later develops more thoroughly, is the possibility of creating connections between movements, and in particular the use of variation as a process to fulfil this quest. But while Mozart appears to draw links between the slow movement and subsequent variation finale in both his Piano Concertos in C minor and G major, K. 491 and K. 453, Beethoven's internal self-referencing represents a new level of cyclical continuity and a more intricate way of developing these connections. While the finales of Mozart's piano concertos *recall* earlier elements from the slow movements, Beethoven's finales seem to *solve* earlier problems. The finale of the Fifth Symphony is a case in point, picking up a previous irregularity from the slow movement and 'normalising' it within the context of the finale. The same is true of the Seventh Symphony, where layers of formal complication in the slow movement (as identified in Chapter 2) are unravelled within the finale.

---

<sup>230</sup> Sisman, *Haydn and the Classical Variation*, pp. 222-223

<sup>231</sup> Ivanovitch, Roman, 'Recursive/Discursive: Variation and Sonata in the Andante of Mozart's String Quartet in F, K. 590', from *Music Theory Spectrum*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (Fall 2010), p. 145

Here, the form of the 'slow movement' is compromised by the breakout of a *maggiore* section that is later rhymed with the Trio of the ensuing *Presto*. This gives the appearance that the slow movement is sliding seamlessly into a dance form, but this *maggiore* section is undercut by the continuing presence of the ostinato rhythm in the bass. When the music modulates to C major at bar 139, tumbling triplets quickly lead to a series of punctuating *fortissimo* quaver chords (bars 148-149) which cut short the lyrical *maggiore* and return to the opening key and theme. The *Allegretto* thus finds itself caught between march and dance topics, and between variation and dance forms – it neither functions as slow movement nor as a central dance movement. The finale helps to make sense of these complications, redefining the A major breakout of the *Allegretto* as a precursor for the celebratory finale and compressing the 'dragging' ostinato march rhythm into triumphant fanfare figure (see Figure 3.1.1). Meanwhile, the contour of the A major breakout in the *Allegretto* is also recalled in the finale (see Figure 3.1.2)

Figure 3.1.1

Beethoven: Symphony No. 7  
Ostinato march rhythm (*Allegretto*) – Fanfare figure (Finale)

*Allegretto*, bars 27-28

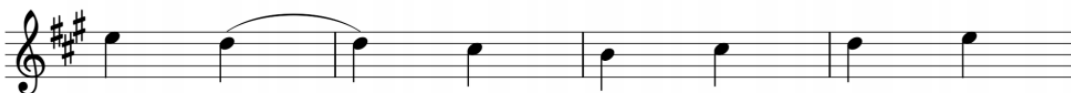


Finale, bar 28



Figure 3.1.2

*Allegretto*, bars 104-107 (clarinet)



Finale, bars 37-40 (1<sup>st</sup> violin)



The slow movement therefore becomes integrated across the cycle, looking outwards towards the rest of the work. Where Mozart alludes to earlier material within the finale, Beethoven goes a step further to create a continuous narrative thread between the movements. The function of the variation finale in these works therefore becomes one of reconciliation and summation, chiming with Sisman's suggestion that variation finales are typically 'longer and more

intricately plotted than the slow movements'.<sup>232</sup> Moreover, these finales take on distinctly lyrical tropes, functioning as both a point of expressive intensity and of relaxation. Neither are these movements indicative of the late style: in Beethoven's Violin Sonata in A major, Op. 30, No. 1, for example, Beethoven appears to follow Mozart's lead by 'swapping' the forms of the slow movement and finale to give a central *Adagio* in rondo form and a finale in variation form. Like Mozart, Beethoven also draws attention to the swap, by mirroring the distinctive dotted rhythms of the *Adagio* in the finale by turning them into scotch snaps. It is this interplay between movements and the increasing malleability of form and its 'correct' context that becomes ever-more important in Beethoven's work, representing Beethoven's longstanding desire to integrate the lyric genre within the cycle as a whole.

By the time we reach his String Quartet in E flat major, Op. 74 (The 'Harp'), the question of integration within the cycle is brought to the fore. Like Mozart's Piano Concerto, K. 491, and like Op. 30, No. 1, the Op. 74 quartet concludes with a set of variations marked *Allegretto*, while the earlier slow movement also mirrors Mozart's template and is in rondo form. And like the two Mozart examples, slow movement *topoi* also seem to pervade the finale of Op. 74, with John Daverio noting that:

'Lyricism takes a somewhat different turn in Op. 74... The family of strategies employed in Op. 74 (figural variation, alternation, embellishment) stand in opposition to the dynamic, goal-directed processes that regulate the musical flow over long stretches of the Op. 59 quartets. Together they create a new and deeply expressive tone that will continue to inform Beethoven's musical language in the late quartets.'<sup>233</sup>

This may very well be the turning point in what appears to be a seamless progression in Beethoven's variation processes. As Marston has shown, it is a complex movement and one that invites multiple interpretations. He writes:

'The one structural feature of the movement that several commentators have noted is the grouping of the variations into two alternating sets of three according to dynamics and content. But... corresponding members of these two sets are closely linked by other means so that in addition to the grouping 1 3 5/2 4 6 there arises a grouping in pairs: 1-2, 3-4, 5-6. The variations may also be divided into two sets of three: in this interpretation Variations 1-3 form an 'expository' and Variations 4-6 a 'developmental' or 'exploratory' group, while the coda serves to recapitulate and resolve earlier events.'<sup>234</sup>

---

<sup>232</sup> Sisman, *Haydn and the Classical Variation*, p. 231

<sup>233</sup> Daverio, John, 'Manner, tone and tendency in Beethoven's chamber music for strings', from *The Cambridge Companion to Beethoven*, p.157

<sup>234</sup> Marston, 'Analysing Variations', p. 306

While Marston does not delve further into the implications of these groupings, I would suggest that each may reflect the three possible ‘faces’ of this variation finale: 1) the grouping 1 3 5/2 4 6 implies an alternating rondo form, characteristic of finales; 2) the grouping 1-2, 3-4, 5-6 implies a ternary structure, typically associated with the slow movement; 3) the grouping 1-3, 4-6 + coda suggests, as Marston notes, a sonata form model – an established first movement form. As such, Op. 74 represents a new level in Beethoven’s development of variation form and perhaps even the coming together of two previously separate strands of his musical thinking: while in Op. 26, we witnessed the integration of lyric genres and first movement forms, and separately noted the link between slow movements and finales, Op. 74 may represent the first time that both of these tropes are brought together. Beethoven’s statement with the finale of Op. 74 is that variations – and by analogy, lyricism – may integrate across the whole cycle, performing variously as first movement, slow movement or finale. As Marston writes, this work ‘raises issues which remained important to Beethoven even in his last period.’<sup>235</sup> He continues by drawing our attention to the ‘maverick note’ D flat which sets in during the second half of Variation 6 in the Op. 74 finale. Its surprising interruption can only be fully understood, he shows, by tracing its genesis to the slow introduction that opened the work and thence to the slow movement. But this in turn has implications for our understanding of the finale and for the role of the variations themselves, drawing deep-seated connections with the work’s lyrical movements and reinterpreting the finale as part of this lyrical network. Could this be the first time that Beethoven challenges the perception of variation as a form, and repositions it as a lyric genre?

## Variation as Form and Process

While we readily understand the concept of a movement in theme and variation form, in which a theme is presented, repeated and embellished, this very process of transformation and elaboration may be more widely interpreted as a recognisable procedure that transgresses the boundaries of variation as a ‘form’. Moreover, as the ensuing analyses will demonstrate, and as the preceding Mozart examples suggest, this concept of variation as ‘process’ may be intrinsically connected to the slow movement – though not exclusively placed within it. As Spitzer demonstrates, the paratactic nature of the variation process is itself a lyrical idiom:

‘Parataxis foregrounds lyricism’s archaic character, which it shares with the Baroque, in contradistinction to the modernity of goal-driven Classical discourse. Thus Baroque and lyric

---

<sup>235</sup> Marston, ‘Analysing Variations’, p. 303

tendencies make common cause against the ruling ethos of sonata and can be regarded as the “inner spaces” of the sonata city.’<sup>236</sup>

As such, variation may represent a process of recession, of journeying into an interior space or, as Spitzer suggests, a distancing from the goal-driven Classical idiom. This in itself moves variation (as form or process) away from the outer sonata form structures and into its own internal space. The pattern of repetition, transformation and continual intensification is narrative-like in its discourse, and journeys to a different place from whence it began – this is its fundamental distinction to the cyclical nature of sonata form.

This distancing is at the heart of the slow movement of Beethoven’s ‘Archduke’ Trio, Op. 97, in which Nicholas Martson identifies ‘the sense of a gradual recession of the theme into the “distance” as it is left further and further behind by successive variations.’<sup>237</sup> This process of recession, which takes hold at the centre of the work in the slow movement, actually begins in the Archduke’s opening movement, as Adorno notes. Writing about the first movement, Adorno claims: ‘The second theme is very far away – too far, for my sense of form.’<sup>238</sup> Later, he refers to the same theme’s expansiveness, likening it to ‘the far-travelling quality of the epic’.<sup>239</sup> For Adorno, the ‘far away’ quality of the second theme of the *Allegro* is due in large part to its estranged key. The movement itself is in B flat major, but Beethoven modulates to the unusual key of G major (the submediant major) for the second theme. What is more, this transition is, in Adorno’s words, ‘abrupt’, with Beethoven simply creating a ‘switch’ from B flat major to D major through chromatic inflections in just three bars (bars 33-35), preparing the way for the onset of G major in bar 43. Moreover, Adorno has problems with the thematic opposition of the two themes – considering the second theme ‘too mechanical’ and more reminiscent of a piano concerto than the trio at hand. Despite Adorno’s misgivings, such abrupt shifts of perspective continue into the *Scherzo and Trio*, with the Trio section echoing the ‘far away’ qualities of the first movement’s second theme. Although the Trio is by no means remote in key – B flat minor (the tonic minor) – it is certainly other-worldly in its scope. Whereas the themes in the Scherzo are largely characterised by scalar motion, and help to define a sense of clarity in both rhythm and key, the Trio theme winds chromatically around B flat, without any clear cadence until some 35 bars in, where a *forte* perfect cadence finally establishes B flat minor as the tonic. The sense of obscurity is furthered by each of the three instruments pursuing independent lines, all of which feature syncopation that obscures the barlines and implies a 4/4 metre. The Trio also

---

<sup>236</sup> Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*, p. 115

<sup>237</sup> Marston, Nicholas, ‘Goal-directedness in Beethoven’s music’, from *The Cambridge Companion to Beethoven*, p. 90

<sup>238</sup> Adorno, *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*, p. 96

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

pursues distant key relationships, with a move to E major (a tritone key relationship) for the second theme – itself dance-like, well-defined and far-removed from the chromatic meanderings with which the Trio began.

Distant key relationships are at the heart of the ‘Archduke’ Trio and the *Andante cantabile* declares its own distance from the preceding movements at the outset, commencing in D major – the mediant major – which is by far the rarest choice of slow movement key in Beethoven’s oeuvre.<sup>240</sup> But in this context, this choice of key plays a dual role: while on one level this dramatic shift distances itself from the tonic keys of the opening movements and thereby looks forwards and, perhaps, into another world, the sharpwards shift has already been alluded to in the preceding movements (with the G major second subject in the *Allegro*, and the E major modulation in the Trio). The choice of key comes, therefore, perhaps not so much as a dramatic surprise, since the work itself to this point has been full of surprises, but rather as a way of ‘making sense’ of the sharpwards lurches in the *Allegro* and *Scherzo*. The slow movement is still ‘distant’ from what precedes it, but now we may understand the preceding sharpwards shifts as gestures towards this distant place. Note that there are tonal similarities here with Beethoven’s ‘Hammerklavier’ Sonata in B flat major, Op. 106, in which the early appearance of D major in the first movement (bars 36-39) is prominent, but at this point apparently empty of significance. Marston suggests that this initial appearance proposes D major as a ‘virtual’ second-group tonality for the movement – a composing out of a III# (D major) triad as a dominant substitute. Only in the (slow) third movement does D major ‘make real’ the function that remained virtual in the first movement. The effect is once again one of ‘other-worldliness’, as Marston notes that this rendering of D major as a stable tonality ‘probably represents the most tranquil moment in the entire sonata’<sup>241</sup>.

Echoing the finales examined earlier, in which the slow movement is revisited as part of the finale, Beethoven revisits the key scheme of the *Andante cantabile* in the finale of the Piano Trio. Here, Beethoven revisits the slow movement’s dominant key – A major – which features heavily in the *Andante cantabile* as part of the modulating theme. Cyclically, this also has significance, since the sharpwards shift in the Trio of the second movement was to E major – the dominant of A. With the sharpwards modulation in the first movement moving to G major, we are left with an intertwining set of fifth relationships between the four movements:

---

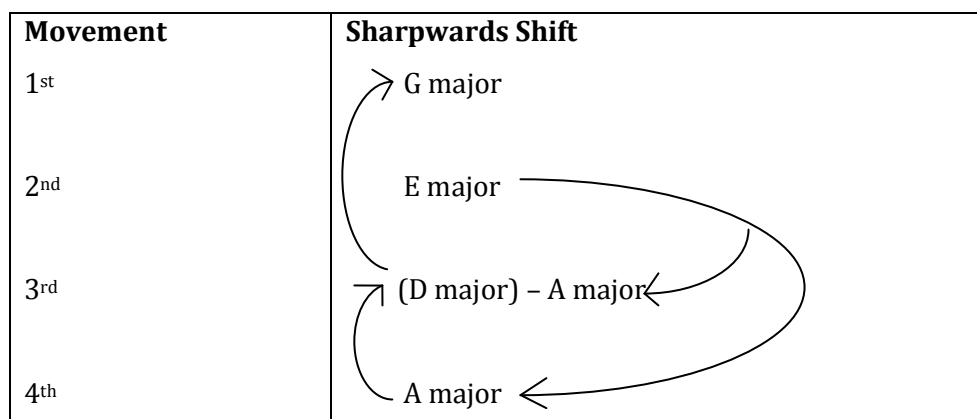
<sup>240</sup> As demonstrated in Chapter 2, the tonic major or minor is by far the most common key for Beethoven’s slow movements, followed by the subdominant, and then submediant. Sharpwards shifts, such as this are rare, as Beethoven tends to move towards flatwards keys for the slow movement.

<sup>241</sup> Marston, Nicholas, ‘From A to B: The History of an Idea in the “Hammerklavier” Sonata, from *Beethoven Forum* 6 (1998), p. 110



Figure 3.2

Beethoven, 'Archduke' Piano Trio in B flat major, Op. 97  
Interconnected sharpwards shifts between movements



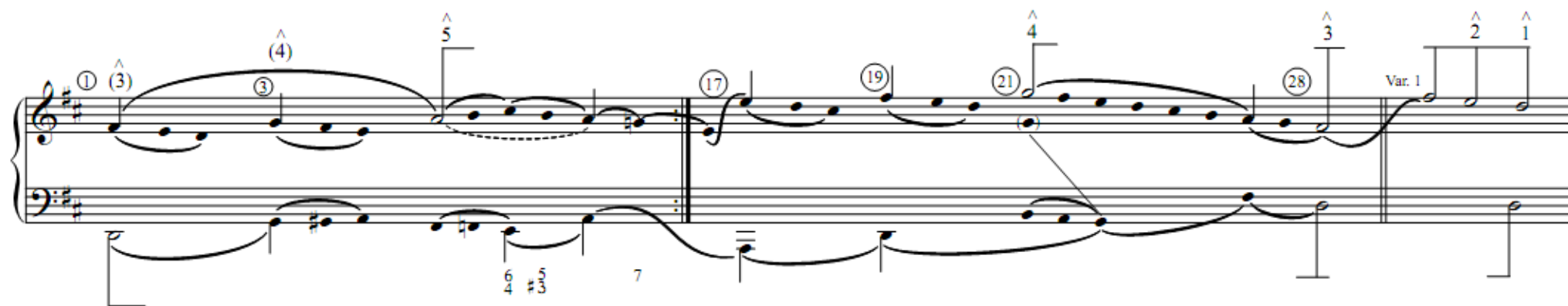
The 'Archduke' is tied together through harmonic 'links', and at the centre of this network is the slow movement, whose voice-leading patterns reveal the deep-seated connections between the outer movements and the 'distant' *Andante cantabile*. Note that the same is true of Beethoven's String Quartet in C sharp minor, Op. 131, where Spitzer has shown that 'lyric's dual face as auxiliary and goal is composed out through two intersecting key schemes'<sup>242</sup>. Here, the slow movement (also a set of variations) in A major forms the connecting linchpin between the overlaid descending tetrachord and rising fifth schemes.

While Op. 131 is celebrated for its complex harmonic interplay, a look at the voice-leading in the slow movement Op. 97 reveals that it too employs a complicated interlinked key scheme between the four movements, with the slow movement at the centre of this network (see Figure 3.3).<sup>243</sup>

<sup>242</sup> Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*, p. 174

<sup>243</sup> The repeat of Section A (bars 9-16) is shown as a literal repeat in this graph.

Beethoven, 'Archduke Piano Trio in B flat major, Op. 97  
*Andante cantabile*: voice-leading foreground graph



The theme of the *Andante cantabile* falls into two parts: section A comprises bars 1-8 which outline a complete sentence, repeated almost note-for-note with only textural and registral changes in bars 9-16. Section B is an unrepeated sentence of eight bars (bars 17-24), followed by a four-bar coda (bars 25-28). Between these two halves, however, Beethoven sets up a tension between the point of arrival and its relationship to the modulating theme. The theme modulates to A major (the dominant) in bar 8, and then again at the repeat of section A in bar 16, and we expect that  $\hat{5}$  (A) will be established as the Primary Tone. A three-note initial ascent from  $\hat{3}$  in bar 1, to  $\hat{4}$  in bar 3, reaching  $\hat{5}$  in bar 5 suggests this is the case, but this is undercut by the first inversion chord (bar 5) which falls to an implied 6/4 chord in the following bar. Meanwhile,  $\hat{4}$  (G) is achieved far more conclusively in bar 3, with a strong root position triad underpinning it; indeed,  $\hat{4}$  is strengthened in bars 8 and 16, as the modulation to A major is swiftly swept aside with a G natural above a dominant seventh. In the second half of the theme, the complications continue, with the initial ascent of section A mimicked once more – but here the climax on  $\hat{5}$  fails to materialise and is stopped short at the arrival on  $\hat{4}$ . Crucially, this moment is highlighted by a sudden *fp* dynamic marking and Beethoven's first attempt to counter the prevailing second-beat emphasis of the movement's sarabande rhythm with a long downbeat.

While the strong presence of  $\hat{4}$  in section B might suggest the beginning of a descent from  $\hat{5}$ , ostensibly established in section A, its arrival in bar 5 is problematic and ultimately too weak to be conclusively labelled as the theme's Primary Tone. David Beach has discussed the problematic nature of the 6/4 chord and its ability to offer sufficient support for notes within the fundamental line. He asks, in a 6/4-5/3 progression: 'If the six-four is a linear chord, dependent upon its resolution for meaning, how can it and the subsequent five-three both support tones (the  $\hat{3}$  and  $\hat{2}$ ) of the fundamental line?'<sup>244</sup> His solution is 'to accept this phenomenon simply because of its existence in musical practice'<sup>245</sup> – a perhaps unsatisfactory suggestion that nevertheless chimes with Robert Hatten's writings about the 'arrival 6/4'. Here, Hatten suggests that such 'arrival' appearances of the second inversion, following a minor chord, may be used for specific effect – to give the appearance of a Picardy third and evoke a feeling of transcendence or salvation.<sup>246</sup> While such an effect may be appropriate to the slow movement, in Op. 97 it is compromised by the strength with which  $\hat{4}$  is asserted elsewhere in the theme, creating a cross-cutting of arrival points that jeopardises the stability of the theme's

---

<sup>244</sup> Beach, David, 'The Cadential Six-Four as Support for Scale-Degree Three of the Fundamental Line', from *Journal of Music Theory*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Spring, 1990), p. 82

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> See Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, p. 15

voice-leading. It is surprising that this conflict has not been discussed elsewhere in the literature, given the intricacy with which this conflict unfolds throughout the rest of the movement.

Note that as well as creating a  $\hat{4}/\hat{5}$  conflict within the fundamental line, Beethoven also leaves a question mark as to the completion of the descent. As Figure 3.3 shows, the voice-leading of the theme appears to remain ‘unclosed’ and left lingering on  $\hat{3}$  - or does it? Looking back at the opening of the theme itself, we see that in addition to the three-note ascent across bars 1-5, there is also a smaller scale three-note descent within the first two bars (see Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4

Beethoven, ‘Archduke Piano Trio in B flat major, Op. 97  
Opening descent



This descent from  $f\#^1-d^1$  outlines an internal  $\hat{3}-\hat{1}$  descent, such that the theme in effect ‘begins with an ending’. At the start of each new variation, therefore, the lingering  $\hat{3}$  is able to complete its descent to  $\hat{1}$ , and with each cycle of the variations, the  $\hat{5}-\hat{1}$  descent cuts across the start of one variation and the beginning of the next. This cyclical dovetailing is reinforced on an internal thematic level too, since with each move to  $\hat{4}$  at the end of section A (in bars 8 and 16), this quickly transforms the final chord to a dominant seventh and allows section A to be repeated and neatly sewn together. This provides another internal  $\hat{5}-\hat{1}$  descent with each repeat of section A. Beethoven’s Haydnesque musical ‘joke’ – that the  $\hat{5}-\hat{1}$  descent is in fact made up of connected thirds, which can be separated and sewn together at will, variously acting as beginnings, or endings, or both – also finds small-scale internal manifestations with repeated third ascents and descents making appearances throughout the theme. But of course the extension to the joke is that these ‘completed’ fundamental lines cut across the musical structure and are bound up in an endless cycle of new variations, necessary to complete the line. As such, they remain incomplete, and Beethoven spins out the larger and more complex  $\hat{5}-$

1̂ descent across the movement as a whole – the internal mini-descents acting like tantalising glimpses of the finished product.

Marianne Kielian-Gilbert has demonstrated how different perspectives and multiple readings of a work may help us to ‘split’ our perception of the music, understanding the work as a dynamic progression over time. She writes: ‘The play of presentation and response, perception and interpretation, is part of the dynamic temporal character of music.’<sup>247</sup> Moreover, the particular effects of a specific musical passage may often actually only be revealed through multiple readings, and oscillation between the two may be the key to understanding the work’s character. This is evidenced through the oscillation between the beginning/ending functions of the opening bars: depending on our perspective, the opening bars may be perceived as a ‘beginning’ and the start of a three-note ascent from 3̂-5̂, or they may function as an ‘ending’, completing the 5̂-1̂ of descent of previous variations (or indeed the internal descent of section A). But the more pressing problem of the fundamental line’s Primary Tone presents a similar tension: is the G in bar 21 a structural 4̂ or merely a passing note to 5̂? Moreover, is its harmonic function as a subdominant to D or a seventh to A? In fact, its appearance changes with each new glance: its sweeping descent from g<sup>2</sup>-a<sup>1</sup> in bars 21-22 initially posits it as a seventh, a feature strengthened by the arrival on a dominant seventh chord on the second beat of bar 22, repeated once more on the final beat of the same bar. But note that the ascent from d<sup>2</sup>-g<sup>2</sup> in bars 20-21 strengthens its relationship with D and reinforces its subdominant function as a pre-dominant chord for the forthcoming resolution to D major: perhaps it was a subdominant after all. Indeed, this d<sup>2</sup>-g<sup>2</sup> ascent functions as a diminution of an identical ascent in bars 2-3, at which point G figured unequivocally as a subdominant. In fact, the discrepancy is encapsulated in one tiny moment of the theme: the chord on the second beat of bar 8. In this chord alone G carries out both of its functions simultaneously, acting both as the seventh to this dominant seventh chord, and as the subdominant-functioning 4̂ in the descending 5̂-1̂ line that cuts across bars 8-10. This collision of functions is one that plays out across the movement as a whole, and is bound up in the key scheme of the wider work, as we will witness over the course of the ensuing analysis.

Having established D major and A major as the central keys in the slow movement, the *Andante cantabile* has already forged harmonic links with the outer movements – by direct link with the A major passage in the finale, and via a dominant link with the G major second subject in the first movement, a relationship which is cemented by the prominence of G within the theme – note that, octave doubling aside, the g<sup>2</sup> in bar 21 is the apex of the theme as a whole.

---

<sup>247</sup> Kielian-Gilbert, Marianne, ‘Interpreting Schenkerian Prolongation’, from *Music Analysis*, Vol. 22, No. 1/2 (March-July 2003), p. 56

Indeed, this relationship with the first movement becomes crucial to the unfolding variations, as we will see in due course. This leaves only the E major shift from the Trio in the second movement unaccounted for, but this too is alluded to as a secondary dominant in the move to A major (note the D sharp in bar 5) and also through the prominence of E in the movement's voice-leading. In section A, E features as both the highest and lowest note in each hand, appearing as an E<sup>1</sup> in the LH in bar 6, while the RH breaks with the conjunct motion to this point to stretch out to an e<sup>2</sup> in the RH in the same bar. Likewise, on the repeat of this section (bars 9-16), the RH introduces the new highest note of the movement thus far – an e<sup>3</sup> in bar 14. The slow movement therefore helps to 'make sense' of the sharpwards shifts in the outer movements, situating them within the 'distant place' to which they alluded. Plantinga identifies a similar function for the slow movement in Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor, Op. 37, of which he writes: 'A major structural undertaking of this [slow] movement and the following one will be the reconciliation of this vivid tonal opposition. As early as the second phrase of the *Largo* a clear gesture is made in that direction.'<sup>248</sup> Of the few precedents in Beethoven's output for the type of large-scale key planning explored in Op. 97, the Op. 37 Piano Concerto bears remarkable similarities. Written some ten years earlier than the 'Archduke', Op. 37 features a slow movement in E major – the sharpened mediant major. The two movements have similar openings – both featuring a solo piano introduction, the theme of which is a largely homophonic, chorale-like melody. Both are in triple time, situated in the same register and even encompass the same range, as well as featuring themes that modulate to the dominant. More pertinently, the first movement of the Piano Concerto also sets up the sharpwards shift in a similar way, with a modulation to D major (the supertonic major) at bar 250 that is dramatically reinforced with *sforzandi*, ascending D major scales and punctuating, *fortissimo* D major chords. In his study of the Piano Concerto's conception, Leon Plantinga, has also referred to the slow movement's distance from the opening *Allegro*: 'After a most emphatic close of the first movement in C minor the piano ushers in the *Largo*, *as from another world*, in E major – declaring thus the most distant and rarest of the eight possible thirds'<sup>249</sup>. But although both he and Tovey register the 'shock' created by this dramatic choice of key, they also acknowledge its link with the outer movements – stemming from an enharmonic neighbour-note relationship between A flat/G sharp and G natural. Moreover, Plantinga notes that the slow movement is revisited within the finale, by way of a pastoral interlude in the 'problem key' of E major.

Although Beethoven tackles distant key relationships early on within his theme in Op. 97, they are not the only 'problems' to be addressed: the problematic G/A relationship and the

---

<sup>248</sup> Plantinga, Leon 'When did Beethoven compose his Third Piano Concerto?', from *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (Summer, 1989), p. 303

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., pp. 302-303 (my italics)

incomplete status of the fundamental line must be dealt with, as must the registral gaps within the theme – gaps highlighted by the seventh relationship between  $g^2$  and  $a^1$ , as identified in bars 21-22. These issues are taken up by the variation process, as we will see over the course of the ensuing analysis. Although it is tempting to understand each variation as a separate, autonomous entity, which repeats the fundamental line in a varied form of that set out within the theme, in fact as Marston has successfully shown in his analysis of Beethoven's Op. 74, the variations themselves may contribute to a large-scale unfolding of the fundamental line. In Op. 97, this is certainly the case, since the 'closure' of the fundamental line within the theme itself is clearly unsatisfactory. At the end of section B, the voice-leading is left hanging on  $\hat{4}$ , while the completion of the line relies on a further iteration of the theme, and this 'completion' is itself a lower level process. More importantly, however, Beethoven demands that the variations reveal the solution to the  $\hat{4} / \hat{5}$  conflict. Throughout the series of variations, Beethoven emphasises and develops the problems set out within the theme, though it is not until the final variation and the subsequent coda that these features are fully resolved.

With the exception of octave displacement, the voice-leading of Variation 1 is largely unchanged from that of the theme, although this line is now far less audible than in its original guise, obscured by the undulating piano triplets. Note, however, that  $\hat{5}$  is introduced and sustained in this variation by means of an internal voice but that the arrival on  $\hat{5}$  is still undermined by the 6/4 chord (bar 34). It is in section B, however, that more noticeable voice-leading changes occur. Here, the registral issues of the theme are not 'ironed out' – quite to the contrary, Beethoven only exacerbates the issue with octave leaps and the transfer of the original line to new extreme heights (tracing an  $e^3-f\#^3$  in bars 45-46). Notably, however, the  $g^2-f\#^1$  descent is preserved at its original register (bars 49-52) and the crescendo and *fp* markings remain intact. Beethoven reserves the transfer of this figure to an octave higher for its repeat in the coda (bars 54-55), at which point he reinforces its importance by increasing the dynamic marking to *ffp*, giving G prominence above A.

Beethoven continues to string out this  $\hat{4} / \hat{5}$  tension in Variation 2 where, after two bars of insistent  $g$ - $a$  semiquaver alternations in the piano (bars 73-74), across which the violin outlines a  $g^2$  (bar 74) rising to an  $a^2$  (bar 76), the cello outlines the anticipated G-A seven-note descent (bars 77-88). But on its repeat in bars 81-84, this descent is extended for the first time: both cello and piano sweep past A to conclude the descent on a D (bar 83). In fact, this continuation from A-D, itself an anticipation of the fundamental line, is also echoed in the violin, appearing three times in succession as an ascending line in bars 78, 80 and 82-83. In turn, these ascents are mirrored in the piano RH an octave lower in the same bars. While the cello and piano descents do not constitute the completion of the fundamental line, they suggest that

Variation 2 is beginning the process towards that goal. Moreover, they begin to assert the role of  $\hat{5}$  as the primary tone.

As variation ideas begin to supersede theme ideas in Variation 3, the theme is increasingly left 'further and further behind'. The notes of the original theme are still identifiable amidst the repeated triplets, but this variation focuses increasingly on other thematic elements. Note, for example, the repeated Gs in bar 87 (present in three octaves), rising to repeated As in bar 89 (doubled at the octave), while in the violin repeated octave-doubled a's in bars 86 and 88 soon move to outline a seventh with  $g^1$  – another feature that reinforces G as a seventh function. This is echoed once more in bar 92 (repeated in bar 100) with reinforcement from both cello and piano, something that is emphasised dynamically with a sudden *f* marking. But while much of the theme remains obscured within the repeated notes, one feature remains readily audible, thanks partly to its appearance on almost every occasion in all three instruments: the three-note a-g-f sharp descent derived from the final bar of the theme (see bars 86, 88, 90, 94, 96, 98, 102, 104, 108). This seems to emphasise the role of G as a passing tone from A, thereby lowering its prominent status, though the 6/3 – 6/4 progression underlying  $\hat{5}$  (bars 89-90 and 97-98) remains unchanged.

Variation 4 is at once both the furthest point of departure and the closest of the variations to the original theme, a fact that denotes the point of both saturation and return. Having abandoned the contours of the original theme even in Variation 1, Beethoven now outlines a simplified version of the original melody in the violin and cello at the start this variation – the closest we have come to the theme since the start of the movement. But elsewhere the variation demonstrates the point of rhythmic saturation, with diminution in the piano now having reached demi-semiquavers. The rapid broken chordal figuration in the piano (reminiscent of the triadic and scalar figuration of Variation 2) contrasts with the sustained melody in the strings – the two sets of instruments appear once again to be in opposition, simultaneously pursuing both acceleration and deceleration motives. But while the piano appears to be pursuing its own agenda, in fact it echoes the notes of the theme outlined in the violin, while the cello contours the original bass-line: the three instruments are working as one for the first time in the movement. This is reinforced when, on the repeat of Section A, the violin and cello take over the syncopation from the piano RH – notably beginning with repeated  $g^1$ s in the violin, underscored by a crescendo. The chromatic downturn also continues in this variation, with the prominent triple-octave doubling of F natural in bar 115 – a further hint that that movement is counteracting the sharpwards trend and heading back towards the work's tonic. Set against a G sharp in the bass, this now creates a diminished seventh chord that anticipates the chromaticism to come in the final section of the movement.



In the final, climactic variation, several notable issues begin their resolution. Firstly, the re-assertion of  $\hat{5}$  takes a new turn in bars 121-128 where, scattered among the demi-semi quaver figuration, a full octave ascent from  $a^1$ - $a^2$  appears across the repeat of section A in the piano. This reinforcement of the Primary Tone leads to a further feature of prolongation: the introduction of an internal pedal note  $a$  in the violin (bars 129-132). But this pedal creates recurring dissonant sevenths with the  $g^1$  above it, so in the spirit of resolution this pedal note falls to  $g$  in bar 133, coinciding with the onset of the seven-note G-A descent, doubled at the octave in the piano. On the repeat (bars 137-138), the descent is shared by both violin and piano. Registrally, progress is also made: having stopped flitting between registers from bar to bar, as in the previous variation, Beethoven also uses this seven-note descent as a means of reinstating the original register of the opening theme. That is, while previously the seven-note descent has typically been repeated an octave higher in the coda, in this instance Beethoven reverses this to place the first descent at  $g^3$ - $a^2$  (bars 133-134), doubled an octave lower, and its repeat at  $g^2$ - $a^1$  (bars 137-138), also doubled an octave lower in the piano. This returns us to the original register of the movement in time for the onset of Tempo I – ostensibly the return of the theme.

But the return of Tempo I does not bring a recapitulation of the theme in the manner we might expect. Typically, in variation sets in which the theme returns to close the movement (take the finale of Beethoven's Op. 109 or Bach's Goldberg Variations), the theme returns unadorned in its original guise, its unembellished state signalling the distance travelled in the intervening variations. But here the journey is not yet complete and the 'problems' set out within the theme remain as yet 'uncorrected'. After just a bar of the original theme, Beethoven aborts: a quaver's silence (bar 142) precedes a chromatic variant of the theme in the cello, and with F naturals, B flats and C naturals now present, the implication is of a reference to the work's tonic – B flat major. Indeed, the brief tonicisation of F natural (the augmented sixth) in bars 144-145 cements this relationship. Almost as quickly as it came, however, the chromaticism passes and by bar 146, the theme is back to its original guise.

The onset of section B brings with it the return to A major and three segmented appearances of the three-note upbeat figure (derived from bars 2-3 of the opening theme). Here, however, they are chromatically altered to D sharp-E-F sharp and they have a new agenda: they push forward to a modulation to E major. Chromatically altered from the original D-E-F sharp and now pursuing E major, they of course bypass the problematic G and push forward to reach an A in bar 155. It is a deliberate overstretch – signified by the *sforzando* marking on a syncopated beat – since in the 'original' theme the A is not reached until two bars later. Here, however, the theme is compressed to emphasise the primary tone – A – and rid the theme of its complications. So what of the modulation to E major? This modulation is crucial in dealing with

the original 6/4 problem, since in the new key A is now transformed from a dominant to a subdominant and what was once an arrival 6/4 is now an arrival 6/3. It is a clever twist since A (the former dominant) now becomes G (the former subdominant) and G's prominent and otherwise problematic role throughout the movement is finally contextualised within the resolution. Moreover, this modulation underpins the importance of the subdominant – not the dominant – as a slow movement goal, in what functions as another example of dominant evasion within the slow movement (as detailed in Chapter 2).

The climactic modulation to the secondary dominant (E major) in the coda of the *Andante* not only cements this movement's relationship with the outer movements but also functions as a tonicisation of B – the upper neighbour to the primary tone of the fundamental line. This B has served a subtle yet crucial function throughout the movement to this point: recall its appearance as an upper auxiliary note as part of the cadences in bars 7-8 and 15-16 of the original theme – its function is one of completion. It represents the apex of the work's arch and as a way of highlighting the upper note of the work's voice-leading. In harmonic terms, it also draws us closer to the tonic of the work itself – B flat.

As the climactic A is reached in bar 155, a descending scale (in E major) begins to outline an octave descent from A-A, and seems as though it is ready to reinforce A as the Primary Tone and initiate the fundamental line's final descent. But this octave descent gets stuck on B in bar 156, with repeated iterations of the same note in violin, cello and piano LH drawing attention to the incomplete scale. In fact, these reiterated B's hold the A at bay for another 10 bars, instead sustaining E major and then gradually acting as the harmonic link in a chromatic downturn back towards D major. This 'downturn' is almost seamlessly effected, with stepwise chromatic shifts subtly moving the harmony from E major (bar 159) to G major seventh (bar 160), B minor seventh (bar 162), and E minor seventh (bar 164), before finally arriving on the dominant seventh (A major seventh, bar 166) by way of preparation for the return of D major (bar 168). Note that, although the A is reached in the violin in bar 166, it is above the 'wrong' chord. Only with the arrival of D major in bar 168 is  $\hat{S}$  finally re-established. But even here there is a sting in the tail:  $\hat{S}$  is reinstated above a 6/4 tonic chord. However, while the 6/4 may seem at first to be counter-intuitive to the feeling of arrival Beethoven clearly intends for the final descent, in fact it exemplifies Hatten's 'arrival 6/4', as detailed earlier. In Hatten's terms, the arrival 6/4 is the cueing of cadential closure without the need to complete the cadence itself: 'The point of arrival has an expressive connotation of transcendent resolution, as opposed to mere syntactic resolution'.<sup>250</sup> In other words, the arrival 6/4 may imply a sense of resolution and completion without the need – or possibility – of a full cadence. Its appearance here, in bar 168, is quite

---

<sup>250</sup> Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, p. 15

fitting, allowing a sense of arrival, while the music continues onwards towards its inevitable goal. And when the line is eventually completed – passing through  $\hat{4}$  in bar 182, before reaching  $\hat{3}$  in bar 183 and completing  $\hat{2} - \hat{1}$  in bars 184-185 – the arrival 6/4 makes another appearance. Note the 6/4 chord which underpins the arrival on  $\hat{3}$  in bar 183 and is carried through the subsequent descent in bar 184. In fact, Beethoven allows us to hear the  $\hat{3} - \hat{1}$  descent twice: firstly across bars 183-4 above the arrival 6/4 ( $\hat{3}$  is initially heard in the violin in bar 183 and then doubled at the octave in the piano in bar 184, where it completes the descent to  $\hat{1}$ ); and secondly (mimicking the earlier compression of the rise to A in bar 155), it is compressed into a three-quaver descent in bars 184<sup>3</sup>-185, this time reinforcing the sense of completion by reaching a root position tonic chord on the downbeat of bar 185.

Discussing Beethoven's use of variation form in this movement, Marston notes the effect created by the gradual increase in elaboration from one variation to the next – something identifiable in Classical form as 'an accepted strategy for imparting a sense of direction'<sup>251</sup>. This expansive technique, he suggests, has a further effect: 'the sense of a gradual recession of the theme into the "distance" as it is left further and further behind by successive variations.'<sup>252</sup> This process of distancing, for Marston simply a variation technique, is also made manifest in the work's preoccupation with distant key relationships. With the inner movements reversed in this work, and the second movement scherzo 'hanging on' to the work's tonic, the slow movement's journey away from the tonic is altogether more pressing and the 'problems' that it sets out to solve are not just its own, but those of the outer movements too – notably, making sense of the unusual key relationships. In fact, the need to 'escape' from the persistence of the tonic in this reversal of traditional four-movement form may also account for the dramatic sharpwards shifts. But there may also be a thematic reason behind the modulations, namely the tertiary relationships generated by the triadic nature of the theme itself, which is built around the two interlocked triads that make up the movement's 5-note fundamental line. Beethoven draws attention to these interlocked triads through the theme, which both begins and ends on  $\hat{3}$ , descending at the end of each appearance of the theme from  $\hat{5} - \hat{3}$ , and thence (as detailed earlier) completing an internal  $\hat{3} - \hat{1}$  descent with the repeat of the theme.

Might these tertiary relationships reinforce the key choice of the movement, itself a tertiary shift from the tonic of B flat major? It is a theory supported by another strong tertiary shift in the work – the G major modulation in the first movement – which, on reflection, seems to drive the work as a whole. Note that G becomes the driving force of the slow movement

---

<sup>251</sup> Marston, 'Goal-directedness in Beethoven's music', p. 90

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

variations, where it is transformed to a subdominant, deliberative evading the dominant. In the first movement, however, the use of G major (the submediant) for the second group is a surprise replacement for the dominant or subdominant – creating a tension that is spun out across the work and focussed upon in the slow movement. Adorno writes of this G major passage in the first movement:

‘The G major passage inserted nine bars before the beginning of the second theme itself. First, a lingering, no haste to get anywhere, the journey is the goal, but as an episode, not a process. Then the floating, suspended character of the passage, which neither moves onwards nor emerges, but ‘stands still’... The whole passage, without thematic contour, is like a blanket or screen beneath which the music continues.’<sup>253</sup>

Adorno’s account of the G major passage alludes to its ‘other-worldliness’, as though it does not ‘belong’ in this movement but is ‘suspended’ above the main thematic material. His suggestion that this passage ‘stands still’ contrasts with his characterisation of the first theme, in which he notes a distinct sense of agitation, brought about by a conflict of elements within the theme itself: ‘Contrast – dialectical contradiction – between the character and rendering of the main theme... The theme is a forte character of a certain epic, affirmative breadth, but it is played *piano dolce*.’<sup>254</sup> The G major passage offers the promise of the opportunity to ‘stand still’ – a distant state that is only reached in the slow movement. Adorno suggests that ‘the journey is the goal’, but the journey itself takes place within the slow movement, a series of variations that by the very nature of the form both ‘stand still’ and travel great distances. The listener may at the same time perceive the point of origin but also recognise the great lengths travelled from the theme itself. When Adorno suggests that the G major theme in the first movement is ‘very far away’, he alludes to the crux of the work as a whole – the reconciling of distance, both large and small scale, a task which is ultimately inherited by the slow movement.

But the slow movement is not the end of the story for Op. 97. In an echo of the summatory finales of the Fifth and Seventh Symphonies and the Op. 74 String Quartet, Beethoven carries through the issues explored earlier in the work to reach an apotheosis in the finale. Each movement of Op. 97 presents its own set of problems: the first movement supplants a modulation to the dominant with a move to the submediant (G major); the scherzo, meanwhile, parodies the ‘mis-modulation’ of the first movement with its own strong pull to the dominant (F major) but dense chromaticism in the Trio section eventually takes it to E major (a tritone relationship); although the slow movement sews up the link with the G major excursion of the first movement, it faces its own subdominant/dominant problem and resolves this by

---

<sup>253</sup> Adorno, *Beethoven*, p. 93

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91

reinterpreting the dominant as a subdominant, shirking A major in favour of E major. The finale, meanwhile, inherits all of the preceding movement's problems – and finds the solutions. Returned to the tonic of B flat major, the finale corrects the problem of the work's other sonata allegro movement and modulates successfully to the dominant (F major) for its second group (bar 43), decorating this arrival with octave-doubled F major scales. But the finale also contains its own strong subdominant leanings, and it strengthens this IV/V relationship with a passing modulation to E flat major in bars 109-110, underlined with its own scalic ascent and broken chordal accompaniment. The work's subdominant/dominant tension is thus neutralised – neither takes priority but both find a home within the finale, in what amounts to an equalisation of lyric and sonata types. While the slow movement finds itself at the centre of the work's distancing network of sharpwards shifts, making sense of both the first movement's uncharacteristic move to G major and the Trio's E major diversion, it does not represent the completion of the work's modulatory cycle. This function is provided by the finale, whose swerve to A major for the final *Presto* section allows the slow movement's  $\hat{5}$ (A) to be recontextualised as the leading note of the work's tonic. This tonicisation of the leading note offers the final – and perhaps most distant – sharpwards shift of the work, but one which seeks its resolution in the work's tonic. 'Distance' is therefore perceived as relative to one's position, at once both 'very far away' and 'standing still'.

Beethoven's development of variation form in Op. 97 is emblematic of his gradual transformation and shaping of variation as a genre. Where, in the *Andante* of Op. 14, No. 2, Beethoven fulfilled Stanley's outline of Beethovenian variation form ('(1) correcting weaknesses in a theme; (2) clarifying and transforming a theme's fundamental structure'<sup>255</sup>), in Op. 97 Beethoven takes in hand the very concept of variation as a segmented form and smoothes this out into a more flowing dialogue, cross-cutting its inherent paratactic structure. Ivanovitch suggests that: 'Variation sets are, after all, made up of small pieces, each of which in itself presents a small goal-directed course',<sup>256</sup> but Beethoven begins to unpick this idea in his later works. As Marston writes: 'Brandenburg suggests that the originality of Beethoven's early variation sets lie in the individuality of the separate variations, whereas in the later works it derives more from the cyclic conception of the whole.'<sup>257</sup> Moreover, Beethoven's later variation movements may begin to challenge Sisman's conclusion that variation slow movements are necessarily 'simpler' than variation finales, moving away as they do from variation as a defined form to variation as an applied process.

---

<sup>255</sup> Stanley, 'The "wirklich gantz neue Manier"', p. 57

<sup>256</sup> Ivanovitch, 'Recursive/Discursive: Variation and Sonata', p. 146

<sup>257</sup> Marston, Nicholas, *Beethoven's Piano Sonata in E, Op. 109* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 170

## Lyricism on the Late Landscape

If Beethoven begins to smooth out the segmented landscape of variation form within Op. 97, then the *Arietta* from the Piano Sonata in C minor, Op. 111, represents the fulfilment of this goal. In his extensive work on the sketches for Op. 111 Drabkin suggests of the *Arietta*: 'Here Beethoven came closer to conceiving the form as an unbroken musical flow – a stream of notes – than in any other work.'<sup>258</sup> The *Andante* of Op. 97 is an important precursor to the *Arietta* with relation to Beethoven's developing approach to variation form, as Drabkin himself acknowledges, but a more thorough comparison of the two works reveals more deep-seated connections between the two. Furthermore, tracing the lines of development between the two works has important consequences for our understanding of the role of the slow movement in Beethoven's late works – and for the role of lyricism in the late landscape.

While writers such as Stanley have suggested that Beethoven's characteristic approach to variations is to deliberately choose a weak or simplistic theme and to use the variation process as a way of ironing out its deficiencies, this suggestion is refuted by Beethoven's creation of the theme for the *Arietta*. True, the theme is deliberately simple: comprising a 16-bar melody of two halves, the first eight bars of which simply oscillate between tonic and dominant chords. But Beethoven makes no attempt to 'rehabilitate' it – rather, the variations represent a celebration of this simple theme, and a 'back to basics' diminution approach that celebrates the purity of the variation process. This 'purity' is evident across all aspects of the movement: the harmonic clarity of the theme itself is reflected across the movement as a whole, whose only modulation takes place in the E flat major transition that precedes the final recapitulatory variation. Meanwhile, although the sketches reveal that Beethoven began with a 'surfeit of ideas'<sup>259</sup> for this movement, these are distilled in the final version to just four variations and a final reprise, throughout almost all of which the theme remains conspicuously audible. The clarity of Beethoven's procedure produces an apparently fluidly evolving set of variations which create, in Drabkin's words, a 'progressive rhythmic animation, by which the momentum of one variation seems to give rise to the next'<sup>260</sup>. At the final reprise, the theme is repeated virtually note for note, with only the newly flowing momentum of the accompaniment to mark the journey over the course of the movement – seemingly an indication of Beethoven's regard for the integrity of the original theme. Indeed, the sketches reveal that at one stage Beethoven planned for the theme to be repeated literally at the end of the movement,<sup>261</sup> in the manner of

---

<sup>258</sup> Drabkin, William, *The Sketches for Beethoven's Piano Sonata in C minor, Op. 111* (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton: 1977), p. 155

<sup>259</sup> Ibid., p. 196

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., p. 202

<sup>261</sup> Ibid.

Bach's 'Goldberg' Variations or, indeed, Beethoven's Piano Sonata in E major, Op. 109 – providing further evidence that Beethoven did not feel that he was in any way correcting any apparent 'weaknesses'. The wealth of sketches dedicated to the theme in the sketchbooks suggests that any process of refinement of this kind took place during the process of the theme's composition, rather than during the variations.

Although it is true that the theme does not undergo a process of melodic 'rehabilitation' during the course of the movement, like the *Andante* of Op. 97, the variations do perform an integral function in completing the movement's voice-leading progression. Drabkin focuses on just one unsatisfactory part of the theme's initial line: namely, the  $\hat{5}-\hat{3}$  ( $g^2-e^2$ ) drop in the final bar of the theme (bar 16). For Drabkin, this represents an inconclusive end to the theme, one which leaves these notes of the fundamental line 'suspended' and unresolved until the ensuing variations. A three-note *Anstieg* from  $\hat{1}-\hat{3}$  across bars 1-3, followed by a five-note *Anstieg* from  $\hat{1}-\hat{5}$  across bars 12-15 is not matched by a subsequent descent. In fact, Beethoven appears to draw attention to the incompleteness of the fundamental line through the  $\hat{5}-\hat{3}$  ( $g^2-e^2$ ) leap in bar 16, which falls to  $\hat{1}$  ( $c^2$ ) in bar 9 on the repeat. However, I would also argue that there is a further incomplete *Anstieg* which warrants attention: the five-note *Anstieg* from  $\hat{1}-\hat{5}$  which takes place across bars 1-5 but which omits  $\hat{4}$ . This is mirrored in bar 6 by a compressed  $\hat{5}-\hat{1}$  descent, which now includes  $\hat{4}$ , but omits  $\hat{1}$  – both are tantalising glimpses of complete lines that as yet have failed to materialise.

Both Op. 97 and Op. 111 play with the establishment of the fundamental line, with Op. 97 failing to establish a conclusive arrival on  $\hat{5}$  while emphasising  $\hat{4}$ , and Op. 111 projecting both  $\hat{5}$  and  $\hat{3}$  as viable Primary Tones. The result in both cases is a subdominant emphasis, though in Op. 111 the subdominant is conspicuous by its absence. Indeed, it is revealing that in the first half of the *Arietta* theme subdominant harmonies are altogether avoided in favour of tonic/dominant alternations. Beethoven reinforces its absence with the aforementioned incomplete *Anstieg* across bars 1-5, which supplants an ascent from  $\hat{3}-\hat{4}$  with a leap from  $\hat{3}-\hat{5}$  (bars 3-5), mirroring the  $\hat{5}-\hat{3}$  ( $g^2-e^2$ ) leap in bar 16, and drawing out the arrival on  $\hat{5}$  in bar 5 with a suspension in bar 6 that falls away to  $\hat{4}$  above supertonic harmony. There is just one appearance of subdominant harmony in all 16 bars of the theme, in bar 14: here,  $\hat{4}$  takes its position as part of the (complete) *Anstieg* to  $\hat{5}$  but is noticeably absent, as Drabkin highlights, in the final bar of the theme. Drabkin suggests that its avoidance in bar 16 allows Beethoven to circumvent the implication of dominant seventh harmony, which would provide the theme with

an apparently undesired sense of completion.<sup>262</sup> It is an interesting moment, with *subdominant* evasion (the omission of  $\hat{4}$ ) simultaneously creating an instance of *dominant* evasion.

While the dominant is not absent from the *Arietta* theme in the 'normal' sense of dominant evasion, neither is its treatment altogether straightforward. In fact, Beethoven goes to great lengths to ensure that its function is obscured. As Spitzer has shown, Beethoven appears to play with the question of convention in Op. 111, exploring the most basic element of Classical syntax: the tonic-dominant polarity. Denying the anacrusis its anticipated dominant harmony, as Spitzer suggests, sets the theme off on the wrong foot, 'short-circuiting' the effect of the anacrusis and creating confusion as to the underlying harmony. In omitting  $\hat{4}$  as part of the  $\hat{5}$  -  $\hat{3}$  ( $g^2$ - $e^2$ ) leap in bar 16, Beethoven again undermines the strength of the dominant function, reinforcing this once more by shifting the resolution to the tonic away from the strong downbeat and onto perhaps the weakest part of the bar – the second half of the first beat. The sketches also show that throughout his planning process he deliberately avoided reference to a conclusive dominant function elsewhere in the theme, allowing only a 'light tonicisation' of the dominant via the F sharp in the bass in bar 6. Early sketches also show that Beethoven initially intended to take this a step further, planning for a strongly contrasting A minor section at the theme's centre<sup>263</sup> – a modulatory 'overstep' and a further example of dominant evasion, having set up expectations of the dominant in bar 6.

While the goal of the variations in Op. 97 is to iron out the tension between  $\hat{4}$  and  $\hat{5}$  and to make sense of the strong subdominant presence, the goal of Op. 111 is instead to find  $\hat{4}$ , and in both works this quest is not complete until the final reprise. Variations 1 and 2 of Op. 111 gradually begin a process of embellishment and ornamentation which, in Variation 3, leads to the first thematic divergences and 'breakouts' of non-thematic notes. As Drabkin notes, in bar 1 of Variation 3, Beethoven chooses a key moment to replace the thematic  $d^3$  on the final beat with an  $f^3$  – the first sign that  $\hat{4}$  is beginning to make its presence felt. While in the second half of Variation 3, Beethoven makes a significant adjustment to the harmony, introducing an  $f^3$  in bar 13 that is doubled by an  $f$  in the LH to change the original dominant harmony to a dominant seventh. Neither is this  $f^3$  part of an ascent to  $\hat{5}$  – it sticks out as the highest note in this half of the variation. In Variation 4 (with repeats now re-composed) the incomplete *Anstieg* from  $\hat{1}$  -  $\hat{5}$  of bars 1-5 of the original theme is now completed with the introduction of an  $f^3$  on the final beat of bar 11, repeated again on the final beat of bar 12. Here, as Drabkin notes, Beethoven shifts the resolution to  $g^3$  from the weak final beat of bar 12 so that it occurs for the first time on

---

<sup>262</sup> Drabkin, *The Sketches for Beethoven's Piano Sonata in C minor*, p. 178

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171



the downbeat of bar 13, no longer treated a suspension. With the *Anstieg* now completed, Beethoven reinforces this with repeated f<sup>2</sup>s rising to g<sup>2</sup>s across bars 33-34, repeated an octave lower across bars 35-36. It only remains for the reprise to complete the theme's final remaining issue – the descent of the fundamental line – which Drabkin has shown is achieved by reaching  $\hat{4}$  via a sequential extension to the theme in bars 16-18 of the reprise variation, thence to  $\hat{3}$  in bar 20 and completing the descent through  $\hat{2}$  -  $\hat{1}$  in the final two bars of the movement. Note, however, that when  $\hat{4}$  is finally established (bar 18), it is not above subdominant harmony, but rather above the same supertonic harmony which supported its appearance in bar 6 of the theme. The subdominant is thus absent to the last – a strange twist for a 'slow movement'.

Though the crux of this tale may be that the *Arietta* is not a slow movement at all. Rather, the *Arietta* splices the functions of slow movement and finale in a way hitherto unseen in Beethoven's oeuvre. I have shown elsewhere that the slow movement often performs the function of a laboratory within the wider work, establishing connections with the surrounding movements and, in many cases, 'making sense' of otherwise problematic issues in the work. Meanwhile, I have also traced the link between slow movements and finales (such as in the Fifth Symphony and Seventh Symphony), and in particular the role of variation finales, which at times may appear to 'swap roles' with the slow movement (see the precedents laid out by Mozart and Beethoven's Op. 30, No. 1). While Drabkin is keen to reveal the connections between Beethoven's last three piano sonatas, Opp. 109, 110 and 111 (and indeed, Beethoven's letters show that they were conceived as a set of sorts), I believe there is a distinct lineage to be traced from the finale of Op. 74 to the slow movement of Op. 97 and thence to the *Arietta* of Op. 111, with the latter representing a culmination of Beethoven's approach to variation form in multi-movement works<sup>264</sup>. In the finale of Op. 74 Beethoven offers three ways of reading the variation set, with three alternate groupings presenting sonata, rondo or ternary structures. In the slow movement of Op. 97, meanwhile, Beethoven cross-cuts the inherently paratactic nature of variation form to create a fluidly unfolding variation process, turning his attention as Marston suggests to 'the cyclic conception of the whole'.<sup>265</sup> In Op. 111 Beethoven combines these two ideals. The *Arietta* is both slow movement and finale – a feature not seen elsewhere in Beethoven's works, where variation finales exist alongside separate slow movements. The Piano Sonata in E major, Op. 109, for example, although it concludes with a variation finale, also includes a separate slow movement – the *Adagio espressivo*. Thus, unlike Op. 111, the finale and slow movement of Op. 109 are separate entities. Moreover, the tempo of this finale fluctuates – such that it cannot truly be considered a 'slow movement. Although it is headed with the tempo

---

<sup>264</sup> The 'Diabelli' Variations, Op. 120, were written later – but these are a self-contained piece in themselves, not part of a wider multi-movement work.

<sup>265</sup> Marston, *Beethoven's Piano Sonata in E, Op. 109*, p. 170

indication *Andante molto cantabile ed espressivo*, Variation 3 is marked *Allegro vivace* and Variation 4 eventually collapses into an *Allegro ma non troppo* fugato. The finale of Op. 111, by contrast, maintains the *Adagio molto* tempo throughout – something that Beethoven ensures by repeating the marking *L'istesso tempo* at the start of Variations 2 and 3. Any quickening of tempo over the course of the *Arietta* is merely implied, a result of the rhythmic diminution but not of any actual tempo variation.

Just as he did in Op. 74, Beethoven offers three ways of interpreting the function of the *Arietta*: by its position as the finale of the work, by its tempo as slow movement or by its formal organisation, which writers including Spitzer and have shown resembles sonata form. Spitzer hears the movement develop into a something approaching a sonata-variation hybrid, in which Variations 1-3 are akin to a first group, followed by a short development, modulating through a chain of thirds, a *da capo* and finally a reprise of the second group that leads to a coda.<sup>266</sup> But it is not just its slow tempo and position in the work that suggest the *Arietta* is a deliberate splicing of slow movement and finale forms. Functionally, the movement performs according to the expectations of both types. Variation itself, as we have seen over the course of this chapter, is typically understood as a lyric form, but one which becomes increasingly prevalent in finales thanks to its additive, episodic character and diminution techniques which drive forwards towards a conclusion. In Op. 111, Beethoven smoothes over the episodic character of the form in a manner more befitting of a lyrical narrative (as witnessed in Op. 97) but retains the propulsion created by the rhythmic diminution to imply a sense of culmination. Harmonically, the *Arietta* is somewhat unusual for a slow movement, where flatwards trends are most common, in that it is situated in a key brighter than the work's tonic. But note that this shift from tonic minor to major is typical of apotheosis-like finales such as the Fifth Symphony, where the finale emerges triumphantly as though through a process of transformation. While in the Fifth Symphony, the process of transformation is undergone in the variation form slow movement, here in Op. 111 this process is compressed so that transformation and emergence take place concurrently as a slow movement/finale hybrid. Meanwhile, Beethoven mixes the markers of slow movement form – such as dominant evasion and flatwards modulation (to E flat major for the transition) – with the unexpected absence of the subdominant. This subdominant absence, manifested in the quest for  $\hat{4}$ , plays out a similar  $\hat{4}/\hat{5}$  tension to that explored in the slow movement of Op. 97. But where this tension was resolved in the Op. 97 finale, in Op. 111 the tension and resolution are carried out within the same movement – with the reprise/coda performing as an internal finale equivalent. Echoes between Op. 97 and Op. 111 are also to be found in the links between movements, which in both cases centres upon tying up issues of

---

<sup>266</sup> Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*, p. 161

harmonic exploration. Drabkin has shown the harmonic and structural parallels between the *Maestoso*, *Allegro con brio* and *Arietta* of Op. 111, noting: 'The only passage in the variation movement which has that very quality which characterises so much of the first movement – harmonic explorativeness – concludes with the same cadential figure that encapsulates the voice-leading of the first movement.'<sup>267</sup>

These 'finale markers', which draw summatory connections with the rest of the sonata in the same manner as Beethoven's other variation works, appear to put an end to the question of whether Beethoven originally intended to 'complete' Op. 111 with a third movement. This is an issue Drabkin addresses and summarily dismisses, with reference to Anton Felix Schindler's claim that Beethoven 'had not time to write a third movement'<sup>268</sup>. Just as Beethoven distilled his 'surfeit of ideas' for Op. 111 into the elegance and purity of the *Arietta*'s 'unbroken musical flow', so too does he refine and capture the fundamental ideas at the heart of his late style into this, his final sonata for piano. Here the two movements represent the poles of Classical form – sonata and lyric – such that there is no need for an additional movement. Beethoven dispenses with a separate internal slow movement, merging it instead with the finale with which it has long retained intrinsic connections and to which it has edged ever closer: note the repositioning of the slow movement in the late works, as identified in Chapter 2, to become a precursor to the finale. The result of this merging is the culmination of lyric's gradual breakout from its internal trappings and a celebration of its dominance in Beethoven's late style. Two-movement sonatas are not uncommon within Beethoven's oeuvre, but previously these have always dispensed with the slow movement. In Op. 111 Beethoven finds a way of synthesising the slow movement with the finale to produce, as Drabkin writes, 'the culmination of the display of contrast, in its quintessential use of two-movement form.'<sup>269</sup>

Indeed, Adorno suggests that it is difficult to interpret the movement as anything other than Beethoven's final work for piano, he writes:

'The close of the *Arietta* variations has such a force of backward-looking, of leavetaking, that, as if over-illuminated by this departure, what has gone before is immeasurably enlarged... The music's inherent sense of form changes what has preceded the leavetaking in such a way that it takes on a greatness, a presence in the past which, within music, it could never achieve in the present.'<sup>270</sup>

The *Arietta* enshrines the values of variation as a compositional process – those of travel and transformation, ideals that are intrinsically connected with the slow movements – but

---

<sup>267</sup> Drabkin, *The Sketches for Beethoven's Piano Sonata in C minor*, pp. 247-8

<sup>268</sup> Schindler, cited by Drabkin, *The Sketches for Beethoven's Piano Sonata in C minor*, p. 252

<sup>269</sup> Drabkin, *The Sketches for Beethoven's Piano Sonata in C minor*, p. 246

<sup>270</sup> Adorno, *Beethoven*, fr. 366, p. 175

transforms this process into a form of leave-taking. That is to say, while slow movements journey inwards (as witnessed in Op. 97), finales must look outwards towards the end of the work. The *Arietta* combines these dual aesthetics, such that the lyrical variation process is embodied by the finale, rather than simply imported as a form. This is where Sisman's comprehensive study reveals a hole: taking her perspective from the works of Haydn and Mozart she is mired in a diminution/elaboration model and too reticent about acknowledging Beethoven's radical re-shaping of the variation process into a dialectical model. As Spitzer writes: 'A late work ends up revisiting its starting point with its premises transformed. These circular, or spiral-like, journeys through late landscape turn change into a matter of shifting perception.'<sup>271</sup> It is this very process of transformation and of shifting perception that allows Beethoven's late variation to posit variation as a genre, rather than a form. As Carl Schachter writes: 'Central to Schenker's way of thinking is the idea that variation is not a special case, but a fundamental process of composition.'<sup>272</sup> More accurately, variation is a fundamental process of *lyric* composition, and this is Beethoven's revelation in the late works.

---

<sup>271</sup> Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*, p. 78

<sup>272</sup> Schachter, *Unfoldings*, p. 19

# Chapter 4

## **‘Voices from elsewhere’<sup>273</sup>: Vocal evocations in Beethoven’s slow movements**

‘These invocations mean to sing or speak instantly to the heart.’<sup>274</sup>

---

<sup>273</sup> Abbate, Carolyn, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 29

<sup>274</sup> Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets*, p. 195, pp. 80-81

## Introduction

'One is carried away, astonished, and ravished by the sheer songfulness of the last quartets'<sup>275</sup>, writes Joseph Kerman in his own song of admiration for Beethoven's *Cavatina*, from the String Quartet in Bb major, Op. 130. He continues: 'Vocality is more than evoked. It is practically transcribed.'<sup>276</sup> This tendency to discuss instrumental music in terms of a vocal presence is by no means limited to Kerman, nor indeed to Beethoven. Very often writers describe the 'song-like' melody, the 'declamation' of a passage that invokes recitative, a 'hymn-like' texture or simply the 'singing style' of a given piece. Moreover, these evocations of vocality occur more often than not with reference to a slow movement, which is seen by many to have strong connections with forms such as aria, song and even the hymn or chorale. Such vocal associations are particularly strong within the instrumental works of Beethoven, a feature which is all the more surprising when one surveys his catalogue of vocal music and his reputation as a vocal composer. The present chapter examines Beethoven's relationship with vocal writing, both within his music for voice and elsewhere within his instrumental music, and questions to what extent 'vocality' as a topic is intrinsically linked with the slow movement.

Identifying the hallmarks of a vocal style within an instrumental context is itself something of a challenge and forms the basis of this discussion. Kerman's attribution of 'songfulness' in the last quartets is left unqualified, without detailing which features in particular invoke song. What exactly constitutes a 'vocal' style? Is it the directness and simplicity of expression that characterises the folk-like melodies of the German Lied, or the virtuosic flamboyance of the Italian operatic aria? 'Vocality' appears at once to be both ostentatious and operatic and at the same time understated and lyrical; it is both declamatory and sustained; it is expressive and virtuosic. The voice may be heard in speech, individual song, communal expression and even as an emblem of anguish – as a scream. Song may be characterised just as readily by strophic repetition as by its melodic fluidity, and simple, lyrical melodies may be just as vocally evocative as more irregular fantasia-like free expression. Vocal forms range from repeated, strophic types such as the traditional Lied, which finds a partner in the recurring 'rhyme' of variation forms, to more progressive aria types which are based on both harmonic and thematic opposition, and may be more closely linked with sonata models. Neither is tempo itself a specific indication of vocality, since songs and arias appear in all manner of guises; nevertheless, the question of tempo is pertinent to this discussion. Could it be that when imported into an instrumental context, that vocality is 'slowed down' to become

---

<sup>275</sup> Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets*, p. 195

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 196

synonymous with the slow movement? Does this, in turn, imply that lyricism and vocality are one and the same?

In Beethoven's works, the issue is particularly fascinating, since it appears that one can discern a reciprocity between his writing for voice and for instruments. That is to say, while Beethoven's songs become gradually more intricately-wrought and 'instrumental' in much of their design – a feature that would later be explored and refined in the works of Schubert and, later, Schumann and Wolf – so too do we find cross-pollination in his instrumental works, which appear to seek more vocal means of expression. This in itself poses a question of genre: to what extent can vocal and instrumental writing be extricated from one another? With slow movements providing the vast majority of vocal/instrumental hybrids, I ask what aligns the slow movement so closely with a more direct means of expression, and explore whether a vocal presence also implies the presence of a narrative. Tracing these ideas through a series of works also raises questions of genre and, in the 'late' style, of genre mixing. Of course, the Ninth Symphony looms large over this discussion, but I will demonstrate that the growth towards this pivotal moment in western music history can be viewed through a lens adjusted to the gradual development of Beethoven's vocal style. I hope to show that, while Beethoven may not be widely celebrated as a primarily vocal composer, his allusions to vocal genres played a large part in the rise of dramatic and programmatic works that would follow. What is more, I will argue that it is specifically his evocation of the voice that places him so precariously on the cusp of Romanticism.

## The Search for Song

Writing about the *Missa Solemnis*, Adorno describes a composer feeling his way into 'an alien genre', and of a work reduced to 'a routine devoid of genius', that 'became a problem which wore down his strength.'<sup>277</sup> Dahlhaus, meanwhile, suggests that Beethoven composed 'against the voice' and notes that even his more well-known works for voice 'scarcely affected the history of the genres they represented'.<sup>278</sup> Such views are representative of the widespread perception of Beethoven's vocal writing, which may be clouded by Beethoven's own portrayal of his works. It is commonly known that he experienced difficulties when writing for the voice. On submitting his setting of Goethe's poem 'Sehnsucht' for publication in the third issue of the periodical *Prometheus* in 1808, Beethoven scribbled on the score: 'Ich hatte nicht Zeit genug, um ein Gutes hervorzubringen, daher Mehrere Versuche' ('I did not have enough time to produce a

---

<sup>277</sup> Adorno, *Beethoven*, p. 145

<sup>278</sup> Dahlhaus, Carl, *Nineteenth-Century Music* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1989), p. 79

good one, so here are several attempts').<sup>279</sup> Later, writing to Rochlitz in 1822, Beethoven declared: 'Goethe lives and wants us all to live with him. It is for that reason that he can be composed. Nobody is so easy to compose as he. But I do not like composing songs.'<sup>280</sup> Sadly for Beethoven, his chosen poet thought little of the musical incarnations of his poetry. Goethe favoured simple, direct musical settings of his poetry, exemplified by the likes of Zelter. Along with the few settings Schubert made of his poetry, Goethe considered Beethoven's songs oversensitive and overcomplicated, out of keeping with the essential folk-like nature of the original poems. Nevertheless, this simple anecdote from Beethoven is rather telling, for it suggests that Beethoven harboured an impulse to set text – Goethe's – to music, and thereby perceived himself (at least potentially) as a vocal composer. That the process might prove altogether more difficult than the idea itself is encapsulated within the final sentence, but the drive to 'compose' these words into music nevertheless seems to be present. It suggests that this image of a poetically-inspired Beethoven is somewhat at odds with the popular conception of Beethoven the instrumental composer, typically considered inferior to Schubert in the realm of song composition. As Barry Cooper writes: 'His massive contribution to the development of German song or Lied has sometimes been overlooked – partly because of the outstanding achievement of Schubert in this field.'<sup>281</sup> Early twentieth century writers such as Erik Brewerton exemplify this view, claiming: 'His character, compared with Schubert's, was of sterner stuff... Beethoven had not the same natural inclination for writing for the voice as Schubert.'<sup>282</sup> But Brewerton is guilty of allowing hindsight to cloud his judgement of Beethoven's works, continually comparing his success as a song composer with that of Schubert. Although they died just a year apart, Beethoven's career as a song composer began at the tail end of the 1790s, even before Schubert was born, a time when the genre of song itself faced a much more uncertain future.

As Richard Taruskin has shown, until the end of the eighteenth century, and indeed somewhat beyond, the Austro-Germanic Lied was considered a 'lowly' genre, the province of 'specialist' composers such as Reichardt, Schulz and Zelter, and out of keeping with the more fashionable, Italian style of vocal composition.<sup>283</sup> Viewed from the vantage point of the 'verbal age' of the nineteenth century<sup>284</sup> the Lied's growth seems inevitable, but at the turn of the century, it was Italian models that still dominated the public sphere, so Beethoven's forays into

---

<sup>279</sup> Beethoven, cited by Cooper, Barry, 'Beethoven's "Abendlied" and the "Wiener Zeitschrift"', from *Music & Letters*, Vol. 82, No. 2 (May, 2001), p. 235

<sup>280</sup> Beethoven, cited by Ford, Walter, 'The Songs', from *Music and Letters*, Vol. 8, No. 2, (April 1927), p. 231

<sup>281</sup> Cooper, Barry, writing in the Foreword to Reid, Paul, *The Beethoven Song Companion* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), p. vii

<sup>282</sup> Brewerton, Erik, 'Reflections on Beethoven's Song's, from *The Musical Times*, Vol. 68, No. 1008 (February 1927), pp. 116-117

<sup>283</sup> Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, Vol. 3, p. 129

<sup>284</sup> Gorrell, Lorraine, *The Nineteenth-Century German Lied* (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1993), p. 9



song-writing were by no means par for the course. Nor was Beethoven an anomaly: in number, Beethoven's songs compare with both Haydn and Mozart, the latter having written half as many Lieder as Beethoven (around 30), but as Taruskin points out – Mozart only lived half as long. In fact, it seems the distinction between Beethoven and his contemporaries has become blurred, demonstrating an apparent confusion between Beethoven as a composer of song and Beethoven as a composer for voice. For it is outside the arena of song and more widely within the realm of vocal works that the differences between Beethoven and his contemporaries are more readily apparent: Beethoven wrote just two masses, while Haydn wrote 14 and Mozart wrote at least 17 (there are numerous other spurious works which have been attributed to him). Meanwhile, Beethoven composed one opera, while Haydn penned 14 and Mozart wrote 22, quite aside from the number of standalone 'insert' arias Mozart wrote for specific occasions. It seems, therefore, that Beethoven's reputation as a mediocre composer of 'satisfying' song is quite separate from his apparent reluctance to compose large-scale works for the voice. What is more, his 60-odd songs for voice and piano represent the Lied in the earliest stage of its development, yet still they bear many of the hallmarks that would later come to characterise the Lied as a definitive genre. That Beethoven did not 'like composing songs' says nothing about his skills as a composer, nor about the impact his songs might have upon the genre's development at the hands of later composers.

Beethoven's songs fall mainly into two basic categories: a series of concert arias written in an Italian style (and indeed to Italian words), following on from his studies with Haydn, Schenk, Albrechtsberger and Salieri in the 1790s, and his songs in German, which more closely approach the style of the Lied. But the distinction between the two categories goes beyond a simple stylistic and linguistic divide: Beethoven's Italianate works, such as the aria 'Ah! Perfido', have been widely praised and seem to demonstrate a greater fluidity of style, or as Brewerton suggests, they 'make excellent singing'<sup>285</sup>. Beethoven's Lieder, meanwhile, have left critics less convinced, a view highlighted by Glauert:

'The simple melody of Beethoven's 'Schilderung eines Mädchens' WoO 107 of around 1783 fits awkwardly with the words and blurs the rhyming pattern of the poem's first two lines. Such awkwardness might be expected from a young composer. However, when he came to set Matthiessen's 'An Laura' WoO 112 about a decade later, Beethoven was still struggling to find an appropriate vocal idiom.'<sup>286</sup>

---

<sup>285</sup> Brewerton, 'Reflections on Beethoven's Songs', p. 115

<sup>286</sup> Glauert, 'Beethoven's Songs and Vocal Style', p. 187

Glauert is right that Beethoven seems to have made few advances in his Lied technique during this period, but she seems to miss a salient point. That is, that Beethoven's struggle 'to find an appropriate vocal idiom' may go hand in hand with the search to find an appropriate vocal genre too, since the Lied was not yet developed as a recognisable and distinctive category. In other words, the awkwardness of style may translate to a more general awkwardness of genre. Italian vocal writing was, meanwhile, *de rigueur*, something to which Beethoven would have become well accustomed during his six-month tour to Prague, Berlin, Dresden and Leipzig during 1796 (the same year that 'Ah! Perfido' was written). His wealth of Italianate works from this time and the ease with which they appear to have been written suggests a composer quite at home with the style – and indeed with the voices for which they were written. But Beethoven's ease of writing under the Italian style may owe more to the nature of the music itself than to just its popularity and established idiom.

Lorraine Gorrell believes that since the Italian aria operates on a much grander and more dramatic level than the simple Lied (certainly at this stage in the Lied's growth), Beethoven's difficulty with song may be due to his reluctance to think within the confines of the musical miniature. She writes: '[Beethoven's] magnificent gifts were grounded in his ability to think on a much grander stage than the Lied provided; something as short, delicate and ephemeral as song was not a natural medium for him.'<sup>287</sup> But Gorrell's claims do not square with Beethoven's propensity for other miniature musical forms, namely his elaborate variation sets and, notably, the late Bagatelles, Op. 126. More precisely, Beethoven's difficulty with the Lied may stem from a tendency for intricacy unbefitting of this rather simple genre. Its modest style of declamation, simplicity of form and lack of flamboyance may be out of keeping with Beethoven's style of composition – typically grander and more overtly dramatic than the early Lied. Writing in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (AmZ) in 1814, E.T.A. Hoffmann insists that the success of the Lied lies in its simplicity:

'The very nature of the Lied is to stir the innermost soul by means of the simplest melody and the simplest modulation, without affectation or straining for effect and originality: therein lies the mysterious power of true genius... It is supremely in composing Lieder that nothing can be ruminated upon or artificially contrived; the best command of counterpoint is useless here'.<sup>288</sup>

'Without affectation', and where nothing can be 'artificially contrived' – nothing could be further from the Italian vocal style of the day. Nevertheless, this was the early nineteenth-century

---

<sup>287</sup> Gorrell, *The Nineteenth-Century German Lied*, p. 100

<sup>288</sup> Hoffmann, E.T.A., *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, 16 (12 October 1814), cited in *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings*, ed. David Charlton, trans. Martyn Clarke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 379

viewpoint, expressed pre-Schubert. If the Lied eventually came to represent a more dramatic and intricately-moulded genre, then it was grounded in a quest for simplicity and a direct, folk-like means of expression.

This is emblematic of the newly-emerging Enlightenment quest for a 'return to nature', as evidenced in the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau – a sentiment shared by the poets who would come to be at the centre of Lied composition. James Parsons has shown how stillness and simplicity are at the heart of Goethe's poem 'Wanderers Nachtlied II', which was set to music by Zelter in 1814. Parsons writes:

'Goethe's poem is stamped by anything but tempestuousness and agitation... Most striking is the way in which Goethe captures the stillness at the heart of his poem, no mean feat given that poetry relies on words and must transgress on silence... Goethe uses art to conceal art in the service of motionless simplicity... the poem marvellously projects serenity'.<sup>289</sup>

Such serenity is uncharacteristic of Beethoven's early and middle period works, and is something he only develops in the late style, where works such as the *Heiliger Dankgesang* of Op. 132, the *Cavatina* of Op. 130, the *Arietta* of Op. 111 and even the *Ode to Joy* from the Ninth Symphony project a new directness of expression. Although even here, Beethoven works hard to create a sheen of effortlessness – dedicating some 26 pages of sketches to the 'simple' theme of the *Arietta* alone.

But while German poetry demanded music that was 'free, flowing, pure, and really natural',<sup>290</sup> Italian texts invited drama. In the buffa aria, for example, as John Platoff writes: 'The central purpose... was to afford a talented singer and actor an extended opportunity for comic expression, and this demanded a relatively expansive piece in which the humour and excitement could build gradually.'<sup>291</sup> Platoff demonstrates how typically the buffa aria's text's changing rhyme scheme contributes initially to a humorous 'sing-song effect', before altering to create a sense of acceleration, and finally closing with a rhyming couplet or 'tag-line'.<sup>292</sup> The effect is altogether more through-composed than the Lied's original simple, strophic origins. And Beethoven's most successful 'Lieder' are those in which Beethoven appears to cast off the 'constraints' of simplicity and draw on his exercises with Salieri to strive for something altogether more operatic. His song, 'Adelaide', although it is a setting of German poetry, is perhaps Beethoven's greatest attempt to fuse the Italian and German styles of the day into one

---

<sup>289</sup> Parsons, James, 'The eighteenth-century Lied', from *The Cambridge Companion to the Lied*, ed. Parsons (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 57

<sup>290</sup> Scheibe, cited by Parsons, 'The eighteenth-century Lied', p. 39

<sup>291</sup> Platoff, John, 'The buffa aria in Mozart's Vienna', from *Cambridge Opera Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Jul., 1990), p. 101

<sup>292</sup> Ibid., pp. 102-103

successful work, the result of which is neither Lied nor aria. As Glauert writes: ‘The author of an 1805 Berlin review of Beethoven’s ‘Adelaide’, Op. 47 (1794) describes the Lied as “a great aria da due carattere”... a work that “could conclude the greatest modern theatrical scene.”’<sup>293</sup>

Its success derives partly from the freedom with which Beethoven treats the poetry. The original poem, by German poet Friedrich von Matthisson, is a strophic text of four verses, each of which closes with the refrain ‘Adelaide!’ But Beethoven’s musical rendering is not only through-composed, crossing Matthisson’s stanzaic delineations, Beethoven also freely repeats portions of the original poem. This ranges from simple repetitions of the word ‘Adelaide’ – twice at the end of the first verse (bars 15-18) and third verse (bars 67-70) – to free repetition of lines 2 and 3 from the second verse (bars 30-37), in order to draw further attention to ‘dein Bildness’ (‘your image’). The final verse of the poem, however, is the most liberally appropriated of all. It is at this point in the poem that the protagonist turns from admiration of Adelaide’s image to thoughts of the future and hope for what may be to come. Beethoven now initiates a wholly new section of the music which, in the manner of a two-part aria, moves from a lyrical *Larghetto* to an *Allegro molto* and, having dedicated just 70 bars to verses 1-3, Beethoven now spins out the final verse over some 111 bars of music. While the original poem contained just 4 iterations of the work’s title, across the song Beethoven repeats the word ‘Adelaide!’ 14 times, varying its appearances according to the momentum of the song. In the final 38 bars and with Beethoven driving towards the final climax, the word appears five times, with its penultimate appearance sustained for some 5 bars (bars 168-172), including an 8-beat pause on an *f*<sup>1</sup> (bars 170-171).

Beethoven’s subtle creativity and compositional maturity also shines elsewhere in the song. As the protagonist waxes rhapsodically on the object of his affections, freely extemporising on Matthisson’s poem, so too does the song’s tonality come to encompass an increasingly wide circle, moving from the tonic of B flat major, through G minor (bars 23-24), C major (bars 28-29), F major (bars 38-39), D flat major (bars 40-41), B flat minor (bars 55-56), G flat minor (bars 58-59), before an emphatic return to the tonic at the onset of the *Allegro molto*, the return happily underpinning the words ‘Einst, o Wunder!’ Subtle moments of word-painting also reinforce the song’s success: a dramatic octave leap from *f*-*f*<sup>1</sup> sends our gazes upwards for the line ‘im Schnee der Alpen’ (‘in the snow of the Alps’) in bars 20-22, while just a little later Beethoven stretches even higher, reaching a *g*<sup>1</sup> to point to the starlit heavens (‘im Gefilde der Sterne’) in bars 32-34. In the third verse, it is the accompaniment that colours the text, with the introduction of a descending six-note scalic figure in the piano (bars 41, 45, 49, 50, 53 and 54) illuminating the ‘ringing bells’, ‘sighing winds’ and ‘murmuring streamlets’. Meanwhile, when the nightingales (‘Nachtigallen’) enter in bar 55, their calls are subtly alluded to with an accented offbeat figure in bar 56. But more broadly, the vocal lines lack the awkwardness of

---

<sup>293</sup> Glauert, cited by Parsons, ‘The eighteenth-century Lied’, p. 50

songs such as the second 'An die Hoffnung' setting (Op. 94), and the phrases themselves break free from the rigidity of Beethoven's other early songs ('An die Hoffnung', Op. 32 included) to create a fluidity of line that is rare elsewhere in Beethoven's Lieder.

Glauert's suggestion that Beethoven appears to search for a 'grander stage' within his songs is therefore partly true, but this appears to be more an issue of text and drama than of the size of the genre. In *The Beethoven Song Companion*, Paul Reid writes that 'it is not clear why Beethoven returned to Italian texts for a number of songs'<sup>294</sup> but notes that 'the habit had been encouraged by Salieri'<sup>295</sup> during his early studies. On the contrary, it appears clear that Beethoven returned to Italian texts regularly due to the increased creative flexibility they afforded him. Beethoven's Italianate arias are settings of through-composed, free verse, which lends itself to tempo fluctuations, free repetition, segmentation and *parlando* sections, all of which are present within 'Ah! Perfido'. The vast majority of Beethoven's Lieder, meanwhile, are rigidly strophic in form, reflecting the simple, repetitious nature of the stanzaic texts to which they are set. While arias were written for their showiness, embellishment and grandeur, the simple nature of the early Lieder reflected an altogether different musical aesthetic. As Taruskin writes: 'The earliest Lieder were in effect imitation folk songs with simple melodies that, while reflecting the mood of the poem, could easily be sung by non-professionals at home.'<sup>296</sup> While the aria derived from open-ended narrative forms, the earliest Lieder grew out of rhythmic dance pieces, maintaining a simple, stanza-refrain format that preserved its inherent *Volkstümlichkeit* (or 'folklikeness'). Like C.P.E. Bach before him, Beethoven often appeared unwilling to work within the 'constraints' of such stanzaic texts, and his most celebrated songs are those, like 'Adelaide', which deliberately flout the form of the original text. Glauert recognises a similar impulse in C.P.E. Bach's song-writing, where she writes of his setting of Klopstock's 'Lyda':

'In Bach's strophic setting the vocal phrases are made to contract and expand rhythmically toward points of harmonic dissonance, in ways that blur even the line lengths of the poem and intensify and interpret the effect of Klopstock's verses for his listener... Even Voss sometimes doubted whether Bach was not taking over too much of the lyrical process.'<sup>297</sup>

Later, she also identifies a tendency for over-complexity and intricacy that prefigures that of Beethoven: 'The level of detail in songs such as *Busslied* and *Trost eines schwermüthigen Christen* is remarkable. In *Trost eines schwermüthigen Christen*, the sporadic use of motivic imitation

---

<sup>294</sup> Reid, Paul, *The Beethoven Song Companion*, p. 4

<sup>295</sup> Ibid.

<sup>296</sup> Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, p. 120

<sup>297</sup> Glauert, Amanda, 'The Lieder of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven', from *The Cambridge Companion to the Lied*, p. 65

between the parts helps order the song's textural complexity.'<sup>298</sup> This is not to suggest that Beethoven's early songs are overly-complex: on the contrary, his striving for effortless simplicity in works such as 'An die Hoffnung', Op. 32, instead falls somewhat flat, producing a rather lacklustre, repetitive setting that lacks the imagination and creativity of his more elaborate songs – 'Adelaide' being a case in point.

So why, only a few years later than Beethoven's efforts, should Schubert achieve much greater success with his own German Lieder? It would be over-simplistic to suggest, simply because he wrote over 600 songs during his short lifetime, that Schubert was simply more at home with the musical miniature. Notwithstanding Beethoven's achievements in the realm of the instrumental miniature, many of Beethoven's individual songs also enjoyed their own relative success. Instead, what Schubert appears to achieve, which Beethoven could not, is the synthesising of Beethoven's two categories of songs – the dramatic and the stanzaic (for Beethoven, equating respectively as the successful and the overlooked), which is tantamount to the integration of Italian and German styles. While Beethoven, Mozart and C.P.E. Bach all found ways of breaking out of strophic settings to create more fluid, through-composed songs that draw on the drama of the operatic aria, Schubert manages to achieve the same sense of drama both within the Lied's origins in strophic poetry and in his more through-composed settings. As Kristina Muxfeldt writes:

'It is significant that Schubert's debut works are both very dramatic in character... This is not to say that Schubert avoided strophic settings, but the ideals of *Volkston* and strophic song were not for him aesthetic constraints as they so often were for Beethoven, rather only one option among many expressive possibilities.'<sup>299</sup>

Notably, his achievements build upon a particular feature of Beethoven's song-writing: namely, his imaginative combination of vocal and instrumental tropes.

To illustrate, while both types of vocal writing – free-flowing arioso and simple strophic songs – would eventually find their way into Beethoven's instrumental music, it is interesting to note that the reverse is also true. Beethoven's vocal writing is also permeated by instrumental features, with writers such as Glauert suggesting that this particular type of writing is indicative of Beethoven's most successful works for voice. Glauert suggests that his song 'Adelaide' owes its success to a particular facet of Beethoven's vocal writing:

---

<sup>298</sup> Glauert, 'The Lieder of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven', p. 67

<sup>299</sup> Muxfeldt, Kristina, 'Schubert's songs: the transformation of a genre', from *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 122

'The greatest of Beethoven's early songs are not surprisingly those where an instrumentally conceived texture or idea forms the point of departure and the voice is pushed beyond its natural confines, seeking to maintain its balance amongst the flow of rhythmically generated figures.'<sup>300</sup>

Though Glauert suggests this is 'not surprising', in fact this is the very criticism that is so often levelled at Beethoven's works for voice: that they are not idiomatically written for voice and would be better suited to instruments. Referring to the coda to Act II of *Fidelio*, for example, Lockwood writes: 'The new coda is enormously difficult to sing and has seemed overwrought to some critics; it is certainly a sample of Beethoven taxing a voice to extremes, as he does later in some passages of the Ninth Symphony.'<sup>301</sup> However, Glauert is right to suggest that among Beethoven's songs, the likes of 'Adelaide' and the song cycle 'An die ferne Geliebte', Op. 98, display signs of an underlying instrumental conception, with a degree of textural variety that looks beyond the realm of piano and voice. She is not the only one to observe a tendency towards the instrumental in his songs. As noted earlier, Gorrell suggests that Beethoven's songs speak of the desire for a 'grander stage'.

What Beethoven sets in motion, and which Schubert grasps with both hands, is the potential to create something *new* from the original poem through his musical setting. While Jack M. Stein's suggestion that 'In Lieder before Schubert, the texture of the music is seldom so rich that the primacy of the poem is threatened'<sup>302</sup> is rather overly-critical of some of Beethoven's most successful songs, he is right to assert that the pre-Schubertian song typically allows the poem to take pride of place. When Schubert penned 'Gretchen am Spinnrade' in 1814, he 'dared to better Goethe', as Marie-Agnes Dittrich writes, creating 'something "new and unheard of" – namely how in the moment of performance they [voice and piano] seemed "as one".'<sup>303</sup>

While the same cannot be said of Beethoven's more reserved early songs, in which his quest for simplicity results simply in a stratified texture, with the piano performing a subservient and purely accompanimental role to the voice, the early signs of this 'new', more intertwined approach to song composition are evident in Beethoven's more elaborate songs – and this appears to be the result of a more instrumentally-conceived texture. Beethoven's songs appear to demonstrate a composer finding his way within an unfamiliar genre, one in which he often leans on more familiar (instrumental) ideas for support. This is best encapsulated in the song cycle 'An die ferne Geliebte', which is interwoven with cyclical motivic ideas, a circular key

---

<sup>300</sup> Glauert, 'Beethoven's songs and vocal style', p. 192

<sup>301</sup> Lockwood, Lewis, *Beethoven: The Music and the Life* (New York : Norton, 2003), p. 260

<sup>302</sup> Stein, Jack M., *Poem and Music in the German Lied from Gluck to Hugo Wolf* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 3

<sup>303</sup> Dittrich, Marie-Agnes, 'The Lieder of Schubert', from *The Cambridge Companion to the Lied*, p. 86

scheme and the opening song that returns to frame the cycle at its close. Moreover, the cycle demonstrates a rich diversity of ideas that is more reminiscent of the 'instrumental Beethoven', and is a far cry from the simplistic early songs such as 'Schilderung eines Mädchens' WoO 107, that Glauert finds so disappointing. Early twentieth-century writer Walter Ford suggests that in his insecurity for writing for voices, Beethoven often turned to his more 'preferred' medium. Ford writes:

'When he turned to song he could not leave his instruments behind; he continued to think instrumentally. The melodies of 'Mailed', of 'Adelaide'... are instrumental melodies; they would sound as well, some of them better, on a violin. The accompaniments too often are instrumental accompaniments. The allegro in 'Adelaide' might be a piano part of a violin sonata.'<sup>304</sup>

Indeed, it appears that the 'instrumentally-driven' songs find most success in Beethoven's output. Beethoven's second setting of 'An die Hoffnung', Op. 94 (1815) surpasses its predecessor (Op. 32) by coupling a more imaginative approach to text-setting with through-composed form and a newly elaborate accompaniment. While the 1806 setting is purely strophic and sets each of the three verses to the same simple, chordal accompaniment, Op. 94 is more elaborate, beginning with a faltering recitative that asks 'Ob ein Gott sei?' ('Is there a God?'). This questioning, probing first verse is reflected in the tentative, winding chromatic lines of the accompaniment, which search for a way out of the depths of B flat minor, finally emerging into the light at the onset of the *Allegro*, with the arrival of D major and the exclamation 'Hoffen' ('Hope'). In fact, this section of opening text is omitted from Beethoven's first setting of 'An die Hoffnung', and while this is in keeping with the rather more one-dimensional nature of the earlier version, in the latter setting it lends the song an additional expressive dimension. In this way, the Op. 94 version more closely approaches the goal-directedness of an operatic aria, which is reflected in the depth and variety of the piano accompaniment, and its interaction with the voice. This multi-sectional song juxtaposes rich homophony with lilting lines that shadow the voice, and dramatic repeated semiquaver chords that build to the song's expressive climax in bar 69 – 'Sonne schein!' ('Sun shine!').

Beethoven appears to take lessons from this setting and, in his 1817 song 'Abendlied', the fourth of the *Vier deutsche Lieder*, Op. 113, he is able to skirt the dangers of a strophic song by using the piano to dramatic effect, using a similar arched contour to that used in 'An die Hoffnung', Op. 94. Here, Beethoven takes an understated chorale-like opening as the starting point for an altogether more dramatic, through-composed song that is punctuated by frequent poignant caesuras, preceded each time by repeated triplet chords that build in both textural and

---

<sup>304</sup> Ford, 'The Songs', p. 232



dynamic to each climax. In both 'Ah! Perfido' and 'Adelaide' (1796), meanwhile, Beethoven looks beyond the text to create, in Glauert's words, a 'daring formal outline' that speaks of a composer more at home with boundary-pushing instrumental works. Both have the freedom of a sonata and, in a sense, both songs are sonatas for the voice – perhaps why some commentators have suggested 'Adelaide' would be better understood as a cavatina.<sup>305</sup>

While both 'Ah! Perfido' and 'Adelaide' are perhaps more closely related to the aria than the Lied, Schubert takes on board their ideals and imports them back into his Lieder. As Dittrich writes:

'In contrast to the keyboard treatment in most eighteenth-century Lieder, Schubert's piano parts typically are no longer structured as a simple, subordinated supplement to a more important vocal line; the piano has at least become its equal and sometimes more than that, for frequently it sets the tone for an entire Lied.'<sup>306</sup>

Schubert's songs thus continue (and perhaps perfect) the move away from a text-dominated sensibility to a more integrated texture. Moreover, while we know that Schubert admired many of Beethoven's songs and studied them as part of his own compositional process<sup>307</sup> we also know that, like Beethoven, Schubert 'was stirred by the operas of his day'.<sup>308</sup> Both display a concern for inspiration outwith the realms of the song, and outwith the confines of the poetry, looking towards other genres (both vocal and instrumental) to enrich and embolden their Lieder. This, in turn, becomes a nineteenth-century idiom: 'Inspired in part by opera, composers freely mixed different styles, alternating recitative or arioso with song-like passages... Reflecting this generic freedom, such works might be labelled *Gesänge*, *Balladen*, or *Kantaten* rather than Lieder.'<sup>309</sup>

Schubert's new contribution to the Lieder led, in turn, to Schumann's own reinterpretation of the genre, something that becomes most conspicuous in his more mature songs. As Marston has shown, Schumann's admission in a letter written in 1839 to the composer and critic Herrmann Hirschbach that he 'ranked vocal compositions beneath instrumental music'<sup>310</sup> is less controversial in the light of his subsequent works. Marston suggests that: 'Schumann did not simply abandon the "higher forms" in 1840, but set about

---

<sup>305</sup> See Gorrell, *The Nineteenth-Century German Lied*, p. 97

<sup>306</sup> Dittrich, 'The Lieder of Schubert', p. 86

<sup>307</sup> Ibid., p. 93

<sup>308</sup> Ibid., p. 91

<sup>309</sup> Ibid.

<sup>310</sup> Schumann, cited by Marston, Nicholas, 'Schumann's monument to Beethoven', from *19th-Century Music*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Spring, 1991), p. 251

reinterpreting them in order to create “something new.”<sup>311</sup> The new genre that Schumann creates goes beyond the instrumental invocations of Beethoven and Schubert’s *Lieder* to reach a truly integrated new genre. While Schumann’s *Fantasie*, Op. 17, makes explicit reference to Beethoven’s song cycle ‘An die ferne geliebte’, Marston has also demonstrated the more subtle borrowing between *Dichterliebe* and Beethoven’s String Quartet in C sharp minor, Op. 131. As Marston writes: ‘A generic cross-fertilization occurs: a song cycle by Beethoven is imported into an instrumental work by Schumann. In the present case, we are confronted by a reciprocal state of affairs, for here an instrumental work by Beethoven is held to inform Schumann’s song cycle... Vocal music yields to instrumental as the singer enacts the transformation from song cycle to string quartet.’<sup>312</sup>

For Marston, this is simply a case of adulation and a musical ‘memorial’ to Beethoven with which Schumann’s acknowledges his admiration for his predecessor’s music. But I believe it represents much more than this, and is the culmination of a process begun even in Beethoven’s early variations on opera arias from the 1790s. Here, Beethoven imposed an instrumental process upon vocal models, as a way of exploring and finding his place within an unfamiliar vocal tradition. Faced with the same question of how to find his way within the context of the *Lied*, a genre with which he was openly uncomfortable, Beethoven applied the same technique once more, grasping at more familiar instrumental idioms to find an appropriate vocal style. Marston observes that Schumann writes to Clara about finding ‘new ways in music’ following early sketches for *Dichterliebe* – ‘new ways’ which he finds by exploring instrumentally-conceived processes. Indeed, the legacy that Beethoven leaves for both Schubert and Schumann is an instrumental one: his instrumental lyricism flows into their songs in the same way that Beethoven’s symphonies flow into Wagner’s operas. In the nineteenth century, the relationship between instrumental and vocal genres is a reciprocal one.

## Vocal Mimicry

This survey of Beethoven’s vocal writing forms an important precursor to a study of vocal evocation in his instrumental works, demonstrating as it does the reciprocity between vocal and instrumental genres in Beethoven’s conception of the song. When Kerman describes the ‘songfulness’ of Beethoven’s late quartets, he compares them unequivocally with Beethoven’s songs: ‘These evocations mean to sing or speak instantly to the heart, like the songs imagined by Beethoven’s poet at the climax of *An die ferne Geliebte*.’<sup>313</sup> Just as we find that his songs become progressively more intricate and instrumentally-driven, so too does this cross-

---

<sup>311</sup> Marston, ‘Schumann’s monument to Beethoven’, p. 251

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 264

<sup>313</sup> Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets*, p. 195

pollination take place within his instrumental works, which increasingly appear to employ vocal topics. Such works appear to demonstrate a more close integration between vocal and instrumental genres – a relationship that extends beyond the boundaries of their close formal links. For Rosen, this is emblematic of instrumental music's roots in vocal forms, since he suggests: 'Before the middle of the eighteenth century, public music was, with few exceptions, vocal music tied to the expression of words'.<sup>314</sup> The instrumental music that developed and expanded as the eighteenth century progressed, he suggests, simply built upon these established vocal forms: 'In a sense, sonata style invented no new forms. It merely expanded, articulated, and made public those it found already lying at hand.'<sup>315</sup> Adorno, too, hears a vocal undercurrent within all instrumental music: 'The vocal is inalienably preserved in all instrumental music... The imagination of all music, and especially of instrumental music, is vocal.'<sup>316</sup>

This is an interesting proposition, for it suggests that the growth of 'absolute' music during the nineteenth century was essentially a fallacy. By Rosen's terms, 'absolute' music does not exist, since it cannot help but reference the vocal forms upon which it was founded, thereby invoking language, words and an 'extra-musical' context. Rosen's views chime with those of Gorrell, who claims that the nineteenth century was a 'verbal age'<sup>317</sup>, apparently referring to the growth of the Lied and the developments in opera during this period. Dahlhaus, too, acknowledges the privileged position of vocal music during this period:

'The omnipresence of absolute music in the twentieth century must not be allowed to obscure the historical fact that – according to sociological, not aesthetic, criteria – symphony and chamber music in the nineteenth century represented mere enclaves in a "serious" musical culture characterised by opera, romance, virtuoso display, and salon pieces (not to mention the lower depths of "trivial music")'.<sup>318</sup>

But among his various (and admittedly often contradictory) writings on the subject, Richard Wagner claims that vocal music, too, could be admitted to the sphere of absolute music. Referring to Wagner's writings, Dahlhaus summarises: 'Aside from instrumental music, the concept of absolute music therefore includes vocal music that hovers over its words, "detached

---

<sup>314</sup> Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, p. 8

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

<sup>316</sup> Adorno, cited by Hoeckner, Berthold, *Programming the Absolute*, p. 27

<sup>317</sup> Gorrell, *The Nineteenth-Century German Lied*, p. 9

<sup>318</sup> Dahlhaus, Carl, *The Idea of Absolute Music*, trans. Lustig (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 3

from all linguistic or poetic basis.” On the other hand, instrumental music is not strictly absolute as long as it retains some influence of the dance.’<sup>319</sup>

E.T.A. Hoffmann, however, disagrees: “Thus Hoffmann associated the idea of absolute music – the thesis that instrumental music was the “true” music – with the aesthetic of the sublime. Music that is “dissolved” from verbal and functional constraints “sublimates” or “exalts” itself above the boundedness of the finite to an intimation of the infinite.’<sup>320</sup> Hoffmann’s view is emblematic of the perception that the rise of absolute music was synonymous with instrumental music’s growing precedence over vocal forms. As early as 1739, Mattheson was keen to claim a privileged status for instrumental music, arguing that ‘one needs much more skill and a stronger imagination to succeed without words than with their aid’.<sup>321</sup> This became a prominent nineteenth-century viewpoint, as Dahlhaus writes:

‘Now instrumental music, previously viewed as a deficient form of vocal music, a mere shadow of the real thing, was exalted as a music-aesthetic paradigm in the name of autonomy – made into the epitome of music, its essence. The lack of a concept or a concrete topic, hitherto seen as a deficiency or instrumental music, was now deemed an advantage... Instrumental music, as pure “structure”, represents itself. Detached from the affections and feelings of the real world, it forms a “separate world for itself.”’<sup>322</sup>

These complex and often contradictory accounts of what constitutes ‘absolute’ music can be difficult to tease apart. As Chua suggests, the history of the idea itself is fractured: ‘Absolute music has a decentred and fragmented identity that can only be elucidated as a constellation of discursive ideas. Its history does not add up to the totality that it claims for itself.’<sup>323</sup> While Chua acknowledges the complexity of finding a satisfactory definition for absolute music, his stance is similar to that of Rosen. He, too, believes that instrumental music – and even ‘absolute’ music – owes its origins to vocal models:

‘The logic is simple: what happens to music when the world is unsung? It becomes instrumental. A disenchanted world vocalises its hope by projecting its loss as instrumental music; its unsung tones only make sense as a negation of the past, drained of Arcadian presence. In opposition to the pastoral, instrumental music is an empty sign, lacking the magical presence that only the voice can represent.’<sup>324</sup>

---

<sup>319</sup> Dahlhaus, *Absolute Music*, p. 21

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59

<sup>321</sup> Mattheson, cited by Dahlhaus, *Absolute Music*, p. 6

<sup>322</sup> Dahlhaus, *Absolute Music*, p. 7

<sup>323</sup> Chua, Daniel, *Absolute Music and the Construction of Meaning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 6

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32

If 'absolute' music therefore originates in vocal music, and its increasing presence in music of the nineteenth century (notably, though by no means exclusively, in Beethoven) represents a return to these origins, then the concept of 'absolute' music may, indeed, have been a brief and passing illusion. In particular, it appears that the slow movement above all retains its associations with vocal music, even at a time when instrumental music was praised for its 'endless longing'<sup>325</sup> or gestures towards the sublime.

Dahlhaus cites Ludwig Tieck's letter to Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder on the concept of the sublime, noting the way in which Tieck contrasts the first and slow movement's of a symphony: 'The fact that the first, main movement of the symphony was praised as being sublime must be understood as an apologetic countermove to the polemical claim that an allegro – as opposed to a *cantabile* adagio, imitative of vocal music and therefore moving – was nothing but a pleasant or lulling noise that, as Rousseau put it, left the heart cold.'<sup>326</sup> A number of features are interesting about this account, not least the fact that Dahlhaus refers to the opening Allegro as 'the main movement of the symphony'. Despite this, it is the Adagio that is considered to be 'moving', specifically because it is 'imitative of vocal music'. In the same passage, Dahlhaus notes: 'Whereas the cantabile, the instrumental aria, speaks directly to the heart, the allegro, the main movement of the symphony, is "admirably suited to the expression of grandeur, of the festive and the sublime," as Johann Abraham Peter Schulz wrote in Sulzer's *General Theory of the Fine Arts*.'<sup>327</sup>

The cantabile slow movement, or 'instrumental aria' in Dahlhaus' terms, partly derives its vocal associations from its origins in two-part aria form. But while aria finds an instrumental partner in the binary slow movement, and strophic song may be linked to variation form, the close integration between vocal and instrumental genres around this time is also a result in part of the resurgence of 'melody' that took hold during the mid-eighteenth century. While this would become a central feature of Beethoven's writing, composers such as Stamitz, Gluck, C.P.E. Bach and Haydn were among the first composers to signal this shift from the Baroque to Classicism and to demonstrate a renewed focus on lyricism and expressive melody. With the Baroque's preoccupation with counterpoint and texture beginning to fade during this time, so the early Classical composers' new emphasis on *Empfindsamkeit* brought with it a new quest for lyricism and a sense of introspection that implied the presence of an individual. For Taruskin, this shift of focus is exemplified by the *Andante* from C.P.E. Bach's 'Prussian' Sonata No. 1 in F minor, Wq. 48, of which he writes:

---

<sup>325</sup> E.T.A. Hoffmann, in his review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, suggests that the music 'awakens the endless longing that is the nature of romanticism.' Hoffmann, cited by Dahlhaus, *Absolute Music*, p. 44

<sup>326</sup> Dahlhaus, *Absolute Music*, p. 60

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59

'There is... nothing remotely like it in the works of J.S. Bach. It is the kind of piece for which the term *empfindsamer Stil* was coined... The harmonic writing is boldly "subjective" and capricious.'<sup>328</sup>

What is more, Taruskin also links this new sensibility specifically with vocal topics. He notes:

'After the half cadence in m. 3 the melody breaks off altogether in favour of something that at first seems a contradiction in terms: an explicitly labelled instrumental recitative! ... A knowing performer would recognise the notational conventions of opera here and perform them like a singer'.<sup>329</sup>

The *empfindsamer Stil* that Taruskin describes is a fragmentary one. Derived from the fantasia style, this 'boldy "subjective"' writing is reserved for the slow movement – a 'margin' area in the instrumental cycle where such wildness is permitted to exist. C.P.E. Bach's sonata represents a change of musical outlook, with a new line of direct communication established between composer and listener, 'who is taken into the composer's confidence, as it were, and confided in person to person.'<sup>330</sup> Such communication implies the presence of a voice, which spills over into the instrumental recitative. For Rousseau, this person-to-person musical effect is the most affective element of music:

'As soon as vocal signs strike your ear they proclaim a being similar to yourself; they are, so to speak, the organ of the soul... one cannot hear either a song or an instrumental piece without immediately saying to oneself: another sensitive being is present.'<sup>331</sup>

This is a view echoed by Sulzer, who suggests: 'The essential energy of music is truly found in song... melody alone possesses the irresistible power of animated tones one recognises as the utterance of a sensitive soul.'<sup>332</sup> Both writers claim that song's specific effect is to imply the presence of another individual, with whose expressive outpourings we might sympathise.

But the invocation of an individual is not the only means by which the voice was beginning to make its presence felt in instrumental music during this time. With Italian opera becoming something of a 'craze' during this period, its influence became widespread, with Taruskin noting that sonatas from the likes of Italians Baldassare Galuppi and Domenico Alberti

---

<sup>328</sup> Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, Vol. 2, p. 413

<sup>329</sup> Ibid.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid.

<sup>331</sup> Rousseau, cited by November, 'Instrumental Arias or Sonic Tableaux', p. 353

<sup>332</sup> Sulzer, Johann Georg, from *Aesthetics and the Art of Musical Composition in the German Enlightenment: Selected Writings of Johann George Sulzer and Heinrich Christoph Koch* (trans. Christensen), ed. Nancy Kovaleff Baker and Thomas Christensen (Cambridge, 1995), p. 94

drew their inspiration not from tireless bowing, ‘but graceful singing.’<sup>333</sup> The *galant*, two-part textures of their works are typically stratified into a continuous, rippling accompaniment (hence the ‘Alberti bass’) in the left hand and a more sustained, lyrical melody line in the right hand. It is not difficult to see how such textures might derive from operatic models. Haydn, too, employs a similar outline in his String Quartets, Op. 20, which writers including W. Dean Sutcliffe and Nancy November have shown are closely modelled on aria forms.<sup>334</sup> In these flowing slow movements, Haydn stratifies the texture into a solo voice (in most cases dominated by the first violin) and three-part accompaniment. Writing in 1801, Johann Triest suggests that this cross-pollination of genres was typical of ‘singer-composers’ of the time, and specifically associates the ‘meaningful, powerful simplicity’ of Haydn’s music with this integration with song types.<sup>335</sup> For Donald Tovey, however, Haydn’s imported vocal textures were ‘backwards looking’ and did not attain the heights reached by Beethoven in later years. As November writes, ‘For Tovey Haydn’s use of vocal topoi in the slow movements of Op. 17, No. 5 and Op. 20, No. 2 merely imitates opera, while Beethoven would call on vocal elements in order to invoke a state of sublime transcendence.’<sup>336</sup>

Meanwhile, a further link between the vocal and instrumental can be found in the works of Gluck, whose self-proclaimed aim was to rid opera of its extraneous decorative features and to write elegant, more ‘natural’ music that was beautiful in its simplicity. These aims were pursued not only in his operas, but also found their way into his instrumental music. The opening movement of his Trio Sonata No. 6 in F major, for example, suggests a more personalised agenda with the marking *Andante affetuoso*, while the *sostenuto* opening outlines an elegant, unadorned melody that is song-like in its simplicity. Its simple lyricism seems to imply a sense of vocality, but such an example highlights the very problem at the heart of this discussion – namely, how we can identify a musical trait as specifically ‘vocal’. As I outlined earlier, our traditional understanding of vocality may rely on a complex and somewhat contradictory set of tropes. Our traditional vocal genres – recitative, aria, song, Lied, hymn, folk song – all conform to a different set of characteristics, though each is a legitimate example of a vocal musical genre. But each is unified by the presence of a singer (or singers) and, typically, the presence of words.

‘Voice’ in an instrumental context could be thought to be a far more subjective matter. What sounds to one listener like a poignant song may be for the next simply a lyrical melody,

---

<sup>333</sup> Sulzer, *Aesthetics and the Art of Musical Composition in the German Enlightenment*, p. 94

<sup>334</sup> See November, ‘Instrumental Arias or Sonic Tableaux’, pp. 346-372, and Sutcliffe, W. Dean, *Haydn: String Quartets*, Op. 50 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1992)

<sup>335</sup> Triest, Johann Karl Friedrich, “Remarks on the Development of the Art of Music in Germany in the Eighteenth Century” Leipzig, 1801. trans. Susan Gillespie in *Haydn Studies*, ed. Sisman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 321-94

<sup>336</sup> November, ‘Instrumental Arias or Sonic Tableaux’, p. 347

with no specific allusions to vocality whatsoever. In some instances, this is true: the *Adagio* from Beethoven's first piano sonata in F minor, for example, is lyrical and song-like in register, range and melodic voice-leading, but it does not appear to make any allusions to a specific vocal model. Other examples are more explicit and more readily identifiable as vocal in topic. The *Andante* from the Piano Sonata in G major, Op. 79, seems to evoke a *barcarolle*, the song sung by Venetian gondoliers that became a popular topic in Italian opera during the early nineteenth century. Rosen has even suggested that the outer A sections in G minor are modelled on a duet for two sopranos, with the central section in E flat major scored for a solo voice.<sup>337</sup> Indeed, the limited range of these melodies seems to suggest a non-pianistic model: with the exception of the top e<sup>3</sup> in bar 14 and the final five-bar coda (whose dramatic change of register suggests an instrumental postlude), the entire movement is within a normal vocal range and is entirely idiomatic of vocal writing at this time. What is more, the marked change in surface tempo, virtuosic flourishes and more flowing, cantabile melody that set the central section apart from the outer pillars, help to enforce the impression of a traditional two-part song. In fact, this sonata, together with Op. 78 and the G minor *Fantasy*, Op. 77, was written on a promise to Muzio Clementi, whom Beethoven had long admired and who agreed to take a number of Beethoven's works on with his London publishers. Might the Venetian-inspired slow movement have been intended then as a small offering to the Italian-born composer? Certainly the clarity of texture and rapid, driving – almost tortuous – figuration of the first movement, interspersed with extreme dynamic contrasts, seems to evoke Clementi's middle-period piano works. Moreover, the brevity of the sonata itself – it has been referred to as both a *Sonatina* and a *Sonata facile* – seems to recall Beethoven's early-period works, in which one can trace the strong influence of Clementi.

The Op. 79 sonata draws on the influences of Beethoven's early work with Italian vocal models – a style with which, though it might not be considered his own, he appeared to be quite comfortable. In fact, this evocation of an Italianate style is surprisingly widespread in Beethoven's works, and in some instances one can pinpoint the influence quite specifically. The *Adagio grazioso* from the Piano Sonata in G major, Op. 31, No. 1, appears to be modelled on the florid Italian aria. But Robert Hatten has gone so far as to identify a specific performance of Mayr's *La Lodoiska*, featuring a castrato by the name of Luigi Marchesi, as the inspiration for this movement.<sup>338</sup> The movement draws its vocal style from a number of characteristic features: at the most basic level, the textural distinction between its unobtrusive, ticking accompaniment and the lyrical melody which sails above this is indicative of a soloist with an ensemble

---

<sup>337</sup> Rosen, *Beethoven's Piano Sonatas*, p. 202

<sup>338</sup> See Hatten, Robert 'Beethoven's Italian Trope: Modes of Stylistic Appropriation' from *Beethoven Forum*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Spring 2006), p. 1



accompaniment. The melody itself is almost entirely within the range of a coloratura soprano and features virtuosic grace notes (bar 4), trills (bars 1 and 3), and scalar runs (bars 9 and 11), which Beethoven even gives the ‘singer’ time to navigate – marking them *leggeremente*. There are very few awkward melodic leaps, with the largely conjunct motion gradually ascending in tessitura to the melodic peak on the submediant in bar 6, before falling again to the cadence in bar 8. The repetition of the melody in the bass in bar 9, coupled with the virtuosic flourishes that colour it in the right hand, also suggest a duet between soprano and bass, while the balanced 8-bar phrases might suggest an underlying poetic framework, contributing to the overall impression of an *opera seria* aria. Moreover, the large-scale form is befitting of a *seria* aria, with a balanced da capo AABAA structure, whose tumultuous inner B section suggests a brief excursion into another, altogether darker frame of mind. In turn, this contrasting inner section leads on to a more elaborate and extended recapitulation, something that James Webster highlights as common to many of Mozart’s arias.<sup>339</sup> Both the da capo aria and the slow movement of Op. 79 feature formally closed first parts, and the da capo (written out in the case of Op. 79) dictates that the form itself is static. But the expressive effect of the contrasting internal section alters our perception of the placid outer frame, such that the impression is given of a through-composed work, in which the da capo is imbued with the effects of the tonal excursion. Note also the key schemes of these internal sections, which strengthens the links between slow movements and arias. As Marita P. McClymonds writes: ‘In the middle section the dominant began to be replaced by third-related keys of the flat major mediant and submediant, as in ‘Tempra il duol’ in Andreozzi’s *Amleto* (1792) as well as by keys of the subdominant and supertonic minor and major, as in ‘S’altro che lagrime’ (*La clemenza di Tito*), thus placing this section in much starker contrast with the rest of the aria than had been the practice earlier.’<sup>340</sup>

In the case of Op. 31, No. 1, this central section is entirely instrumental – or orchestral – without a vocal melody above the driving *staccatissimo* chords. Following such a clear, lyrical opening, the listener is left wondering what is missing, perhaps imagining the on-stage action that occurs during this instrumental interlude (one can even imagine the woodwinds taking the part of the delicate descending scales), before calm is restored. This change of mood imbues the movement with new depth, altering our perception of the theme when it returns once again during the *da capo* section. The da capo aria therefore has the potential to be transformational, despite its tonal closure, since it is the contrasting central section that opens up the transformational space. In some cases, this goal-directedness is made all the more explicit, such as within the two-tempo *seria* variant – the rondo. Rondo arias, such as ‘Dove Sono’ from

<sup>339</sup> Webster, ‘The Analysis of Mozart’s Arias’, p. 145

<sup>340</sup> Marita P. McClymonds, from The Grove Dictionary of Music Online:

[http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/43315?q=aria&search=quick&pos=1&\\_start=1#firsthit](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/43315?q=aria&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit)

Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, are similarly transformational but these conclude by 'breaking out' into a fast tempo for the final section.

Hatten also reads a degree of through-composition into Op. 31, No. 1, although for him the sense of culmination is related to the weaknesses in the theme. He suggests that Beethoven's decision to choose such a 'trivial' theme is in order to 'rehabilitate' it. The exaggerated ornamentation – with repeated appoggiaturas, extended trills, and rising chromatic scales at every opportunity – is, he suggests, a means of parodying the theme in a manner that 'transcends the theme's triviality'<sup>341</sup>. By the time we reach the coda, Hatten believes the listener comes to appreciate the theme for more than just its surface sentimentality. This parodistic approach to the aria theme chimes with the stilted, 'out-of-time' opening bars of the first movement, seemingly a humorous parody on the amateur pianist who cannot quite play in time.<sup>342</sup> But while Hatten hears the movement as a process of 'rehabilitation', I would suggest it is more accurately a process of *transformation*. This, as I have demonstrated elsewhere, is a slow movement trope and is characteristic of the outwards and upwards growth that typically takes place within the central slow movement – as the music strives onwards toward the finale. Since the slow movement shares its goal-driven roots with aria form, the analogy is all the more pertinent here. The tumultuous minor interlude at the centre of the movement presents the character's journey to a deeper interior state, before it emerges once more – transformed and renewed – at the recapitulation.

But, unlike the central slow movement, neither of the outer movements in Op. 31, No. 1 demonstrates any characteristics of vocal influences whatsoever. The first movement continues as though it is a series of exercises to improve the pianist's technique, with running scales interpolated by the disjunct chords, and no other 'theme' as such to speak of. The same is true of the finale which, although it opens with a more recognisable melodic theme, soon descends into scalic figuration that propels the movement onwards with an almost unrelenting vigour. Only at the end is there any hint of the lyrical interlude at the work's centre, with two brief recourses to an *Adagio* tempo (bars 227 and bar 233) and a long, sustained trill that recalls the ornamentation of the slow movement's theme. It is puzzling, then, that such an ornate movement should sit between these two, modest pillars, with no hint as to why Italian opera was embraced and parodied so wholeheartedly in this particular work. However, during the 1790s Beethoven seems to have become infatuated with Italian opera and wrote a series of variations on opera themes at this time. Indeed, Glauert also notes the popularity of the Italian style in Vienna in the late eighteenth century, with many lyrical poems (that would later be

---

<sup>341</sup> Hatten, 'Beethoven's Italian Trope', p. 17

<sup>342</sup> Note also that this humorous, out-of-time effect is echoed in the first movement of another Piano Sonata in G major: the Op. 79 sonata, which also has an Italianate song as its central movement.

connected with the emergence of the 'Lied') being set in a deliberately elaborate, Italianate fashion. The results of Beethoven's own fixation can be seen not only in Op. 31, No. 1, but also in the slow movements of the String Quartet in F major, Op. 18, No. 1 and the Piano Sonata in B flat major, Op. 22. All of these movements not only share Italianate melodies that are coloured by operatic ornamentation but are also united by their gently pulsing accompaniments and 9/8 time signatures – an unusual choice of metre for this era.<sup>343</sup> But more tellingly, each of these Italian vocal incarnations appears in the slow movement. Of course, not every aria in an opera is in a slow tempo – so why are there no examples of operatic appropriations within Beethoven's outer movements? What is it about the slow movement that lends itself so naturally to vocal evocation?

As we have seen, at a purely practical level, the slow movement is certainly the most malleable of any of the movements in a traditional Classical work, lending itself more readily to different formal types and flexible enough to incorporate almost any musical topic. While a slow movement might be in sonata form, ternary form, binary form, variation form or any number of formal hybrids, it is not confined to any of these and, as such, can be shaped in accordance with the chosen topic or genre. But, as Rosen has shown, 'aria form' is a common formal prototype for the slow movement and even becomes synonymous with 'slow movement form' in Rosen's theory.<sup>344</sup> More pertinently, the very fact that the slow movement has a slower tempo allows greater flexibility of expression and, importantly, more time for the listener to absorb and digest the musical material. If there is a message or narrative to be conveyed, the listener may have more time to comprehend it. But there is also a historical side to the argument, which is that slow arias and songs have long been associated with a depth of expression: in opera, a fast-paced aria is often associated with humour, action or urgency, but rarely with heartfelt emotion. The *aria d'affetto*, for example, defined by Webster as a 'heartfelt' aria, tends to be moderately slow, often in 2/4 metre (a common slow movement metre) and while its binary form usually eschews internal contrasts, Webster also notes that it is rarely situated in a sharpwards key.<sup>345</sup> Examples include 'Porgi amor' or 'Dies Bildnis' from Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, or Constanze's aria 'Traurigkeit ward mir zum Lose' from *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. By contrast, the more light-hearted male buffa aria, such as Papageno's bird-catcher song from *Die Zauberflöte* or Leporello's 'Madamina' from *Don Giovanni*, is more commonly associated with a 4/4 metre, *Allegretto* or *Allegro* tempo, a multipartite structure, 'leading to a climax of comic action towards

---

<sup>343</sup> Hatten suggests that Beethoven may have been exploring arias in 9/8 as a means of creating new expressive potential. It was certainly not the norm in Italian operas of the late eighteenth century, nor does it appear to have been drawn from any dance genres. It is more likely, Hatten proposes, that Beethoven associates the metre with a 3/4 metre that has been subdivided into triplets, giving a poignant weighting to each beat. See Hatten, 'Beethoven's Italian Trope'.

<sup>344</sup> See Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, pp. 27-28

<sup>345</sup> Webster, 'The Analysis of Mozart's Arias', p. 107

the end'<sup>346</sup>. When Leporello shifts from the *Allegro* 4/4 with which the 'Madamina' aria opens to a 3/4 *Andante con moto* for the second section, it is with mock gravity. Here, Leporello lists the ladies' amiable characteristics – their kindness, faithfulness, and sweetness – as though he were singing an *aria d'affetto* to the object of his affections, though the words tell a different story, and the mischievousness of the preceding cabaletta ensures we hear it as such.

This appears to demonstrate a clear distinction – not just in Beethoven's works but in all opera of this era – between fast and slow vocality, one that stems from the aria's earliest origins. The name 'aria' is derived from the Latin *aer* ('air, atmosphere')<sup>347</sup> and in its original incarnation this indicated a simple tune or strophic song. In the late seventeenth century, the aria continued to be defined by its simplicity, as Jack Westrup indicates: 'Aria strophes exhibit great variety of form, but the same procedure of composition underlies most of them: the text is set line by line, by and large syllabically despite isolated flourishes, and often with modest repetition of single words or phrases.'<sup>348</sup> In the Baroque, an aria was typically reserved for a moment of static, quiet contemplation, such as the sarabande 'Lascia chio pianga' from Handel's *Rinaldo* or the hymn to nature 'Ombra mai fu' from Handel's *Serse*. Both require a slow tempo to adequately convey the gravity or placidity of the situation. Fast arias are distinguished by being reserved for moments of humour, action, urgency or anger, such as 'A dispetto d'un volto ingrato' from Handel's *Tamerlano*. Not until the emergence of opera buffa in the age of Mozart does the aria form a new strand which is more elaborate, more complex, and more light-hearted – moving away from its original associations with the heartfelt sincerity of the air.

The slow movement appears to retain vocality's foundations in lyrical contemplation, and it is primarily in the slow movement that Beethoven chooses to visit vocal topics. Fast vocality exists – but it is a subset reserved for specific, marked occurrences. When Beethoven mimics Leporello's aria 'Notte e giorno faticar' in Variation 22 of the Diabelli Variations, Op. 120, it is humorous and the tempo is *Allegro molto*. While there is limited space to discuss the issue of fast vocality within this study of slow movements, one casts a cursory glance at the recitative links that make up the *Allegro moderato* (No. 3) of Beethoven's String Quartet in C sharp minor, Op. 131, or the scream-like cascade of the *Presto* that precedes the *Allegro appassionato* finale of the String Quartet in A minor, Op. 132. Both are disruptive and suggest vocal outbursts or sudden and intense action, by contrast with their slow, lyrical counterparts which Beethoven typically marks out deliberately with expressive markings – note, for example, the *Molto adagio*

---

<sup>346</sup> Webster, *The Analysis of Mozart's Arias*, p. 108

<sup>347</sup> McClymonds, Marita P., 'Aria' from The Grove Dictionary of Music

Online:[http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/43315?q=aria&search=quick&pos=1&\\_start=1#firsthit](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/43315?q=aria&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit)

<sup>348</sup> Westrup, Jack, 'Aria' from The Grove Dictionary of Music Online:

[http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/43315?q=aria&search=quick&pos=1&\\_start=1#firsthit](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/43315?q=aria&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit)

recitative that concludes the *Andante* slow movement, which Beethoven marks 'Mit innigster Empfindung' ('with deepest feeling').

To conjure the voice within the slow movement, therefore, invites the listener to hear a new level of expressivity and a depth of sentiment not witnessed in the other movements. To invoke aria may imply passion or melancholy, but above all it implies pause and contemplation – a moment of stock-taking, both retrospective and forward-looking, that is consistent with the slow movement's transformational function within the work. We are also reminded that the term 'aria' is not only used to describe vocal works: Bach designates the theme of his Goldberg Variations as an 'Aria', perhaps because the variation treatment to which it is subjected is reminiscent of the repetitive, strophic song with which the early aria was most closely associated. Indeed, Johann Mattheson suggests that the definition of aria is 'a short, singable, simple melody, divided into two parts, which in most cases is so plainly drawn that one may turn it about, embellish it and vary it in countless ways'.<sup>349</sup> While songs and arias may be fast or slow, in an instrumental context vocality is slowed down; and it is this simplicity above all that may best capture the topic of instrumental vocality, implying a directness of expression that is somewhat uncommon to instrumental works. While the slow movement might not always evoke heartfelt emotion, if a vocal topic is suggested, this arouses the image of a singer (or singers) and this, in turn, invites the listener to hear the music as communicating something *personal*. For Kerman, the sheer 'songfulness' of the late quartets goes hand in hand with his quest for a new musical immediacy: 'A striking new directness of emotional appeal, a determination to touch the common mankind as nakedly as possible. Never in the past had Beethoven reached so urgently for immediacy.'<sup>350</sup> On the contrary, I believe this directness of expression, brought about by the presence of a 'voice', is evident in Beethoven's works from a much earlier stage.

## The Soloist

In Chapter 2 I touched upon the developments in piano manufacture during the early nineteenth century and the impact of these changes upon the piano as a new vehicle for personal expression. The piano became a symbol of the newly inward-looking artist, changing the shape and style of music that was performed both within the home and at the concert hall. As Richard Kramer writes of Beethoven's own relationship with the instrument: 'Beethoven's

---

<sup>349</sup> Mattheson, Johann, from *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (1739), cited by Jack Westrup, 'Aria', from The Grove Dictionary of Music Online:

<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/43315?q=aria&search=quick&pos=1&start=1#firsthit>

<sup>350</sup> Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets*, p. 194

piano, the instrument that seems often a surrogate extension of his being, must simulate a music that captures the essence of both song and speech even as it can neither sing nor speak in any actual sense.’<sup>351</sup> The piano allowed the performer to bring the grandiosity of the orchestra to the home, channelling expression in a more personal, intimate way. Indeed, it is revealing that despite the widespread examples of vocal evocation in instrumental works, these examples do not extend to the symphonies. Two exceptions exist: the hymn of thanksgiving in the ‘Pastoral’ Symphony and the literal invocation of vocalicity in the finale of the Ninth Symphony. In both cases, the voice is used to evoke celebratory, *communal* singing – an altogether different kind of vocal invocation to the intimate voice identified within Beethoven’s other genres. Moreover, both of these examples are marked by their tempo – they are both fast.

This distinction between communal celebration in the symphony and the intimate, solo voice in the chamber works seems to go hand in hand with the growing prominence of the soloist as introspective artist during the nineteenth century. However, there is one large-scale orchestral genre to which vocal evocation is very strongly linked: the concerto. Both share similar forms, with the concerto’s ritornellos principle echoing the repeated structure of the da capo aria. Rosen suggests: ‘Concerto and aria are closely related forms: often, in fact, identical.’<sup>352</sup> Rosen also believes that the Classical or ‘sonata style’ as a whole – not just the concerto – is founded upon vocal forms of preceding periods, as detailed in the previous section. For Rosen, the sonata is just as readily identifiable with vocal sources as the concerto – both are modelled on operatic forms. But while vocal evocation is indeed common to both forms, Rosen’s theory does not account for the presence of the individual in the concerto, something that is relinquished within the sonata. Whereas the sonata borrows from the large-scale form and harmonic articulation of the aria to create its tripartite form, the concerto preserves the presence of an individual soloist. The sonata may mimic this with varied textures, but it cannot produce the same effect as that of a soloist against an orchestral backdrop. Regardless of form, the concerto preserves the sense of dialogue inherent to the aria, and therefore more closely mimics the effect of the aria. The concerto’s affiliation with voice is thus linked with the growing tendency towards introspection and self-expression that characterised the growth of romanticism. As noted in the previous chapter, Taruskin believes that this is markedly demonstrated by Beethoven’s Fourth Piano Concerto – but vocal associations do not end here. The Fifth Piano Concerto also continues this trend and invokes vocal writing, this time in the form of a chorale.

Like the Fourth, the Fifth Piano Concerto begins with a dialogue between soloist and orchestra: while the orchestra set forth with a serene chorale, played *con sordino*, the piano

---

<sup>351</sup> Kramer, Richard, *Unfinished Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 237

<sup>352</sup> Rosen, Sonata Forms, p. 69

responds with lilting triplets in chains of descending scales. It is not until bar 45 and the return of the tonic (B major) that the piano finally takes up the chorale theme, now spliced with the triplet accompaniment. But it is the Violin Concerto that most readily adopts the new air of introspection, again channelling this through the presence of the voice. While the form of the slow movement appears at first to be a confusing mix of both variation and rondo forms, Jander suggests it is perhaps best characterised as a *Romanze*. He cites Sulzer, writing in 1793, who suggests: 'Nowadays one gives the name *Romanze* to little narrative songs in the extremely naive and rather antique tone of the old rhymed Romances. The content of these songs is a narrative of passionate, tragic, sentimental or merry content.'<sup>353</sup> Indeed, the *Romanze* began life as a literary genre, popular among many of the leading poets in the late eighteenth century, such as Goethe, Schiller and Tieck. Soon, composers began setting these poems to music to create the vocal form of the *Romanze*, but it was not long before the genre became adapted for purely instrumental forces, as Jack Sage writes: 'The simplicity, lyricism and form of the vocal romance were easily adapted to instrumental composition. In the eighteenth century the term was most frequently applied to slow movements with a rondo, ABA or variation structure.'<sup>354</sup> Less dramatic than the *Lied*, the *Romanze* is characterised above all by its simplicity: both in form, which typically follows the lead of strophic poetry, and in melody, phrase structure and harmonic planning.

Although the slow movement of Beethoven's Violin Concerto certainly conforms to some of these characteristics, Jander's suggestion does not adequately account for the movement's most striking qualities. While he suggests that the form of the movement is a peculiar rondo-variation hybrid, in fact it is neither. Variation implies the return of a theme, each time appearing in a newly varied, embellished or transformed guise; while rondo implies the return of a theme in a more or less identical format, with intervening material between each appearance. Neither can truly be said of the *Larghetto*, in which the opening theme is repeated four times in succession virtually unchanged, without intervening material. Its repetition of the unadorned theme is rondo-like and the soloist's thematic embellishments are variation-like but a rondo-variation hybrid is not an accurate portrayal of the form. Rather than transforming the opening theme in the manner of a variation procedure, when the solo violin enters in bar 11, its relationship to the theme (which remains present in the string accompaniment) is purely decorative. The effect is akin to the da capo of an aria, in which the theme itself remains unchanged and clearly audible, with decorative embellishments to avoid literal repetition. While

---

<sup>353</sup> Sulzer, cited by Jander, 'Romantic Form and Content in the slow movement of Beethoven's Violin Concerto', p. 161

<sup>354</sup> Sage, Jack, 'Romance' from The Grove Dictionary of Music Online: [http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/23725?q=romance&search=quick&pos=1&\\_start=1#firsthit](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/23725?q=romance&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit)

this like-for-like presentation of the theme is certainly reminiscent of the repeated verses of strophic song, and hence the comparison with the *Romanze* may be appropriate, Jander's formal analysis appears to miss the wider implications of the movement. Roger Fiske's label 'semi-variations'<sup>355</sup>, which Jander acknowledges and dismisses, seems more fitting. If one strips the string texture away to preserve only the bass-line and the violin melody, as Jander implies we are to do when he describes the 'ingenious manifestation of the venerable chaconne bass'<sup>356</sup>, then a variation label certainly applies. But Jander ignores the fact that the theme remains present and unchanged in the strings throughout the four consecutive iterations of the theme, so it cannot truly be called a chaconne. A variation set relies on transformation, and the violin's role in this movement appears to be purely decorative. As Robin Stowell writes: 'It is so unlike the traditional variation types of the period, such as those based on themes in binary form, or on opera arias or popular tunes, that it has proved difficult to describe accurately in conventional terms.'<sup>357</sup>

Instead, I would argue that this decorative quality is integral to the movement's design, which manifests itself as the composing out of a cadenza. The movement echoes the slow movement of a Baroque concerto, in which the composer typically transcribes a simple, brief and unadorned melody, which the soloist is invited to freely embellish at will. Often, such movements culminate with a marked cadenza – to be written or improvised by the performer. In some extreme cases, composers might only give an indication of the key of the movement and two or three chords on which the performer is to base their improvised cadenza. Further exploration of the cadenza as a form takes place within Chapter 5. Many writers, including Jander, have commented on the 'serenity' of the movement – a quality which is largely imbued by the unusual tonal planning of the movement. There is no modulation to speak of in the movement, except for a passing glance at D major (the dominant) within bars 4-6 of the theme, while the theme itself is just as harmonically unadventurous. The first three bars of the theme simply oscillate between tonic and dominant chords, before a circle of fifths (bars 4-8) draws the theme back to the tonic once more, concluding with a final perfect cadence (bars 9-10). Since this same harmonic pattern is repeated each time the theme returns, the impression given is one of stasis – the theme does not journey anywhere and this is reinforced by the persistent repetition of the theme in the strings. This eerie sense of calm also manifests itself in the stop-start rhythm of the theme, which keeps stalling itself (bars 1, 3 and 5) with crotchet rests. Meanwhile, the repeated perfect cadences in the opening bars bring the music to a halt before it has even begun. Note, however, that Beethoven makes these 'feminine' cadences – it is the

---

<sup>355</sup> Fiske, Roger, *Beethoven Concertos and Overtures* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1970), p. 31

<sup>356</sup> Jander, 'Romantic Form and Content in the slow movement of Beethoven's Violin Concerto', p. 160

<sup>357</sup> Stowell, Robin, *Beethoven: Violin Concerto* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 79



dominant chord that falls on the strong beat of the bar. Thus despite repeated perfect cadences in G major, the tonic itself is weakened, and Beethoven sets up the dominant as the strong chord at the outset.

Beethoven therefore establishes a) the dominant chord and b) a platform of stasis as the predominant features of this movement – in other words, the makings of a cadenza. The violin's ethereal embellishments dance above the theme itself as though the strings were maintaining their sustained cadenza harmony and the soloist were freely extemporising upon the theme. This becomes truly the case after the fourth repeat of the theme when the strings cease to repeat the theme proper, instead supporting the violin's virtuosic flourishes with punctuating chords. Indeed, if we look to the very end of the movement, we see that just as the theme itself goes round in circles, neither has music journeyed anywhere over the course of the movement: the movement finally closes with a 'real' cadenza. Here, the a<sup>1</sup> of the theme in the first violin is retained, but its function as the underlying harmony is now transformed from the dominant of G major to the dominant of D major – the key of the concerto itself. This a<sup>1</sup> in the first violin is of course echoed by the violin soloist's a<sup>2</sup> for its cadenza, before plummeting to the a two octaves lower at the onset of the *Rondo*. The *Larghetto* is thus open-ended, functioning as the composing out of a cadenza that connects the *Allegro* to the *Rondo*. Jander remarks that the movement is 'd'un gout un peu antique', following Rousseau's characterisation of the *Romanze*, but this description is just as fitting for Beethoven's recourse to Baroque concerto techniques. Michael Talbot, in his description of the Vivaldi's concerto slow movements, notes: 'In solo concertos the emphasis of the solo part is predominantly lyrical; it is usually notated in "outline" form in the expectation that the performer will, through improvised embellishment, produce a more flowing, expressive and individualized melody.'<sup>358</sup> Note also the extended orchestral introduction to the first movement of the Violin Concerto, which is equally befitting of the Baroque concerto layout. Finally, it is worth briefly considering the unusual nature of Beethoven's 'variations' in the slow movement, which may deliberately invoke the presence of C.P.E. Bach. Drabkin, reviewing Richard Kramer's recent volume on the works and influence of C.P.E. Bach, notes that Kramer refuses to translate the German term *Veränderung* into a suitable English alternative, 'since for Bach, the technique of *Veränderung* lies somewhere between ornamentation and variation'<sup>359</sup> – a style quite reminiscent of the process in question here. I return to the topic of C.P.E. Bach in the next section.

---

<sup>358</sup> Talbot, Michael, 'Concerto' from The Grove Dictionary of Music Online:  
[http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/40737?q=concerto&search=quick&pos=1&\\_start=1#firsthit](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/40737?q=concerto&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit)

<sup>359</sup> Drabkin, William 'Richard Kramer, Unfinished Music' (Review), from *Nineteenth-Century Music Review*, Vol. 7 (2010), p. 124

Nevertheless, if Beethoven recourses to Baroque techniques within the Violin Concerto, this is not without transforming their characteristics. This is not just the case for the slow movement, but also for the opening movement, which forms crucial links with the slow movement 'cadenza'. While the extended orchestral introduction to the first movement appears to set up the arrival of the soloist in a dramatic manner, as befitting of a Vivaldian concerto, what follows is somewhat atypical. When the soloist enters, it is with dramatic octave leaps to reach a *sforzando* g<sup>3</sup> in bar 91. But the soloist does not then take on the theme: instead, the violin's first entry is itself a kind of cadenza, beneath which the strings sustain the dominant seventh harmony. The g<sup>3</sup> that the violin reaches in bar 91 and repeats in bar 93 is the seventh atop this dominant seventh chord – but it also references the tonic of the slow movement. The first movement therefore prefigures the composed-out cadenza of the slow movement with this very first entry, itself a quasi-cadenza.

Characterising the slow movement of the Violin Concerto in this way has important consequences for our understanding of vocal evocation in Beethoven's works. While Jander suggests that the movement has links to vocality through its reference to the *Romanze*, the cadenza-like elaboration of the theme also invokes a voice. It implies the presence of an individual – one who muses idly on the potential of this theme. As such, Beethoven uses the individual to transform a Baroque practice into a newly Romantic genre, one in which the soloist becomes detached from the orchestral fabric, as the artist looks inwards upon himself. This is a moment of standstill – or *Augenblick* – in which temporality is briefly suspended and the music is caught in the very moment of becoming. As Spitzer writes:

'The moment – a word which in German means both instant of time (*Augenblick*) and formal part (*Bestandteil*) – is a central category in early-Romantic and modernist aesthetics of the fragment. Indeed, the Romantics saw the fragment as a model for all structures, with the accent on formal separation, the fleetingness of lyrical experience'.<sup>360</sup>

The slow movement is caught between *Augenblick* and *Bestandteil*; it is both outside the work and an integral part of the whole. The cadenza is itself a kind of variation – one which takes elements of the theme as its starting point and freely elaborates upon them to create a new and dramatic variant. But the cadenza also performs an important transitional function, looking both backwards at the preceding thematic material and forwards to its resolution. Its unique purpose is encapsulated by Richard Kramer, who writes: 'A commentary from without and within, the cadenza, as its name affirms, articulates the structural cadence of the greatest weight, and so the music that happens here holds a privileged place. The music seems to stop,

---

<sup>360</sup> Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*, p. 230

but that is illusory.’<sup>361</sup> Note also that this dual relationship is strengthened by Yeheudi Menuhin’s analysis, which draws motivic connections between the theme of the *Larghetto* and the themes of the two outer movements – particularly that of the finale.<sup>362</sup> So the undercurrent of ‘semi-variation’ within this movement supports this function and fulfils the cadenza’s dual-aspect role, with the static repetition of the theme providing a platform for calm contemplation, while the cumulative elaboration allows for a process of transformation.

A similar process takes place in the slow movement of the ‘Triple’ Concerto, Op. 56, which was written in the previous year to the Violin Concerto and once again features a ‘semi-variation’ technique based on a simple, repetitious song-like theme. In this case I use the label ‘semi-variation’ because although, like the Violin Concerto, it employs a discernible theme that is repeated and embellished by the soloists, once more this embellishment is purely decorative and not transformative. Moreover, this variation ‘set’ constitutes just one presentation of the theme and one ‘variation’. What follows is, like the Violin Concerto, a passage of free coda-like material that sets up a transition to the dominant key of the finale. In both cases, the slow movement has a distinctly transitional function, a moment of stock-taking that eventually ushers in the finale. The semi-variation undercurrent in both cases provides a static platform over which the cadenza-like cascading arpeggios and scales is draped – unlike a more normative variation set where diminution, minore variations or modulations may contribute to an intensifying and goal-directed series, these semi-variations both appear to be motionless. It is this coupling of stasis and soloist that invites us to perceive the soloist as a contemplative voice. Indeed, Joseph Kerman directly equates Beethoven’s growing interest in variation with Beethoven’s awakening interest in song. Variation-based slow movements, he notes, are relatively uncommon in Beethoven’s early works (Op. 26 is a rare example) but they become increasingly prevalent during the ‘middle’ period, as Kerman suggests: ‘The new interest in song automatically awoke a new interest in variation.’<sup>363</sup> Indeed, he highlights a salient point: there are few examples of direct vocal evocation in the earlier works, as the middle-late focus of the present discussion might suggest. So why should variation and song be so closely associated with one another? The issue is partly one of form: while aria form is more closely associated with sonata form (as Charles Rosen has shown<sup>364</sup>) and demonstrates a degree of progression, based on both harmonic and thematic opposition, both song and variation are primarily harmonically static and are based on strophic repetition. Da capo arias may bridge this divide, however, since these too are harmonically static (closing their first part in the tonic, and

---

<sup>361</sup> Kramer, Richard *Unfinished Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 213

<sup>362</sup> Menuhin, Yeheudi and Primrose, William, *Violin and Viola* (London: Macdonald and Company, 1976) pp. 123-124

<sup>363</sup> Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets*, p. 213

<sup>364</sup> See Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, p. 28

therefore alien to the sonata dynamic) and the da capo return of the theme in its original guise, often with additional ornaments, has echoes of variation procedures.

As Elaine Siman writes:

'Variations of [the Classical] period may be seen as a series of frozen moments, of decorative tableaux... Variation form is founded on repetition: a discrete thematic entity – a complex of melody, harmony, phrase structure, rhythm, and the character resulting from these – is repeated several (or many) times, with various modifications.'<sup>365</sup>

While the material itself may sound different to what preceded it, variation form is based upon repetition of certain fundamental factors and this finds a natural partner in many vocal forms. In song, variation equates with the recurring 'rhyme' of form, phrase structure and harmony, while da capo arias may echo both the embellishment of the variation process and the common practice of bringing back the theme unadorned at the close of the variation set. But other vocal forms find echoes in variation too. Note, for example, in Beethoven's 'Appassionata' Piano Sonata, Op. 57, the congruence of variation form and that most repetitious of all vocal genres: the hymn. Or consider the Op. 79 Piano Sonata (discussed previously) that focuses intently on the repetitive barcarolle – its companion piece is the Op. 77 Fantasy, a work that contains a prominent set of variations. But variation form also borrows from aria too – using embellishments and ornamentation to decorate a repeated melody.

What variation form and song share beyond purely formal considerations, however, is the ability to evoke a protagonist, someone who is sharing these ideas and repeating, distorting and ruminating on them as the work progresses. Both imply that the music is 'talking *to* itself *about* itself', to use Jander's terms.<sup>366</sup> But this means of expression, in turn, invites an altogether different means of vocal evocation: where hitherto the discussion has focussed on evocations of vocal musical styles, the voice is not limited to song, aria or hymn. That is to say, the voice may also appear disembodied, as speaker rather than singer.

## Voice versus Narrative

The declamatory voice in instrumental works is not without precedent – as Taruskin has shown, it appears (perhaps for the first time) in C.P.E. Bach's 'Prussian' Sonata No. 1, Wq. 48. We know that Beethoven was fascinated with Bach's works, and eventually requested his complete catalogue from his publishers in 1810, while making references to Bach's *Versuch* in letters and documents throughout his life. In January 1812, he wrote to his publishers once more, but this

---

<sup>365</sup> Siman, *Haydn and the Classical Variation*, p. 16

<sup>366</sup> Jander, 'The "Kreutzer" Sonata as dialogue', p. 40

time, tellingly, he requested a set of vocal scores – those of Mozart’s *Requiem*, *La Clemenza di Tito*, *Così fan Tutte*, *La Nozze di Figaro*, and *Don Giovanni* – alongside another request for ‘a gift of the things by C.P. Emanuel Bach’.<sup>367</sup> Kramer has also shown that Bach’s Keyboard Sonata in E minor (1785) may have influenced Beethoven in his composition of the Piano Sonata in E minor, Op. 90. Kramer writes of Bach’s Sonata: ‘The opening phrase seems about speech, even as it speaks. The interruption at m. 3, impatient with these measured tones, is abrupt, violent, contrary.’<sup>368</sup> Kramer outlines the many points of congruence between the two E minor sonatas, the most striking of which is their shared invocation of the voice. Beethoven subtitles the two movements: ‘Mit Lebhaftigkeit und durchaus mit Empfindung und Ausdruck’ (‘With liveliness and with feeling and expression throughout’) and ‘Nicht zu geschwind und sehr singbar vorgetragen’ (‘Not too swiftly and conveyed in a singing manner’). As well as noting the similarity between these expressive indications and those Beethoven gave to his songs, Kramer suggests of the opening bars of Op. 90: ‘There is something about these phrases that resonates with those studies in the declamatory, that encourages us to hear the opening phrases as an exploration of a new, narrative mode, not so much songlike in a lyrical sense, but, rather, Lied-like in its diction, and balladlike: *erzählend, sprechend* – speechlike’.<sup>369</sup>

Bach may well have been the inspiration for Beethoven’s own declamatory passages in instrumental works, not only for the idea itself, but also for the context in which such features appear. As Kramer has shown, that ‘Bach’s music was understood to negotiate its meaning in linguistic terms was manifest early on.’<sup>370</sup> Like the abruptness that Kramer identifies in Bach’s E minor Sonata, in Bach’s ‘Prussian’ Sonata, the self-titled recitative passages puncture the surrounding form, appearing each time as abrupt *forte* intrusions amidst the flowing *piano* texture. The same is true of the *Beklemmt* passage in the Cavatina from Beethoven’s String Quartet in B flat major, Op. 130. Dahlhaus writes of this movement: ‘Beneath its simple ABCA outline, the real formal process of the Cavatina is the way it integrates vocal materials into an instrumental idiom. This is the “poetic idea” of the movement.’<sup>371</sup> But Dahlhaus is only partially correct: the vocal materials of the *sotto voce* outer sections, the ‘Cavatina proper’, are seamlessly blended with the string textures to become not an evocation of vocality but a synthesis between voice and instrument. In fact, Hatten suggests that the movement is perhaps closer aesthetically to the *Romanze*, which Beethoven imports as though it were a topic, applying the principles of simplicity, sincerity and elegance within an aria-like formal structure. The *Beklemmt* interlude, however, shatters this illusion. Dahlhaus suggests of this recitative section: ‘The fact that they

---

<sup>367</sup> Beethoven, cited by Kramer, *Unfinished Music*, p. 238

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239

<sup>369</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 236

<sup>370</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7

<sup>371</sup> Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, p. 85

come from long-standing vocal traditions causes their appearance in an instrumental work such as the *Cavatina* of the B flat major Quartet, Op. 130, to take on the character of a quotation.<sup>372</sup> Indeed, one of the defining features of a quotation is that it is heard as such – as a quotation removed from its more natural context. This is exactly the aural effect of the *Beklemmt* interlude.

Literally translated as ‘oppressed’ or ‘anguished’, this episode cuts through the unfolding song form and seems to suggest an excursion into another world. Hatten suggests that this interlude invokes a more personal level of expression: ‘A more exposed level of discourse... almost a baring of the soul’<sup>373</sup>. This stuttering recitative, out of joint with the pulsing accompaniment, is so different from what precedes it that one cannot help but use narrative-like rhetoric to describe it. This is something Carolyn Abbate discusses in *Unsung Voices*, suggesting that musical narrative is created (or at least implied) by moments that break the natural flow of the music and cause the listener to ask ‘why?’ She writes: ‘[Music] is not narrative, but it possesses moments of narration, moments that can be identified by their bizarre and disruptive effect.’<sup>374</sup> Such moments, she suggests, seem like ‘voices from elsewhere’<sup>375</sup>. The first movement of Beethoven’s Piano Sonata in D minor, Op. 31, No. 2 is a case in point: this *Allegro* opening movement is preceded and later interrupted by a series of *Largo* passages that bring the music to a momentary hiatus (bars 1-2, 7-8, 93-98, 143-148, and 153-158). Even before the movement has begun, their effect is disruptive: the spread first inversion dominant chord sets the sonata off on the wrong foot, cueing an implied recitative that fails to materialise. Moreover, the occasional repeated notes suggest something syllabic: indeed, this is a feature that Adorno discusses with reference to the slow movement of the ‘Hammerklavier’ sonata, where he suggests that ‘the repeated notes... give rise to the peculiar *speaking* character of the theme.’<sup>376</sup> Unaccompanied and rhythmically untethered, it is difficult to describe them without evoking a vocal comparison. Like the interruption from the *Cavatina*, they seem to ‘speak out’ from within the music; indeed, Beethoven marks them *con espressione e semplice*.<sup>377</sup> At the onset of the development section (bars 93-98), the *Largo* interlude returns once more, but three modulatory flourishes fail to lead on to the anticipated recitative. It is not until the recapitulation (bars 143-148 and 153-158) that the recitative finally materialises – the opening trigger having been deferred to a more appropriate place, as a way of heralding the tonic return. Echoing the ‘baring of the soul’ in the *Cavatina*, Rosen writes that this stark recitative has ‘a

---

<sup>372</sup> Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, p. 85

<sup>373</sup> Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, p. 219

<sup>374</sup> Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, p. 29

<sup>375</sup> Ibid.

<sup>376</sup> Adorno, *Beethoven*, fr. 266, p. 128

<sup>377</sup> Note also that these interruptions are *slow* in tempo – further evidence of the natural affiliation between the voice and slow expressiveness.

hollow and even cavernous quality like a voice from the tomb.’<sup>378</sup> But the deferral to the end of the movement has another rhetorical effect: a recitative implies that an aria will follow. While the *Allegro* theme subverts these expectations, the ensuing *Adagio* appears to take these cues, and begins by mirroring the spread chords of the opening movement. What follows is not an aria, though its cavatina form certainly has echoes of song, but its peculiar, almost reticent declamation, punctuated by regular rests and alternations of register certainly seems to evoke speech – perhaps even a conversation. Recitative sparks the implication of a narrative, so if we hear echoes of personal declamation in the slow movement, this is due in no small part to the implicative cues of the opening movement.

While repetition implies stasis, interruption implies an external agent: something or someone that breaks the natural order of things. To the listener, this creates a sequence of events that invites interpretation, hence suggesting not just a voice, but also a narrating voice. As Abbate writes: ‘Narrative always involves a storyteller and a listener, not merely a story.’<sup>379</sup> The ‘voice from elsewhere’ becomes assigned the role of storyteller, albeit in a purely musical drama, since it is the agent that expresses movement and change. However, while in opera or song, narration might refer specifically to a well-defined plot or set of characters, can we really speak of ‘narrative’ in the same sense when discussing instrumental music? What does this external voice describe, other than a change of mood or thematic material? What story is this voice telling? In some instances, the story is suggested to the listener somewhat explicitly: Beethoven’s Sonata in E flat major, Op. 81a invites a basic level of narration through the movements’ titles ‘Das Lebewohl’, ‘Das Abwesenheit’, ‘Das Wiedersehen’. But within this sequence of ‘Farewell-Absence-Reunion’, what story can we discern within the movements themselves?

The slow movement, ‘The Absence’, creates a wholly personalised voice through a combination of musical factors. Its funereal topic is derived from the opening bars of the first movement, connecting the narrative of the movement with that of the work as a whole, but here the anguish of absence is expressed through harmonic obscurity and the absence of normative formal pattering. I briefly addressed the movement’s evasion of the dominant in Chapter 2, but this is only one of the movement’s harmonic complications. In fact, it proceeds from obscurity in the very first bar. The tonic, C minor, is compromised even within the first quaver beat by an F sharp in the right hand (quickly followed in the left hand) that cuts short the opening tonic chord to a mere dotted semiquaver. The move is so surprising and so sudden that the listener has no time to register the brief C minor chord as the tonic, so that we are left hanging harmonically until bar 8. The F sharp is all the more disconcerting as it creates a dissonant

---

<sup>378</sup> Rosen, *Beethoven’s Piano Sonatas*, p. 170

<sup>379</sup> Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, p. 28

tritone with the bass, moving on to form a diminished chord that destabilises the tonality further. Only retrospectively can we reinterpret this harmonic abnormality as a dominant preparation for G major, the dominant, to which there is a resolution in bars 3-4. At this stage, the listener is led to believe that G major may in fact be the movement's tonic (which would create a jarring mediant major relationship with the tonic of the sonata, E flat major), until a sequential repetition a third higher finally brings the first phrase to a close in the rightful tonic of C minor (bar 8), a powerful moment which Rosen describes as a 'beautiful effect'<sup>380</sup>.

The following transition passes briefly through F minor (bar 10) before *sforzandi* alternations between G minor chords and its dominant seventh (bars 11-12) begin to suggest a move towards the dominant minor. When the new theme arrives in bar 15, however, there is no PAC to affirm the new tonality. With the new introduction of B naturals, the dominant (major) is implied as the new key, conforming with the expectations of the form, but with only weak perfect cadences on the final beat of the bar (bars 15-17), an affirmative resolution is never established. The theme itself is far more lyrical than the opening C minor theme: marked *cantabile*, it is underpinned by a flowing broken-chord accompaniment and its fluid melody contrasts with the static one-bar phrases of the opening. But this new sense of hope does not last, as the dominant is swept aside with gestures towards G minor (bars 18-19) and a new staccato texture that creates an altogether starker atmosphere. The starkness prefigures the return of the gloomy first subject, and with an understated resolution to C minor in bar 20, this seems to signal the onset of the recapitulation. But the return of the opening melody is underpinned by a diminished chord on G, which, four bars later, we are able to reinterpret as pre-dominant preparation for the PAC in F minor. This modulation brings with it interesting news: the recapitulation is not in the tonic, but in the subdominant (note that this was prefigured, albeit briefly, by the passing modulation to F minor in bar 10). What is more, by bar 24 it becomes clear that the recapitulation has begun not with the first phrase of the theme but with the second phrase (the equivalent of bars 5-8). This may be in order to avoid modulating during the first 4-bar phrase, which in the key of F minor would take the music to its dominant, C major/minor – a key which Beethoven seems to be deliberately avoiding.

When Beethoven 'recapitulates' the theme for a second time (bar 37) the theme begins on the tonic note and is harmonised by a diminished ninth on the dominant – a chord that implies an imminent and conclusive resolution to C minor to close the movement. Instead, however, the tonic is thwarted once more, as the main thematic unit is repeated insistently in rising sequence – an emblem of hope that delays the promised cadence before finally arriving on a B flat major seventh chord (bars 41-42), the dominant upbeat to the E flat major finale. Beethoven thus uses the movement to draw the listener away from the sense of positivity and

---

<sup>380</sup> Rosen, *Beethoven's Piano Sonatas: A Short Companion*, p. 204



hope provided by the structural pillars that the listener expects to hear – an affirmative dominant modulation and solid recapitulation in the tonic – instead dwelling on the sense of absence and reserving the forwards momentum for the onset of the finale (‘Wiedersehen’ or ‘The Return’).

But Op. 81a is an unusual case: few movements in Beethoven’s oeuvre provide us with titles as clues to the narrative thread of the work. Elsewhere, the problem is an issue of specificity, something that forces us to confront the difficult question of whether music is a language. Edward T. Cone invokes a direct comparison between music and its potential to speak as a language: ‘Music communicates, it makes statements, it conveys messages, it expresses emotions. It has its own syntax, its own rhetoric, even its own semantics.’<sup>381</sup> It is a comparison that has been drawn many times over the years, but the principal objection to this analogy is perhaps best voiced by T.W. Adorno in his fragment ‘Music and Language’ from the *Quasi una Fantasia* collection. In this fragment, Adorno concludes that although music *resembles* a language for all the reasons that Cone describes, ‘music creates no semiotic system’<sup>382</sup>. But Adorno, like Cone, notes that its resemblances derive largely from its speech-like means of structure: ‘The traditional theory of form employs such terms as sentence, phrase, segment, ways of punctuating – question, exclamation and parenthesis. Subordinate phrases are ubiquitous, voices rise and fall, and all these terms of musical gesture are derived from speech.’<sup>383</sup> Although an instrumental ‘voice’ might not, therefore, be able to specifically narrate, it might still invoke narration.

## Voice and Voicelessness

In the same way that moments of interruption invite interpretation, forcing the listener to confront the music as potentially narrational, so too do moments of incongruity. Both pose the same question: why is this here? In the ‘late’ style, this question appears time and again, as Beethoven juxtaposes seemingly disparate ideas in a manner that forces the listener to embrace issues of form and content. The slow movement from the Piano Sonata in A flat major, Op. 110, echoes this kind of genre-mixing, with a slow movement-come-finale that places Aria and Fugue side by side. Here, too, the slow movement colonises the outer movements with song. What is more, Op. 110 cements the links between variation and voice, opening as it does with a sonata movement that takes on aspects of variation form (as detailed in Chapter 3), which precedes the self-titled vocal topics in the slow movement. As such, it is a work of triumphant summation and a unique catalogue of Beethoven’s interaction with each of these distinct musical genres: song,

---

<sup>381</sup> Cone, Edward T., *The Composer’s Voice* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1974), p. 1

<sup>382</sup> Adorno, T.W., *Quasi una Fantasia, Essays on Modern Music* (London: Verso, 1998), p. 1

<sup>383</sup> Adorno, *Quasi una Fantasia*, p. 1

fugue, sonata form and variation. For Michael Spitzer, it is a work of ‘oscillation’, emblematic of Beethoven’s concern in the ‘late’ works with conventions and their abstraction. In Op. 110, there is no frame for the topic: vocality is a convention laid bare. As Adorno writes of these last piano sonatas: ‘Conventional formulae and phraseology are inserted... The convention is often made visible in unconcealed, untransformed bareness.’<sup>384</sup> This ‘bareness’ is a lack of musical cushioning; Beethoven makes no attempt to hide the Aria within a more instrumental idiom. Instead, he invokes Baroque topics with a candidness only heard in the late style. A short introduction prepares the ground for the entrance of the ‘Recitativo’ where, as in Op. 31, No. 2, sustained accompanimental chords and repeated melodic notes evoke the syllabic declamation of traditional recitative. Intriguingly, although writers such as Dahlhaus have suggested that Beethoven composed ‘against the voice’, and Beethoven himself described his own frustration at writing for singers, within this instrumental idiom he seems perfectly at home with traditional vocal writing. The recitative even closes with a characteristic  $\hat{7}-\hat{8}-\hat{8}-\hat{5}$  melodic closure, before throbbing chords signify the onset of the ‘Arioso dolente’ and prepare for the entry of the aria ‘soloist’. The ‘vocal’ line of the Arioso is also syncopated throughout, creating a written-in *rubato* that suggests the presence of an individual. Indeed, this contrasts markedly with rigidity of the rhythmic fugue that enters in bar 26 – a juxtaposition that seems to highlight the gulf between man and machine. Of course, the irony is that both the flexible vocal delivery and the machine-like fugato are conveyed by the same instrument: an exposition perhaps of the instrument’s capabilities, or a summary of Beethoven’s own exploration of the piano?

This latter suggestion is not cast off lightly: numerous commentators have noted a Beethovenian fascination with the ‘machine’ and the keeping of time throughout a number of his works. Abbate hears the *Allegretto* from the Seventh Symphony as purely mechanical, she writes:

‘The *Allegretto*... is switched on by its opening woodwind chord. Several effects – the click that sets something in motion, the pervasive rhythmic ostinato, the twenty-four measure period repeated fourfold – suggest a slow and subtle music box.’<sup>385</sup>

Moreover, she contrasts this mechanical rigidity specifically with an absence of vocality, referring to the movement’s ‘voicelessness’. Daniel Chua, meanwhile, has discussed the *Andante con moto* of Op. 130 with reference to musical time, suggesting that Beethoven pits the relentlessness of a perpetual pulse against the possibility of cadential closure, with the result being ‘a contradiction in which the music can never quite end and the clock can never quite

---

<sup>384</sup> Adorno, *Beethoven*, p. 124

<sup>385</sup> Abbate, Carolyn, *In Search of Opera* (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 199

keep time.’<sup>386</sup> While Kerman has observed a similar idea in the slow movement of the ‘Razumovsky’ Quartet in C major, Op. 59, No. 3, where he suggests that the monotonous, repetitive rhythm that drives through the movement gives it an air of ‘restlessness most unusual for a lyric movement’.<sup>387</sup>

In the ‘late’ works, this mechanical element becomes fossilised in fugue, which is offered as an emblem of the counterpoint that is at the roots of Classical style. This is contrasted, meanwhile, by the element of song, with the two genres representing the twin features of ‘Classicism’: form and lyricism. Richard Kramer suggests that these two basic features, song and fugue, are in fact the roots of sonata form and that Beethoven foregrounds this dialectic in the late works. He writes:

‘Fugue and song figure pre-eminently in Beethoven’s last works: not, of course, as genres in the naive sense, but as modes of diction mediating, in their directness of discourse, the stripped-down narratives of sonata, or as dispassionate, fragmentary representations of genre – the ruins of genre.’<sup>388</sup>

Op. 110 foregrounds the ‘directness of discourse’ that Kramer describes, juxtaposing song and fugue in such bare, unadorned states that their proximity becomes almost shocking. Beethoven makes no attempt to bury the vocal topics of the third movement or the fugue of the finale within a wider movement – the topics are the movements themselves.

Op. 110 represents a marked change from the recitative invoked within the first movement of Op. 31, No. 2. In the latter, the vocal topic breaks the flow of the movement but its position is ‘outside’ the movement proper. Its effect is disruptive, stalling the rest of the movement and demanding satisfactory resolution. In Op. 110, the topic is elevated from intrusion to genre: topic is no longer imported as a ‘soundbite’ but laid down as the fundamental building blocks of the movement. Kofi Agawu explores the juxtaposition of topics in the first movement of Beethoven’s String Quartet in A minor, Op. 132, noting that the most striking feature of the movement is its extreme contrasts which dominate the musical surface. Discontinuity, rather than continuity, is established as the norm in this movement. Agawu identifies some nine topics in this opening *Allegro*: learned style, *alla breve*, fantasy, cadenza, march, sensibility, gavotte, aria, and brilliant style.<sup>389</sup> But while Agawu acknowledges that these

---

<sup>386</sup> Chua, *The ‘Galitzin’ Quartets of Beethoven*, p. 177

<sup>387</sup> Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets*, p. 147

<sup>388</sup> Kramer, Richard, ‘Lisch aus, mein Licht: Song, Fugue, and the Symptoms of a Late Style’, from *Beethoven Forum*, Vol. 7 (1998), p. 78

<sup>389</sup> See Agawu, Kofi, *Playing with Signs: A semiotic interpretation of classic music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 113-114

extreme contrasts ‘conspire to create a sense of fantasy’,<sup>390</sup> he remains determined to interpret the movement as a string of consecutive topics that operate at the level of signs. He underexplores the possibility that Beethoven has begun to amplify the topic in his late works, elevating them from imported snippets or ‘signposts’ to the level of a genre. So, in Op. 132, these consecutive topics present an overarching implication of discontinuity – or, more specifically, of fantasy. The myriad of topics therefore at once becomes subsumed into a genre: Beethoven is not writing ‘piecemeal’, with snippet after discontinuous snippet, but rather is elevating the idea of the topic to a more formal level. This is not to diminish the possibility of the topic as implicative sign, but rather to draw attention to the fact that the implication of the sign is altered. In Op. 31, No. 2 the recitative topic is imported from outside, and as such its status signifies disruption and instability which, in turn, alters how we perceive this vocal invocation. The recitative topic in Op. 110, by contrast, is part of the unfolding introduction-recitative-aria design: the topic is not an external agent but the genre of the movement itself. Agawu’s theory appears to be mired in a concept of the topic as ‘referential sign’ or as musical motif, but Beethoven’s late works may abstract these topic conventions from their referential context, such that they become the basis of the material itself.

This new presentation of topics seems to invalidate Ratner’s claim that ‘topics mirror certain stances, but they never assume the role of fundamentally structuring Classic music.’<sup>391</sup> Ratner’s categories of topic include musical types on the one hand – the sarabande, minuet, gavotte and other similar genres – and styles of music on the other – the fanfare, horn-call, French overture or fantasia.<sup>392</sup> But Op. 132 demonstrates that musical styles *can* fundamentally structure a piece of music – the opening movement is not a fantasia per se, but it does more than invoke the fantasia as a topic. Rather than importing ‘fantasia signs’ such as virtuosic scalic figuration, trills, and abrupt modulations, its widespread collection of topical signs implies that the movement is structured according to the *principles* of the fantasia. Moreover, Ratner’s topical groupings lack a third category: musical forms such as the aria, Lied, fugue and even sonata form – which, when heard ‘out of context’, must surely be interpreted as ‘referential signs’ or topics. When Agawu claims, like Ratner, that ‘Topics, then, are points of departure, but never “total identities”,’ that they are simply ‘suggestive’ or ‘allusive’,<sup>393</sup> he overlooks Beethoven’s elevation of the topic and magnification of the convention in the late style.

How, then, could one extricate the ‘topic’ of recitative or aria from its background in Op. 110? It is impossible to extricate because without this ‘topic’, there is nothing left. The same could be said of the opening movement of the Piano Sonata in A major, Op. 101, whose pastoral

---

<sup>390</sup> Agawu, *Playing with Signs*, p. 114

<sup>391</sup> Ratner, Leonard, cited by Agawu, *Playing with Signs*, p. 32

<sup>392</sup> Ibid.

<sup>393</sup> Agawu, *Playing with Signs*, p. 34

style is not imported as an isolated topic but rather saturates the whole movement. As Hatten has written about the consistency of the pastoral style within this movement: 'In the case of the first movement of Op. 101... the consistency with which expressive gestures and climaxes are undercut suggests one strategic means Beethoven employs to maintain a pastoral sensibility even while exploiting various tragic turns.'<sup>394</sup> Topic is thus elevated to a genre. Note that Kerman characterises this movement as 'intimate' and 'songlike', part of an increasing lyrical impulse in these late sonatas which is later transferred to the late quartets.<sup>395</sup> Here, too, the listener is swung quickly from one topic to another – from the pastoral opening movement to the second movement march and the Baroque ornamentation of the slow movement.

Just as most of the movements in Op. 101 run *attacca* into each other, so too do the *Adagio* and *Allegro* of Op. 110, such that the 'bareness' effect is heightened all the more, as the listener is cast from one genre into another – from lyricism (song) into form (fugue). Richard Kramer also notes that the sketchbooks from this time suggest a preoccupation with these polar styles during later years.<sup>396</sup> The 'Bolldrini' sketchbook of 1817, he observes, although largely devoted to the first three movements of the 'Hammerklavier' Sonata, is otherwise focussed on reproducing a number of fugues by J.S. Bach and Marpurg, as well as sketches for his own Fugue in D minor. Alongside these, more surprisingly, are sketches for two songs – 'Resignation' and 'Badelied' – as well as ideas for the Ninth Symphony.

Vocal evocation in the 'late' works, therefore, is a world away from the pastiche witnessed in Op. 31, No. 1 and Op. 79. Song is no longer absorbed, but instead invoked as representative. In the 'late' works, vocality is hollowed out, becoming emblematic of a bygone convention. As Kramer writes: 'It is precisely the idea of the modern that is challenged in the works of Beethoven's last decade; modernity as a value is questioned, problematised.'<sup>397</sup> However, while in Op. 110, vocality is dropped – almost like a cut-out of convention – into the musical artwork, drawing its meaning from its very abstraction, in the very next sonata (Op. 111) Beethoven turns the tables on vocality and channels it through a very different means of expression. The Recitativo-Arioso of Op. 110 is representative of the voice in its most conventionalised format: it is abstracted directly from an operatic format. The 'voice' in Op. 111 is quite the opposite, rendered instead in the *Arietta* theme as 'pure expression'. But in an imaginative and subtle twist, Beethoven demonstrates that lyricism is founded upon *both* simplicity and intricacy, as the previous examples in this chapter have shown. For out of this understated and simple theme grows a movement of great magnitude and complexity which, though founded upon some of the simplest harmonic building blocks, also encompasses

---

<sup>394</sup> Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, p. 84

<sup>395</sup> Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets*, p. 229

<sup>396</sup> Kramer, 'Lisch aus, mein Licht', pp. 69-70

<sup>397</sup> Ibid., p. 80

intricacy like that of Variation 3. Unlike Op. 110, the *Arietta* is stripped of the recitative that might have provided a formal (and conventionalised) frame, instead beginning unintroduced with a simple 16-bar melody of two halves, the first eight bars of which simply oscillate between tonic and dominant chords. There is no dramatic dialogue to cloud the unfolding theme, nor any sense that this has been lifted from a vocal score. Instead, vocality is invoked in the *Arietta* simply by the directness and uncluttered nature of its expression – an unfolding that speaks of an ‘apparent inevitability’, according to Drabkin.<sup>398</sup> This despite the time Beethoven spent re-writing and honing its various elements, as can be observed in the sketches.<sup>399</sup> Moreover, the theme is explored through a series of variations: a genre noted previously for its repetitious means of invoking strophic song. The trajectory of the movement is to build complexity from simplicity through a gradual layering effect. It is the same process Kerman identifies in the *Heiliger Dankgesang* from the String Quartet in A minor, Op. 132, of which he writes: ‘The gradual dissociation of the hymn in its three manifestations from an archaic, awesome chorale prelude into a granitic contrapuntal study of a single phrase – this is heard as a process of increasing spiritualisation but also as one of enrichment, a confrontation of inherent complexities.’<sup>400</sup> Writing about the first movement of Op. 111, Rosen suggests that Beethoven’s quest was to attack ‘the problem that only Mozart had been able to solve, and then only with a finale: combining sonata and fugue textures, and accomplishing this with a first movement.’<sup>401</sup> His goal in the slow movement is similar: to combine the twin poles of lyricism – elegant simplicity and intricate virtuosity, strophic repetition and through-composition, form and expression. It is a far cry from the mimicry of Op. 31, No. 1 or the complex juxtapositions witnessed in Op. 110; in fact, this recourse to simplicity begs the question ‘is it really a late work?’

Where in Op. 110, Beethoven seemed to point his finger deliberately at convention and enshrine it almost as an artefact, in Op. 111, he does the same – but this time beneath the musical surface. As demonstrated in Chapter 3, it is not form but harmony that is the centre of Beethoven’s attention in the *Arietta*, as he plays with the possibilities of Classical syntax through the crossover of tonic-dominant alternations. Its ‘lateness’ results both from this underlying manipulation of convention and from the ‘hollowed out’ simplicity of its expression. Vocality in Op. 111 is more than just the title ‘Arietta’, for once beyond the lyrical theme and the strophic repetition, the movement bears little superficial resemblance to song at all. While Op. 110 plays with vocality in its most stylized form, Op. 111 offers the more ‘natural’ alternative – something Beethoven reveals in his marking *semplice e cantabile*. That Beethoven conceived the movement

---

<sup>398</sup> Drabkin, *The Sketches for Beethoven’s Piano Sonata in C minor, Op. 111*, p. 155

<sup>399</sup> Ibid.

<sup>400</sup> Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets*, p. 260

<sup>401</sup> Rosen, *Beethoven’s Piano Sonatas*, p. 243

as ‘vocal’ is therefore in little doubt, just as the title of the movement suggest. But if we were in any doubt as to the centrality of the *Arietta* to Beethoven’s thoughts while writing Op. 111, Drabkin highlights its significance among the sketches:

‘Beethoven devoted fully forty pages of the sketchbook to the *Arietta* and its variations, compared to barely twenty for the first movement. And in the accompanying pocket sketches, where he was chiefly concerned with the melodic line of the *Arietta*, the proportion is even greater than two to one.’<sup>402</sup>

As the final movement of his final work for piano, the care and attention lavished upon the *Arietta* suggest that vocality, lyricism, and more specifically the slow movement, was central to Beethoven’s late outlook. It is a summatory work, not only for its pure celebration of lyricism, but also in capturing and distilling the essence of the newly inward-looking artist and the piano’s crucial role in its creation. As Drabkin suggests, there is a sense of ‘grandeur’ in the way the full capabilities of the instrument are explored through the *Arietta*’s simple 16-bar melody:

‘[There is] a transcendent grandeur in the way a simple melody (“molto seplce e cantabile”), essentially having the compass of only an octave, is gradually extended over the entire upper range of the keyboard and is joined by a bass that also explores new possibilities of registral development opened to it.’<sup>403</sup>

## The ‘Songfulness’ of the Late Quartets

Vocality in the late piano sonatas is centred around uncovering the intricacies of lyricism, from the unbridled stylisation of Op. 110, to the understated simplicity of Op. 111 and the grandeur that it inspires. Both works prioritise contrast as their *raison d’être* – both the contrasts inherent within lyricism itself and the contrast between lyricism and form. Kerman believes that the principle of contrast is also at the root of the late quartets, and that song is the motivating force of these late works. Writing about the String Quartet in E flat major, Op. 127, he notes:

‘Song, not drama, grounds the tender first movement of this quartet and song, however superbly and strongly moulded, inspires the theme and variations of the *Adagio*. Somewhere the later

---

<sup>402</sup> Drabkin, *The Sketches for Beethoven’s Piano Sonata in C minor, Op. 111*, p. 186

<sup>403</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 210

movements had to find a place for another quality – for something tougher, more intellectual, and more disruptive.’<sup>404</sup>

Later, he identifies a remarkable feature of Op. 127’s opening movement: ‘the almost complete absence of dominant articulation.’<sup>405</sup> Although he acknowledges that this renunciation of the dominant diverts the potential for ‘emphasis and high potential... the automatic device for excitement’<sup>406</sup>, he misses the wider implication of this dominant evasion: that it epitomises the spread of lyricism across the work and the colonisation of the outer movements by slow movement devices. That song, too, makes itself felt in this movement bolsters this effect.

In fact, in Op. 127 we are witness to far more complex interplay between lyricism and form than Kerman acknowledges. Other commentators, too, have identified a shift in focus in Op. 127 but none has yet shown how the function of the slow movement – and an increasing preoccupation with the voice – is at the root of this. For Daniel Chua, the quartet epitomises a new obsession with polyphonic systems, for Michael Spitzer it represents a ‘paradigm shift from contour to counterpoint’<sup>407</sup>, while for William Kinderman it evokes ‘the contemplation of the heavens’.<sup>408</sup> Each of their accounts seems to focus on the idea that Op. 127 represents a shift in focus for Beethoven’s late style. Moreover, both Chua and Spitzer agree that the group of quartets to which Op. 127 belongs – the ‘Galitzin’ quartets – represents a change of aesthetic not found in Beethoven’s late sonatas. The unique make-up of the quartet as a genre seems to have stimulated in these quartets, according to Chua, ‘a radical shift in Beethoven’s sketching process from thinking on a single stave to working on four-stave score sketches.’<sup>409</sup> The result, for Spitzer, is works which are ‘more radical than the late sonatas’<sup>410</sup>. At the heart of this ‘radical’ change, are the variations that make up the second movement of Op. 127, a movement which Kerman has called ‘the most monumental of Beethoven’s variation movements’<sup>411</sup>. At around fifteen minutes in length, it is certainly one of the longest, and represents a turning point in Beethoven’s planning of variation sets.

To understand fully the complexities of the slow movement, we must first look back at the first movement. This two-pronged structure sets up the premise of contrast, which will become the basis of the work as a whole. Spitzer has shown how Beethoven deliberately and emphatically sets up an opposition between the *Maestoso* and *Allegro* sections, something that

---

<sup>404</sup> Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets*, p. 230

<sup>405</sup> Ibid., p. 239

<sup>406</sup> Ibid.

<sup>407</sup> Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*, p. 133

<sup>408</sup> Kinderman, William, ‘Beethoven’s Symbol for the Deity in the “Missa Solemnis” and the Ninth Symphony’, from *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Autumn, 1985), p. 118

<sup>409</sup> Chua, *The ‘Galitzin’ Quartets*, p. 13

<sup>410</sup> Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*, p. 133

<sup>411</sup> Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets*, p. 227



he sees as emblematic of a wider concern with stylistic dualism between introductions and first groups elsewhere in the 'Galitzin' quartet first movements. This dualism is defined here not just by a change of character, rhythm and tempo, but also more fundamentally by means of harmonic opposition, as Spitzer writes: 'The Maestoso is an "external" world of dominants and functional tonality; the *teneramente* Allegro is an "inner" world ruled mostly by subdominants.'<sup>412</sup> The stylistic negotiation between the two is gradually 'composed out': 'so that the Maestoso can eventually be dispensed with'.<sup>413</sup> This final point is particularly interesting: note that Spitzer suggests the 'outer' world is eventually dispensed with, and with it the functional tonalities, while elsewhere he makes a number of other observations concerning the movement's 'interiority'. In addition to this diametric opposition between dominants and subdominants, Spitzer also draws attention to the weakening of the dominant within the Allegro: 'The weakness of chord V in the Allegro, capped by the substitution of the dominant key in the second group by the mediant G minor, helps compound the lyrical sensibility of the movement.'<sup>414</sup> What Spitzer describes are features typically more common to the slow movement than to dynamic Allegros. I have demonstrated elsewhere that the dominant is often evaded, problematised or underplayed within Beethoven's slow movements, seemingly as a way of deliberately weakening the dynamic drive of the movement and inducing a sense of stasis, more apt for the lyrical idiom. That the *Maestoso*, the more 'functional' of the two opposing states, is eventually 'dispensed with' suggests that this movement has taken on many of the facets of a lyrical slow movement – a statement supported by Kerman's song-like characterisation of the movement.

The intrigue deepens when we turn to look at the second movement, a set of six variations upon an *Adagio* theme. Like Spitzer, Chua hears Op. 127 as a work obsessed with counterpoint, but he suggests that the 'systems' used within the work even pervade the parts with are 'seemingly antithetical to such polyphonic play'<sup>415</sup>. In other words, dynamic contrapuntal complexity saturates even the slow movement, a space typically built upon more lyrical, static structures. Moreover, while the first movement was built upon contrasting structures that were gradually assimilated, the slow movement seems to posit tensions which are never fully resolved, as the ensuing analysis will demonstrate. Could it be that Beethoven is challenging our expectations of the work's large-scale formal planning, and that the first two movements of the quartet have 'swapped roles'? Certainly Beethoven seems to play with the conventions associated with the slow movement, and those of variation sets.

---

<sup>412</sup> Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*, p. 134

<sup>413</sup> Ibid.

<sup>414</sup> Ibid., pp. 133-4

<sup>415</sup> Chua, *The 'Galitzin Quartets'*, p. 17

The form itself inherits the contrasts initiated in the first movement, for although the movement follows a clearly-defined set of variations upon an initial theme, two ethereal episodes cut across the variation set to suggest a rondo structure. Discussing the form of the first movement, Spitzer demonstrates that Beethoven manages to nimbly imply the G major entry of the Maestoso section as both second group and transition – in what is a kind of duck/rabbit moment. But he misses the parallel in the slow movement where, in an echo of the Op. 74 String Quartet, Beethoven manages the same trick – at once implying both variation and rondo forms as equal partners. In this variation-rondo hybrid, the theme (bars 1-20) and variations 1 (bars 20-38) and 2 (bars 38-58) form section A, a dramatic change of texture and key introduces variation 3 (bars 58-96) as section B, while a return to the original key, tempo and character of the opening at bar 96 suggests a rondo-like return to section A instigated with variation 4. Another ethereal interlude cuts across the form to present section C in variation 5, before a return to the opening key and section A is heralded by variation 6. Within this rondo structure, variations 3 and 5 provide the functional equivalent to the *Allegro* sections of the opening movement – that is, these dislocated episodes represents an interior space, both literally within the frame of the outer sections, and in terms of aesthetic. Set against the dense and complex counterpoint of the preceding variations, these hymn-like, homophony-driven variations are segregated by key, tempo, texture and time signature, and signal a distinct shift in character from what frames them. Note also in variation 3 that the tempo indication signals that this is the slowest part of the movement – creating a sense of space, reflection and, after the jostling counterpoint of the preceding variation, comparative stasis. Crucially, this slow, ‘interior’ sub-section also evokes vocality – through the hymn – emphasised by the ‘cantabile’ and ‘espressivo’ markings.

Like the *Allegro* of the first movement, variation 3 also takes on a further slow-movement trope in weakening the position of the dominant by ‘overshooting’ and instead modulating to E major, the sharpened dominant. The over-sharpening brings with it a starry, somewhat ethereal mood, something that has not gone unnoticed by commentators, including Kinderman, who likens it to a symbolic musical conception of ‘deity’ explored in both the *Missa Solemnis* and *Ninth Symphony* – both of which employ the voice. As Kinderman notes, Op. 127 was Beethoven’s first major work after the completion of the *Ninth Symphony* in 1824, and he observes several similar musical ideas between this passage of the Op. 127 slow movement and the climax on ‘Über Sternen muss er wohnen’ in the finale of the symphony.<sup>416</sup> Among these musical details are sudden and dramatic climbs in register, to reach a high g<sup>3</sup> above a sustained chord – such as that reached in bar 66. It is this broad sonority, with one voice reaching high into the stratosphere above the others that Kinderman attributes to the symbol of ‘deity’. This

---

<sup>416</sup> See Kinderman, ‘Beethoven’s Symbol for the Deity’

may seem like a coincidental point, but Kinderman's argument is bolstered by the context surrounding this climactic  $g^3$ : at this point, the music flirts casually with B major, and the first violin traces an octave ascent from B-B across bars 65-66. The G natural, however, stands out as a chromatic aberration and throws this ascent off course, sending the first violin plummeting almost three octaves to an  $a^\sharp$ . It is thus aurally dramatic, and highlighted by a crescendo to a *forte* climax on the  $g^3$  itself.

The ethereal quality of this central section is not the only instance of 'otherworldliness' in the movement. The very opening ushers itself into being as though from a distant place, with the outlined dominant seventh seeming to imply that it had already been in motion in some unseen space. This sense of timelessness and continuous motion is reinforced by the syncopated entries, which deny any real sense of stable tempo until the beginning of the theme proper in bar 3. Even here, the first violin glides, song-like, above the accompanying strings in a quasi-improvisatory, rhythmically-repetitive spiral. Throughout this section the harmony also remains very slow-moving, with typically one chord change per bar and, in some cases, no change of harmony across the barline (see, for example, bars 5-6 and 10-11). With the lower strings remaining grounded in their lower registers, however, and the first violin climbing ever higher, we begin to feel another level of duality to the movement – one of register. And with Kinderman's ethereal symbol in mind, we are reminded of Beethoven's fascination with Kant's maxim: 'the moral law within us and the starry skies above us'.

This registral discrepancy is not confined to the E major variation – in fact, frequent registral leaps permeate the theme itself. These gaps not only infiltrate the upper melodic line, but are also present in the bass too. What is most interesting about this disjunct theme is that these gaps are not filled or dealt with over the course of the ensuing variations – if anything, they are exacerbated. In variation 1, for example, the first violin begins to stretch the melodic register even higher, to reach the highest note of the movement thus far – an  $a^\flat$ <sup>3</sup> – in bar 28. The violin climbs still higher in the final few bars of the same variation (bars 35-36), at times a full two octaves above the second violin, and reaching a  $c^4$  on the first beat of bar 36. Just a bar later, however, and the same violin has plummeted to a  $g$ , three and a half octaves lower. Variation 2, meanwhile, makes a feature out of this disjunct movement and incorporates a downwards leap of a fifth into the main melodic thread on which this variation is based. Beethoven then plays with this downwards leap, extending it variously to a twelfth (bar 40, first violin), an octave (bar 40, second violin) and a tenth (bar 43, first violin), before later filling in the gap with running semiquavers (bar 46, first violin) and inverting the leap to become an ascent (bar 47, first violin). At its widest, the leap becomes a two-octave descent (bars 53-54, first violin) that dramatically reinforces the sense of registral displacement inherent to the theme. The climactic  $g^3$ - $a^\sharp$  sharp leap in variation 3 (bar 66) has already been noted, but note

also the extreme register in the cello in bars 93-94, which once again is followed by a dramatic plummet of several octaves. Even in variation 6, the final variation, there is no sense of pacification of this registral disjunction. In fact, the first violin outlines a dramatic three-octave reinforcement of these gaps, firstly on the dominant (E flat) in bars 113-114, and then on the tonic (A flat) in bars 115-116. Note also that texturally this variation revisits that of the 'ethereal' E major variation – with the first violin soaring many octaves above the accompanying strings, in what is a clear 1:3 textural ratio. With the reinstatement of the syncopation and register of the opening in the accompaniment here, the lower strings seem to be calling the first violin back to firmer ground. But although the lower strings soon get spirited away and the four voices eventually intertwine in bar 117, the music is suddenly dramatically halted (a moment I will return to later) and silence ensues. As the second violin and viola cautiously re-start the process, the first violin continues regardless – soaring outwards and upwards to its lofty conclusion.

The steadfastness with which Beethoven pursues this registral displacement throughout the set of variations is unusual among his oeuvre, and is one example of Op. 127 marking a departure from his earlier works. Typically, as explored in Chapter 3, Beethoven's earlier variation movements 'solve' problems set out within the theme. Beethoven's agenda in Op. 127, it seems, is no longer one of thematic transformation or clarification, but is one founded simply on exploring the possibilities of contrast. As a series of variations, the Op. 127 set does not follow the theme as closely as many of Beethoven's other works. Instead, each variation presents the theme from a new angle, each with varying degrees of association with the original theme, such that the collective result is a contrasting set of pictures spun out from a single thread. Variation 1 is, as Chua suggests, 'a complex polyphonic web'<sup>417</sup> that is loosely based on fragments of the theme. While, at times, the contours of the theme can be discerned among the complex interweavings, these are by no means made prominent. Instead, variation 1 takes the upbeat figure from the original theme as its starting point, and sets off on a polyphonic journey of which this is the centrepiece. Note, however, that Beethoven now syncopates this upbeat figure (see Figure 4.1), so that although it retains its original contour, rising from E flat-A flat (for example, see cello and second violin, bars 20-21), it is now rhythmically obscured and metrically displaced. Throughout the variation, Beethoven plays with this motif in various inverted, chromaticised and otherwise altered guises.

---

<sup>417</sup> Chua, *The 'Galitzin' Quartets*, p. 17

Figure 4.1

Beethoven: Op. 127 second movement

a) Thematic upbeat figure (1<sup>st</sup> violin, bars 2-3)



b) Variation 1 upbeat figure (bars 20-21)



Notably, although Beethoven retains much of the harmonic structure of the original theme (which largely alternates between tonic and dominant chords), structurally this variation removes certain textural markers – such as the change of texture originally heard in bars 10-11 of the theme.

Variation 2 is also contrapuntal, now forming a canonic dialogue between the two violins and continues to play with the thematic upbeat figure, but the instigation of a new ticking, rhythmic accompaniment in the viola and cello instils a new sense of propulsion and a new thematic character. This is reinforced by a change of metre – to 4/4 – and a new tempo marking, *Andante con moto*. With the change from compound to simple metre, the quicker tempo, and the clockwork accompaniment, the variation casts off the quasi-improvisatory character of the 12/8 sections and takes on a new sense of vigour. This forwards propulsion increases, as the semiquaver accompaniment ‘speeds up’ from 8-per-bar to 16-per-bar, sending the violin dialogue into spirals of demi-semiquaver figuration. In turn, this leads to other forwards motion: in bar 47, for example, what had previously been an ascent in the first violin

from b flat<sup>1</sup>- b flat<sup>2</sup> over three bars (bars 11-13), is now compressed into a single bar. While the basic structure of the theme stays intact over the next three bars (rising from B flat to C to D flat, as per the theme – see bars 11-13), the dynamic climax comes a bar early, peaking on the D flat in bar 49, instead of the A flat a bar later. Beethoven seems to draw attention to this ‘mistake’ by chromaticising this moment with a D flat minor chord – the ‘wrong’ chord for the wrong climax. This increased propulsion exaggerates the sense of contrast with the next section and makes the ‘ethereal’ variation 3 all the more poignant when it arrives, reinforcing the sense of space discussed previously. Note also the abruptness with which variations 2 and 3 are elided – with no sense of rhythmic or harmonic preparation, variation 3 seems to burst in on variation 2 before it has been completed. Moreover, the ‘modulation’ between the two hinges simply on a chromatic alteration from C-C sharp in bar 58. This chromatic shift has a double-edged function, at once both emphasising the otherworldliness of variation 3, whose key of E major seems disconcertingly distant from the tonic of A flat major, while at the same time the close chromatic proximity of the two also suggests a closer, neighbour-note relationship. I will return to this harmonic mapping in due course.

Variation 3 is ushered away just as abruptly as it arrived, with a swift chromatic alteration, this time from E-E flat, heralding the arrival of variation 4 and the ‘recapitulation’ of the ternary structure. Interestingly, although in many ways this variation signals a return to the opening theme, it also represents the furthest point of departure thus far. In terms of tempo, key, character and texture, variation 4 closely resembles the opening theme – hence its designation as section A<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, at points this variation mirrors the contours of the original theme more closely than any of the variations to this point – take, for example, the ascending sequence from bar 85, which corresponds to bar 11 of the theme. But this ascending sequence presents an interesting insight into the character of this variation as a whole, embodied in the chromatic D natural in bar 87 (originally a D flat in the theme). This swerve ‘off course’ symbolises this variation’s relationship with the theme: namely, that it takes certain aspects of the theme as a starting point, but actually evolves towards new material. That is, while the preceding variations have always retained fragments of the theme within the melodic lines, variation 4 opens with what appears to be new material. This is something echoed by Chua, who also notes that the counter melody (originally heard in the first violin in bars 7-10, accompanying the cello’s iteration of the theme) is now largely absent and the structure of the piece itself is beginning to break down and lose contact with the theme. This was witnessed elsewhere in the slow movement of Beethoven’s ‘Archduke’ Trio, Op. 97, in which I have demonstrated that variation 4 (again) represents both the furthest point of departure and the closest of the variations to the original theme. The similarity of the two movements suggests that the Tempo I in Op. 127 represents something of a ‘re-birth’, both a point of recapitulation

and re-gathering, and a new departure for the theme. In the spirit of contrast, with which this movement is saturated, variation 4 represents a new chapter on the spectrum of ideas presented. This idea is reinforced by what follows variation 4: that is, what Kerman refers to as a 'brief meditation' on the enharmonic subdominant (C sharp/D flat major), which Chua determines is 'itself a type of variation'<sup>418</sup> and which I refer to as variation 5.

If variation 4 is the point of 'beginning again', then variation 5 represents a recapturing of the E major episode, now transformed to the subdominant. Note that Beethoven emphasises this link by rhyming sharps with sharps and 'spelling' what is the enharmonic equivalent of the subdominant (D flat major) as C sharp major – and later D flat/C sharp minor. In the spirit of new beginnings, this variation also captures original elements of the theme and presents them afresh, as Chua notes: 'it distils from the original theme the process of imitation and mirror symmetries – a process of such canonic concentration that the counterpoint... becomes homophonic in texture.'<sup>419</sup> What begins as a canonic exchange based on the inimitable upbeat figure, now restored to its original rhythms (bars 95-99), segues into homophony at bar 100, eventually cascading outwards in contrary motion (Chua's distillation of the mirror symmetries) as the key signature change (bar 107) signals the final return to the tonic. Though this subdominant episode is shorter than the original theme (13 bars to the theme's 18), so too is the final variation that follows it, and I would argue that variation 5 is sufficiently well-defined as a coherent section to warrant its name as a 'variation'. Moreover, the underlying tonic-dominant alterations of the original thematic structure are retained in this section, with some chromatic embellishment.

I suggested earlier that this variation set does not so much 'solve' tensions set out within the theme, as exacerbate and distort them. So, when variation 6 is finally reached, it comes as no surprise that features of the opening theme have returned – not in their original guise, nor smoothed out, but re-emphasised. The registral displacement, notably dramatised in bars 113-116, has already been discussed. Texturally, this variation also returns us to the 1:3 ratio of the opening theme, in which the first violin glides above the accompanying strings; but while originally the violin soared one to two octaves above its nearest neighbour, now this gap is widened, at times to nearly three octaves. The quasi-improvisatory style of the original theme, which circled in its rhythmically-repetitive spiral is also now exacerbated to become a cascade of winding semiquavers, the lack of rests or pauses now intensified by the faster motion. The unstable syncopation of the opening bars now makes a return too, now with all three lower strings moving on different beats to blur the rhythmic definition of this final variation. This is exacerbated when the texture is inverted from bar 113, such that the lower strings now spiral in

---

<sup>418</sup> Chua, *The 'Galitzin' Quartets*, p. 24

<sup>419</sup> Ibid

endless semiquavers, above which the first violin soars in syncopated octave leaps. All this has the effect of pressing the music onwards in an impatient drive towards the movement's conclusion, but this, as noted previously, is stopped in its tracks at bar 118.

This dramatic moment's silence – the first in the movement so far – signifies a turning point in the variations' ruthless avoidance of resolution. I noted earlier that this silence is followed by the first violin 'soaring to its lofty conclusion', a statement that is loaded with implications for the movement's background voice-leading (see Figure 4.2).



Figure 4.2

Op. 127, slow movement – theme background voice-leading

The image displays a musical score for the slow movement of Op. 127, focusing on the theme background voice-leading. The score is written for piano (p) and consists of two systems of staves. The first system spans measures 1 to 14, and the second system spans measures 15 to 20. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats), and the time signature is common time (C). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, beams, and slurs. Circled numbers 1, 7, 11, 14, and 20 indicate specific measures. Above the staff, there are annotations: a circled 3 with a caret (^) above it, a circled 2 with a caret (^) above it, and a circled 1 with a caret (^) above it. Below the staff, there are annotations: a circled 7, a circled 1, and a circled 2. The score shows the voice-leading of the theme background, with notes and rests connected by lines and slurs, indicating the flow of the melody and harmony.

I read the background of the theme as a descent from  $\hat{3}-\hat{1}$ , but acknowledge  $\hat{5}$  (E flat) as a strong peripheral tone. E flat features as the root of the dominant harmony which opens the movement, before rising to A flat as the theme begins in bar 3. This ascent is mirrored in the melody, too, as the characteristic upbeat figure that forms the opening of the theme itself (bars 2-3, first violin). And E flat appears early on in the graph as an arpeggiation of the tonic triad – not articulated strongly enough, or supported sufficiently harmonically, however, to be considered part of the descending fundamental line. But the strong oscillation between tonic and dominant chords throughout the theme means that E flat is never far from our thoughts: note, for example, the upper voice that is cast out by the first violin as part of a compound melody in bars 5-9, rising through a flat<sup>2</sup> (bar 5), b flat<sup>2</sup> (bar 7), c<sup>3</sup> and d flat<sup>3</sup> (bar 8) and stopping conspicuously short of e flat<sup>3</sup> in bar 9, instead dropping an octave to e flat<sup>2</sup>. In fact, the theme is framed by the E flat-A flat relationship: in addition to the opening ascent, the theme closes with a full E flat-A flat descent in bars 19-20.

This strong E flat presence, which cuts across the fundamental  $\hat{3}-\hat{1}$  descent, threatening its stability as the ‘true’ background voice-leading, is at the centre of the movement’s dual personality. Contrary to the theme’s fundamental descent, the E flat pulls upwards, each time it appears as part of the upbeat figure outlining a  $\hat{5}-\hat{6}-\hat{7}-\hat{8}$  ascent to the tonic. Spitzer links this to the ‘affecting’  $\hat{6}-\hat{7}-\hat{8}$  ascents in the first movement (bars 260-265, first violin), of which he claims: “‘soaring” technically gives the apex  $\hat{6}$  a different way out – up, rather than down’<sup>420</sup>. The contrast between this upwards ‘escape’ and the more grounded descent chimes with the movement’s perpetual registral dislocation, bringing Kinderman’s designation of an ‘ethereal’ topic into sharper focus. This movement features not one, but two fundamental lines – one which tethers the theme to the ground and pursues a more normative three-note descent, and another that seeks ‘a different way out’, splitting the movement in half. At the point of dramatic silence in bar 118, we see that the first violin was on the cusp of completing the  $\hat{5}-\hat{1}$  descent which, as noted, frames the theme. In effect, this five-note descent would have drawn E flat back earthwards and resolved its escalating tendencies in the movement’s final bars. But this is not to be, and as the silence aborts the descent, the first violin resumes its lofty flight, instead resolving upwards through e flat<sup>3</sup>-f<sup>3</sup>-g<sup>3</sup>-a flat<sup>3</sup> in bars 120-121. By way of reinforcement, this is repeated in the final bar – this time an octave lower. Both keys are expressions of a neighbour-note motif, prevalent within the theme itself. As Chua writes, the theme is really ‘a motivic counterpoint of neighbour-note motions in mirror image, oscillating between tonic and dominant.’<sup>421</sup> E major is therefore contextualised as an upper neighbour to the dominant – we might even hear it spelled

<sup>420</sup> Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*, p. 138

<sup>421</sup> Chua, *The ‘Galitzin’ Quartets*, p. 26

enharmonically as F flat major to cement this relationship – while D flat major is its lower neighbour, the subdominant. In a theme bound up almost entirely with tonics and dominants, these neighbour-note keys draw out the ‘flip-side’ of the theme – its interiority – in what is a mirroring of the first movement’s aesthetic.

Returning then, to the question of whether the first two movements of the quartet have ‘swapped roles’, we find that in fact the two movements share many similarities. Both pursue contrast as a central feature and polarise interior and outer worlds, made manifest through harmonic differences. But the two movements also differ in their treatment of these ideas: while the first movement makes moves to assimilate the contrasting features, the second movement makes deliberate attempts to abstain from resolution. In the world of lyricism, the latter outlook is more normative: the lyrical slow movement dwells, repeats, ruminates and considers, while the dynamic sonata form movement posits tensions, explores and develops them, and ultimately seeks resolution. What distinguishes these movements is their readiness to explore ideas typically foreign to their ‘type’: lyricism and interiority in the case of the first movement, and contrapuntal systems in the slow movement. Beethoven’s shift away from variations upon a theme, to variations upon an idea, is one of the features that sets Op. 127 apart from his earlier works and more closely aligns it with a late work aesthetic. And in the case of Op. 127, this idea is counterpoint: of voice-leading, register, texture and theme.

In the late works, as the ‘Boldrini’ sketchbook reveals and as the juxtapositions of Opp. 110 and 111 appear to confirm, Beethoven becomes increasingly concerned with contrast, setting lyricism (song) against form (fugue). Perhaps for the first time in Op. 127, Beethoven attempts to combine the two – Op. 127 as a whole is motivated by counterpoint, but it is reinterpreted through lyricism. Though the slow movement takes on formal ideas more commonly associated with outer (fast) movements, it transforms these, in Chua’s words, into ‘a polyphony of song’.<sup>422</sup> The voice is in evidence at every turn, from the ‘songfulness’ of the opening *Allegro* and its absorption of slow movement tropes, to the song-like melody of the variations in the slow movement – themselves closely related both formally and harmonically to vocal models. Thence to the hymn-like central section of the slow movement, and the ethereal reachings of the first violin – evoking in its own way a solo voice grasping ever higher. Finally, in bar 118, we hear the silencing of the voice. But while this silencing seems to suggest the end of vocal evocations and a new determination to find, as Kerman writes, ‘something tougher, more intellectual, and more disruptive’, this is a purely superficial gesture. For as Chua has eloquently shown, the four movements of the quartet are bound by deep-seated motivic and harmonic connections, creating a symmetrical structure that sees the third and fourth movements reflect

---

<sup>422</sup> Chua, *The ‘Galitzin’ Quartets*, p. 17

and refract the actions of the first and second.<sup>423</sup> The effect is altogether song-like, creating ‘a circle of self-reflection’.<sup>424</sup> A.B. Marx, writing in his *Formenlehre*, suggests that the *Liedsatz* is a basic formal prototype from which many instrumental forms can be derived. Its characteristic feature is that it presents ‘A musical piece that holds only one idea... regardless of whether or not it is meant to be sung.’<sup>425</sup> Beethoven’s tribute to lyricism in Op. 127 is therefore to create a closed musical form, a symmetrical overarching structure that is altogether reminiscent of song. Rather than taking on the dynamism of a sonata contour, the Op. 127 quartet embodies the lyrical impulse to dwell. As Su Yin Mak suggests: ‘As a rhetorical argument, sonata discourse must constantly “drive forward”; yet the lyrical tendency toward self-expansiveness and stasis is anti-teleological in nature. Lyrical sections linger on particular moments, thereby arresting “sonata time”’.<sup>426</sup> Since Chua has shown that the entire work is driven by the very opening movement, ‘song’ pervades the quartet as a whole. Op. 127 is motivated just as much by lyricism as it is by counterpoint.

## Song as Slow Movement

While I showed in Chapter 1 that the slow movement is traditionally perceived as a ‘soulful’ inner movement, in which the artist ‘submerges himself in this new world that he has found within himself’<sup>427</sup>, this discussion has suggested that the slow movement’s connection with personal expression is not just a result of a more ‘lyrical’ outlook. More pertinently, this connection with inwardness may be more closely traced to the slow movement’s links with vocality – a relationship that is brought to the fore, and even idolized, in Beethoven’s late works. Nevertheless, it is surprising, given the plethora of examples explored over the course of this discussion, that vocal writing did not come naturally to Beethoven. Or, more specifically, he found vocal writing for *singers* difficult, as he explains in a letter to his librettist for *Fidelio*: ‘I know what to expect of instrumentalists... but with vocal compositions I must always be asking myself: can this be sung?’<sup>428</sup> His remark is somewhat telling, for it seems that it is not the expressive nature of song that Beethoven has difficulty with, but rather the specific practicalities of singers. It can be no coincidence then that Beethoven wrote relatively little for singers, and that today we prize him mainly as a composer of instrumental music. But the continued presence of vocal styles, idioms and genres within his instrumental music suggests a

---

<sup>423</sup> See Chua, *The ‘Galitzin’ Quartets*, pp. 44-53

<sup>424</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52

<sup>425</sup> A.B. Marx, cited by Mak, Su Yin, ‘Schubert’s Sonata Forms and the Poetics of the Lyric’, from *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Spring 2006), p. 264

<sup>426</sup> Mak, Su Yin, ‘Schubert’s Sonata Forms and Poetics of the Lyric’, from *The Journal of Musicology* Vol. 23, No. 2 (Spring 2006), pp. 267

<sup>427</sup> A.B. Marx, *Musical Form in the Age of Beethoven*, p. 87

<sup>428</sup> Beethoven, cited by Glauert, ‘Beethoven’s Songs and Vocal Style’, p. 192

desire to explore these ideas through his preferred (instrumental) medium. Indeed, Amanda Glauert highlights a salient point: 'In a sense, Beethoven created the greatest realisation of hymn-like style outside song, in his sonatas, quartets, and symphonies, where he could weave it into contrasts on a much larger scale.'<sup>429</sup> Her point refers in particular to his use of hymn-like melodies and textures, but it is just as applicable to all vocal invocations across his oeuvre. Her remark echoes that of Kunze, who suggests that Beethoven was best able to achieve his aims within an instrumental idiom: 'He therefore does not succeed in vocal music precisely, perhaps, since it does not, because of the added words, allow for the character of indefinite longing.'<sup>430</sup>

Let us not forget, however, the context in which Beethoven was writing. In the eighteenth century, music for the voice was held in high regard due to its expressive potential, as Glauert notes: 'The possibility of song speaking directly from the heart was viewed as the source of its authentic and distinctive power.'<sup>431</sup> Indeed, John Rink notes the progression towards performance modelled on drama in the nineteenth century, and suggests that 'the communication of "meaning" lay at the heart of this aesthetic.'<sup>432</sup> But these views are predicated on a belief that for Beethoven music and drama went hand in hand, that to evoke vocality was not to invoke drama per se, but rather to invite expression and meaning into instrumental music. Our modern categories of 'absolute' and 'programmatic' music did not exist for listeners at the cusp of the nineteenth century, and the concert hall and operatic stage were seen almost as synonymous entities. As Lawrence Kramer writes: 'We need to remind ourselves that in the music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, the reciprocity of genre between stage and chamber is a convention of highest sophistication.'<sup>433</sup> Webster echoes these sentiments, noting that each work was understood in terms of its expressive *Affekt*: 'In the eighteenth century, there was no such thing as 'absolute' music, instrumental or otherwise: all music was understood as rhetorical in nature.'<sup>434</sup> That Beethoven drew inspiration from the operatic styles of Mozart, Gluck and Haydn, as well as the instrumental genres by C.P.E. Bach and Clementi, throughout his instrumental music is testament to this reciprocity between voice and instrument.

It is something of a cliché to suggest that Beethoven's music straddles musical boundaries, reflecting his position on the historical spectrum between 'Classicism' and 'Romanticism'. But this discussion has demonstrated a changing perspective of instrumental music and a growing openness to inter-genre cross-pollination. As Dahlhaus suggests, vocal

---

<sup>429</sup> Glauert, 'Beethoven's Songs and Vocal Style', p. 196

<sup>430</sup> Kunze, cited by Hoeckner, *Programming the Absolute*, p. 26

<sup>431</sup> Glauert, 'Beethoven's Songs and Vocal Style', p. 186

<sup>432</sup> Rink, John, 'Translating Musical Meaning': The Nineteenth-Century Performer as Narrator', from *Rethinking Music*, ed. Cook and Everist (Oxford; New York Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 237

<sup>433</sup> Kramer, Lawrence, 'Between Cavatina and Overture: Opus 130 and the Voices of Narrative', from *Beethoven Forum*, Vol. 1 (November 1992), p. 181

<sup>434</sup> Webster, 'The Analysis of Mozart's Arias', p. 102

evocation is emblematic of the growth of lyricism that characterised the nineteenth century, something that reveals that the slow movement itself may be at the very roots of 'Romanticism':

'The romantic composers, however, realised that they could take these works as a starting point... The rigour and consistency of Beethoven's thematic and motivic manipulation relaxed, as it were, to make room for a lyricism that infringed against the spirit of sonata form by permeating whole movements rather than remaining confined to their second themes. Cantabile, a mere enclave in classical sonata form, became an underlying structural principle.'<sup>435</sup>

While it may not have been unusual in the eighteenth century to evoke a characteristic song within a piano sonata, as in the case of Op. 79, this work is a precursor to the more complex experimentation with vocal derivations at the heart of Opp. 110 and 111. That is to say, the latter are reflective retrospectives on the former; they question the validity of such topical appropriation and push instrumental music a step closer to the altogether more dramatic focus it was to have in the later nineteenth century. Lyricism and personal expression is, of course, at the heart of this dramatic expansion, so it is no surprise that the slow movement is at the centre of the transformation. As Hatten reminds us, the slow movement is inherently able to absorb more complex, expressive ideas: 'A slower tempo allows for a greater flexibility of expressive discourse, at least on the surface since a listener has more time in which to consider possibilities and absorb the effect of actual events.'<sup>436</sup> While formally, this discussion has also shown the integration between the development of vocal and slow movement forms, each sharing its genesis with the other. Indeed, there are few examples elsewhere within Beethoven's output of vocal evocation outside the slow movement: until, of course, the Ninth Symphony.

The Ninth Symphony is, to an extent, emblematic of the 'late' style as a whole. As the preceding examples demonstrate, vocality takes on new meaning in Beethoven's later works, becoming less an integrated topic and more an abstracted icon. Glauert also notes this change of perspective: 'In the composer's late period, when his drive to introspection appeared most strongly, his sense of the wider significance of vocal idioms emerged in a highly distinctive fashion.'<sup>437</sup> Framing the voice in an otherwise purely instrumental work, in the manner of the Ninth Symphony finale, is perhaps the most explicit and forceful way of highlighting the splicing of vocal and instrumental idioms: a synthesis of two apparently irreconcilable ideas, perhaps. But the movement also represents a continuation from Beethoven's achievements in the *Arietta* of Op. 111. As Glauert writes:

---

<sup>435</sup> Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, pp. 80-81

<sup>436</sup> Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, p. 207

<sup>437</sup> Glauert, 'Beethoven's Songs and Vocal Style', p. 188

'In his late works the composer is usually assumed to have absorbed vocal styles into the instrumental... But, the Ninth Symphony's "Seid umschlungen", which Wagner said showed Beethoven drawing new power from the prosodic rhythm of the words themselves, suggests the direction might be reversed and the vocal seen to encompass the instrumental.'<sup>438</sup>

That is to say, that the voice is no longer invoked as a 'voice from elsewhere'. Instead, perhaps it is possible that within the 'late' works, the two have become truly synonymous, with voice and instruments growing out of one another. As Beethoven proved in the *Arietta*, it is possible to abstract the voice so far from its original guise that it no longer assumes the role of a topic, but is instead fully part of the composite vocal-instrumental texture.

---

<sup>438</sup> Glauert, 'Beethoven's Songs and Vocal Style', p. 188

# Chapter 5

## **‘A moment of becoming at a standstill’: Interruption, Improvisation and the Influence of the Fantasia in Beethoven’s Slow Movements**

‘The fantasia, although it may by accident be successful, is of secondary value, probably without much meaning and certainly not the highest form of art.’<sup>439</sup>

---

<sup>439</sup> Forkel, cited by Richards, Annette, *The Free Fantasia and the Musical Picturesque* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.38



## Introduction

As Forkel's disparaging comment overleaf suggests, the fantasia as a self-contained genre has often been somewhat sidelined in musical analyses, relegated to the status of an 'unstable alter-ego'<sup>440</sup> that warrants little further discussion. Such perceptions resonate with criticisms often levelled at the slow movement, where expression may often be perceived to override technical precision, somehow resulting in a 'lesser' musical genre. Like the slow movement, the fantasia's formal freedom, emphasis upon gesture above structure, and grounding in the art of improvisation have often led to the suggestion that it is somehow a less 'serious' art form, one that is composed quickly and digested just as fast. Yet the eighteenth-century perception of the genre was somewhat more divided: while some critics agreed with Forkel's suggestions of inferiority, others claimed that the improvisatory nature of the fantasia brought it closer to perfection, caught in the very moment of its composition. As Adorno suggests, the fantasia represents a suspension of temporality: 'a moment of becoming at a standstill'<sup>441</sup>. Caught in this conflict, the fantasia represents an aesthetic transformation of the nature/nurture divide: should considered logic be prized above spontaneous invention or vice versa?

Despite the controversy surrounding its conception, the fantasia embodies many of the eighteenth-century's central aesthetics, prioritising rhetoric, gesture and *Affekt* above melodic development. As such, it epitomises the growing notion of *Empfindsamkeit* that came to dominate eighteenth-century thought. Koch, for example, suggests that the process of *fantasieren* may facilitate invention by allowing the imagination to run free: 'This improvisation... can very often be a means by which the composer arouses the activity of his genius or puts himself into that state known as improvisation.'<sup>442</sup> Haydn described a similar process to his biographer at the end of his life, explaining that his compositional process included *phantasieren*, *componieren* and *setzen*: 'I sat down [at the keyboard] and began to fantasize, according to whether my mood was sad or happy, serious or playful. Once I had seized an idea, my entire effort went toward elaborating and sustaining it according to the rules of art.'<sup>443</sup>

Although this concern for sensibility above structure may seem somewhat removed from the sonata principle, which developed alongside the fantasia during the same era, the two are not as mutually exclusive as their characteristics might suggest. Indeed, A.B. Marx claimed

---

<sup>440</sup> Forkel, cited by Richards, Annette, *The Free Fantasia and the Musical Picturesque*, p. 37

<sup>441</sup> Adorno, cited by Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*, p. 260

<sup>442</sup> Koch, cited by Richards, *The Free Fantasia and the Musical Picturesque*, p. 85

<sup>443</sup> Greisinger, Georg August, cited by Bonds, Mark Evan, *Wordless Rhetoric: Musical Form and the Metaphor of Oration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 116

that it was within the fantasia – not the sonata – that the summit of artistic reason was achieved, with the composer ‘free to range over the entire gamut of artistic possibilities... Hence the ‘fantasia’ denoted the creative *principle* behind sonata *form*.’<sup>444</sup> While Forkel’s is a practical approach to fantasy composition at the keyboard, Marx embodies a more ‘Romantic’ nineteenth century viewpoint, in which *fantasieren* represents an idealistic, Hegelian concept – the embodiment of imagination and artistic freedom, exploring the ‘Romantic conception of consciousness that had developed since Mozart’s time.’<sup>445</sup> As Stephen Downes writes, Hegel’s aesthetics prioritise music that gives itself to self-reflection and the exploration of inner feelings:

‘Hegel’s “poetic dimension to music” is of the “soul” and “gives vent to our inner desires and pain, and in so doing alleviates and uplifts us above the natural force of emotion by turning our momentary inward feelings into self-perception and voluntary self-absorption.” Hegel thus considers a move from the immediate to the reflective realm to be an elevation in music’s effectiveness and status.’<sup>446</sup>

In this chapter, I explore the integration between these often disparate trends of eighteenth-century rhetoric, examining the roots of the fantasia style and questioning to what extent it came to influence the development of the sonata. In turn, I compare the relationship between the fantasia and the slow movement, examining their mutual concerns for ‘imaginative play’<sup>447</sup> and free development, and their shared status as a misrepresented ideal. The fantasia may manifest itself in many disparate ways – from the virtuosic and flamboyant figuration of the traditional keyboard fantasy, to the diverse and surprising harmonic planning that C.P.E. Bach advocates in his *Versuch*. More broadly, the fantasia may also be an agent of disruption, sowing seeds of contrast that may eclipse the formal balance of the movement. Integrated within the slow movement, these ideas may become markers of lyricism, overthrowing the balance and precision that characterises outer movements and suggesting a free and untethered approach to expression. I trace all these stylistic traits through Beethoven’s works, and also ask to what extent the fantasia informs the music of his contemporaries. Contrast is a central premise of Classical form, but here I hope to show that the integration of the fantasia represents a modern, fragmentary approach to musical contrast – a counterweight to the balanced contours of sonata form. Kerman characterises the late quartets by their predilection for contrast and opposition, observing in the String Quartet in E flat major, Op. 127 a ‘whole series of madly contrasted

---

<sup>444</sup> Spitzer, *Metaphor and Musical Thought*, p. 349

<sup>445</sup> Downes, Stephen, ‘Kierkegaard, a Kiss, and Schumann’s “Fantasie”’, from *19th-Century Music*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Spring 1999), p. 270

<sup>446</sup> Ibid.

<sup>447</sup> Cramer, cited by Richards, *The Free Fantasia and the Musical Picturesque*, p. 99

ideas',<sup>448</sup> and of the Quartet in A minor, Op. 132 that 'contrast is not rationalised but endured.'<sup>449</sup> But Kerman's assessment of such extremes of musical opposition is that it contributes to 'frustration' and 'the condition of suffering',<sup>450</sup> suggesting even that these late works may be accused of 'overreaching themselves'.<sup>451</sup> In so doing, he overlooks the expressive effect of these juxtapositions, which is to create a sense of immediacy. Fragmenting the whole invites interpretation and suggests a degree of compositional spontaneity.

## Fluidity and Precision

Deriving both its name and its ethos from the German term for composing, 'fantasieren', the fantasia is typically understood as capturing the very moment of composition. But not all fantasias are written in this way: while some are improvised and later committed to paper, others may be written *as though* they were spontaneous, *quasi una fantasia*. But the crucial element of a fantasia is that it gives the impression of immediacy, freedom and natural, unhindered invention. The fantasia is the antithesis of complex counterpoint, an emblem instead of pure lyricism. As Spitzer suggests: 'Lyrical idioms... were valued by Classicism as tokens of a quasi-natural immediacy, at the opposite extreme to a comic rhetoric articulated through layer upon layer of conventional coding'<sup>452</sup>. The absence of surface formal patterning allows the fantasia a directness which may be denied to forms such as the sonata, theme and variations or fugue, whose often complex melodic and harmonic structures may demand a higher level of listener-orientated understanding. The fantasia, by contrast, invites free interpretation, often encouraging the listener to become heavily involved in the performance itself. As Richards writes, there are 'gaps demanding interpretation, moments in which the listener becomes the principal player'.<sup>453</sup>

Indeed, despite the sonata's development of motivic patterning and forays into new harmonic territory, Richards notes that eighteenth-century audiences actually relied upon musical rhetoric and punctuation to inform their listening. The fantasia, therefore, despite its freedom of design, often constituted a more listener-friendly format than the sonata, with fermatas and cadenzas denoting clearly delineated sections and melodies understood more as a constantly developing line than as integral parts in a wider structural whole. While some critics (notably Forkel) have interpreted this more readily-understood format as an indication of the low style, others recognise that the composition of a fantasia requires considerable technical

---

<sup>448</sup> Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets*, p. 232

<sup>449</sup> Ibid., p. 243

<sup>450</sup> Ibid.

<sup>451</sup> Ibid., p. 375

<sup>452</sup> Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*, p. 24

<sup>453</sup> Richards, *The Free Fantasia and the Musical Picturesque*, p. 138

ability, demanding a good command of harmony and melodic dexterity, as well as a flair for innovative, striking figures that convey the impression of improvisation. In fact, some eighteenth-century critics considered the fantasia an elevated genre unto itself: requiring a command over the elusive, unfolding moment, the fantasia came to embody an element of genius and took music a step closer to the realm of the sublime.

Spitzer also suggests that the fantasia's spark of transience brings it closer to the perception of the sublime as a natural phenomenon: 'The natural is an index of particularity, of the nonidentical, the momentary, and the transient, a 'standstill' of the dialectic which is both allegorical and sublime.'<sup>454</sup> Max Paddison also discusses this perception of the 'natural sublime' as something which became popular across the Enlightenment era:

'In the writings on aesthetics from the mid-eighteenth century there is a striking shift from a concept of nature associated with 'natural beauty', characterised by formal balance, clarity and order, to one associated with the natural sublime, characterised by the experience of formlessness, obscurity and disorder'.<sup>455</sup>

While this new way of thinking was by no means an abrupt and distinct change in taste, this shift of emphasis saw a change in musical aesthetics, moving away from the balanced forms of the Baroque towards a more fluid medium. In her extensive survey of the fantasia and its relation to the picturesque, Richards explores the eighteenth-century perception of beauty, suggesting that, at the time, true beauty was a thing of ambiguous borders, treading a fine line between the natural and the artificial, the unruly and the ordered. It is the rough, unhewn surface of the carefully-composed fantasia, therefore, that brings it closer to the sublime than other genres. She writes: 'The picturesque eye, and hand, pursued a textured and roughed-up beauty which verged on the disorderly realm of the sublime.'<sup>456</sup> Although the fantasia is emblematic of a 'free' approach to composition, Richards' appraisal of the genre reminds us that beneath the fragmentary surface, the fantasia is often underpinned by a strong sense of formal unity. Its essence lies in the tension between order and disorder; as an open-ended, ambiguous art form it both resists analytical interpretation and invites multiple readings.

Alongside Richards, who is keen to demonstrate the historical value of the fantasia as emblematic of the eighteenth-century's preoccupation with natural beauty, Ratner has also stressed its importance in the development of Classical form. He suggests: 'Without the fantasia, the great forms of the classic style – the sonata, the concerto, and the sonata-rondo – could not

---

<sup>454</sup> Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*, p. 260

<sup>455</sup> Paddison, Max, 'Nature and the Sublime', p. 107

<sup>456</sup> Richards, *The Free Fantasia and the Musical Picturesque*, p.12

have evolved.’<sup>457</sup> Its influence, he suggests, is felt keenly across the Classical style, with its sense of ‘play’ impacting upon the unusual, often eccentric, turns of phrase developed by ‘Classical composers’. He reminds us: ‘Fantasia, as a process, was far more important and pervasive at that time than is presently recognised: it was honoured and admired as evidence of creative originality’<sup>458</sup>.

In Schenker’s view the fantasia can be perceived more widely as the process of improvisation within a composition – instilling the work with a freshness unique to this manner of writing. He suggests that ‘improvisation’ is not merely an unplanned manner of composing, but should be understood as a metaphor for spontaneity, compositional freedom and an abundance of ideas. A good compositional technique, he claims, presupposes the ability to realise pre-formed harmonic plans as if through a process of improvisation. It is this ‘as if’ appearance, Schenker seems to suggest, that gives the musical work its breadth and formal fluidity. Schenker understands improvisation – or the appearance of it – as a highly sought-after musical quality, far removed from the ‘low style’ status it has often been assigned. John Rink even suggests that Schenker goes so far as to link the demise of improvisation in the nineteenth century with a decline in compositional technique at the same time.<sup>459</sup> With these ideas in mind, Schenker holds C.P.E. Bach in particularly high esteem, admiring the manner in which Bach’s works grow through the process of *Auskomponierung*. According to Rink, Schenker’s 1908 essay on ornamentation is a deliberate attempt ‘to “rehabilitate” the music of C. P. E. Bach, undervalued at the time because of changes in taste and performance practice.’<sup>460</sup> Schenker writes: ‘[Bach’s] works are not merely pieced together, but are sketched out instantaneously like the free fantasy and are developed from a mysterious fundamental source [*Urgrund*].’<sup>461</sup>

This ‘fundamental source’ is perhaps not quite as ‘mysterious’ as Schenker would appear to have us believe, neither are Bach’s works sketched out ‘instantaneously’. As Rink shows, Schenker later goes on to clarify his position regarding the connection between improvisation and composition, citing the importance of a well-defined ‘plan’ [*Hauptform*]: ‘both require the elaboration of harmonic “plans.” Good compositional technique presupposes the ability to realize such “plans” as if through improvisation.’<sup>462</sup> Bach’s works, including his fantasias, are grounded within a carefully-planned theoretical framework. In his *Versuch*, Bach himself sets out a series of loose structural guidelines by which a good fantasia should proceed. Among other factors, he notes that the tonal organisation of the fantasia should always be carefully planned: ‘The ear, in order not to be disagreeably startled, must be prepared for the new key by means of

---

<sup>457</sup> Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form and Style*, p. 314

<sup>458</sup> Ibid.

<sup>459</sup> Rink, ‘Schenker and Improvisation’, p. 3

<sup>460</sup> Ibid., pp. 2-3

<sup>461</sup> Schenker, cited by Rink, ‘Schenker and Improvisation’, p. 6

<sup>462</sup> Rink, ‘Schenker and Improvisation’, p. 4 (my italics)

intermediate harmonic progressions'<sup>463</sup>. Such acts of care serve to ground the composition at a background level, allowing the often disjunct foreground melodies to flow more fluidly from one to the next. Salzer also agrees that a fantasia must rest upon this bed of tonal stability: 'Fantasias never constitute a more or less meaningless wandering from one tonal centre to another. The assumption of aimlessness or lack of structure leads to a complete misunderstanding of the term 'free fantasia'<sup>464</sup>. Indeed, Matthew Head summarises this contrast between foreground and background structures in Bach's works as a 'dichotomy of form and content', he writes: 'Capricious details are encased in relatively inflexible and predetermined formal scaffolding'<sup>465</sup>. Nevertheless, Bach himself maintains that the fantasia offers one of the greatest opportunities to take the listener by surprise, as he suggests: 'It is one of the beauties of improvisation to feign modulation to a new key through a formal cadence and then move off in another direction.'<sup>466</sup> Such tricks, he warns, should not be used excessively though, else the 'natural relationships will become hopelessly buried'<sup>467</sup>.

Bach perceives the process of improvisation as integral to successful composition, for it is with such structural freedom that the composer can best relate to his listeners. He writes: 'It is principally in improvisations or fantasias that the keyboardist can best master the feelings of his audience.'<sup>468</sup> But these works must also be articulated elegantly and with careful thought: 'I believe that music must, first and foremost, stir the heart. This cannot be achieved through mere rattling, drumming, or arpeggiation, at least not by me.'<sup>469</sup> Although the fantasia may be fluidly articulated, it must be conceived with some restraint, or else the resulting sounds will be, as Kunzen suggests, simply chaos: 'A chaos of notes is no music but noise, shouting, racket; and everything that lies beyond the sphere of the beautiful, the idealistic, is lost for art.'<sup>470</sup> Bach's formal grounding in thoroughbass techniques and the *regola dell'ottava* provide the basis for his improvisatory writing, transforming this theoretical framework into a fully-fledged means of composition. Building from the fundamental bass, Bach's linear progressions not only become mapped onto the tonal architecture of the work but are also projected onto the foreground melodic contours. Thus, the fundamental bass becomes the subject of a series of variations, at once harmonic, melodic and structural.

---

<sup>463</sup> Bach, *Versuch*, p. 436

<sup>464</sup> Salzer, Felix 'Haydn's Fantasia from the String Quartet, Op. 76, No. 6', from *Music Forum USA*, Vol. IV (1976), p. 162

<sup>465</sup> Head, *Fantasy in the Instrumental Music of C.P.E. Bach*, p. 5

<sup>466</sup> C.P.E. Bach, *Versuch*, p. 434

<sup>467</sup> Ibid.

<sup>468</sup> Ibid, p. 152

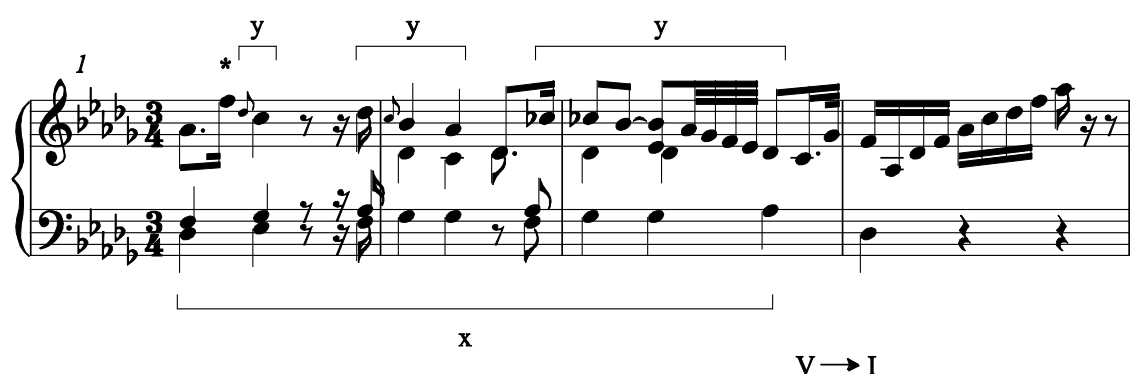
<sup>469</sup> Ibid, p. 16

<sup>470</sup> Kunzen, cited by Brown, A. Peter, 'Haydn's Chaos: Genesis and Genre', from *The Music Quarterly*, Vol. 73, No. 1 (1989), p. 18

This method of composition is not just confined to his fantasias, but is also evident in his other works – most notably in the slow movements. In the fantasia-like slow movement of his ‘Württemberg’ Sonata No. 2, Bach explores the possibilities of this technique by repeating the same linear fragments in the bass, while altering the harmonies with which they are associated. In turn, the linear bass-line comes to influence the contours of the right hand melodies. The fragmented opening bars of this movement offer the first presentation of the theme (See Figure 5.1), with each new utterance adding to the gradually evolving descending line (y).

Figure 5.1

C.P.E. Bach: ‘Württemberg’ Sonata No. 2, ‘Adagio’, bars 1-4



Meanwhile, this is mirrored in the bass in contrary motion, with an ascending line from tonic to dominant over the first three bars (marked as x), but the full scalar ascent is broken off with a perfect cadence into bar 4. Note here that the bass is sympathetic to the phrase structure presented in the treble, with both hands following the phrase structure of 4 + 2 bars – this is not always the case. As the second phrase begins (bar 7), the stilted opening has been forgotten and the right hand now takes off in chains of scalar triplets which, apart from their conjunct movement, seem to bear little relation to the melody of the opening six bars. Indeed, it is the bass-line that provides the thematic impetus for this phrase, instigating a complete descending D flat major scale from bars 7-11 (see Figure 5.2), above which the right hand meanders in free association with the bass.

Fig. 5.2

C.P.E. Bach: 'Württemberg' Sonata No. 2, 'Adagio', bars 7-11

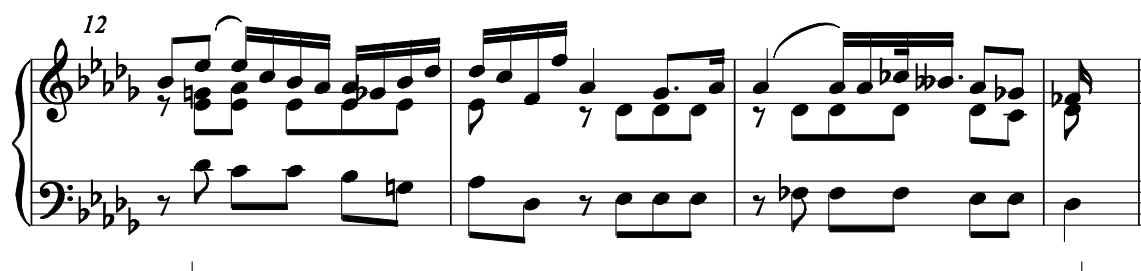


Although the bass completes a full scale this time, the phrasing between the two hands has now slipped out of sync: the bass descent is not completed until the start of bar 11, whereas the right-hand phrasing is punctuated at the beginning of bar 10. This looseness blurs the phrasing boundaries and creates an altogether more fluid line, one which emphasises the unfolding, narrative-like style of the triplet melody.

The left hand begins another octave descent in bar 12 (this time with alterations – see Figure 5.3) and, although the phrases once again overlap by a bar (the descent reaches the tonic in bar 15, while the upper melody cadences into bar 14), this time the descent to D flat rhymes with the arrival on D flat minor in bar 15.

Fig. 5.3

C.P.E. Bach: 'Württemberg' Sonata No. 2, 'Adagio', bars 12-15





Although there appears to be no ‘thematic’ melody in the upper voice that is carried through and developed, the movement is saturated in all voices by the driving force of the linear bass progressions. This simple, understated device acts as the structural underpinning for the entire movement, manifesting itself both at a background level as a basic means of stability, and as part of the foreground voice-leading.

Peter Schleuning has shown how such Bachian processes are also employed by Mozart in his *Fantasy* in C minor, K. 475. Echoing the opening of the *Adagio* of Bach’s ‘Württemberg’ Sonata No. 2, Schleuning notes the presence of a prominent descending sequence at the opening of Mozart’s *Fantasy*, and a series of ‘deceptive’ harmonic progressions, which centre – interestingly – around an ‘unfulfilled drive toward the dominant’.<sup>471</sup> Mozart appears to heed Bach’s advice to ‘feign modulation’ before moving off in another direction – substituting an implied move to the dominant with a more unusual ‘changing-note’ harmonic structure that visits D major (the naturalised supertonic major) and B flat major (the flattened leading-note). So, too, in Bach’s ‘Württemberg’ Sonata, where an initial evasion of the dominant in bar 14 leads to a brief diversion into the realm of D flat minor. Five bars before the end of the movement, this thwarted dominant arrival is echoed once more, this time with a swerve to G flat minor (bars 40-41). The purpose in both cases is to create a surface illusion of disorder, concealing a carefully-scripted bass-line progression that avoids the music falling into a ‘chaos of notes’. While Mozart’s tonal planning, as Schleuning shows, is based upon the composing-out of a changing-note figure, Bach’s harmonic swerves play out the linear motion of the bass-line that initiated the movement. When the swerve to D flat minor occurs in bar 14, it is the dominant bass-note (E flat) that shifts upwards to F flat (instead of completing the cadence with a move to A flat) that allows the rapid transition. The same process occurs across the barline in bars 40-41, with the A flat bass-note rising to B double-flat instead of moving to the tonic note.

The same techniques can also be traced through Haydn’s ‘Chaos’ overture at the opening of *The Creation*, where the influence of the fantasia is used for programmatic effect, signifying the ‘disorder’ of Chaos. Here, Haydn also has recourse to Baroque thoroughbass practices, relying upon strict contrapuntal techniques to contextualise the chaotic, intervening fragments. In fact, as A. Peter Brown notes, one of the surviving sketches ‘reveals that the composer’s first impulse was to create a motet-styled movement in which the traditional texture and rhythm were retained, but the careful dissonant preparations and resolutions were discarded’<sup>472</sup>. The resulting movement thus has two tiers of musical activity, combining the *stile antico* language of the motet with more dramatic, contrasting material. Like Bach’s ‘Württemberg’ Sonata, these distinct musical layers are anchored by a unifying melodic device: the presence of a descending

---

<sup>471</sup> Schleuning, Peter, cited by Rink, ‘Schenker and Improvisation’, pp. 9-10

<sup>472</sup> Brown, ‘Haydn’s Chaos: Genesis and Genre’, p. 32

scale in the bass. Brown highlights the unusual position in which this 'Chaos' movement sits within Haydn's oeuvre, and even makes a direct comparison with the fantasia itself: 'Nothing similar can be found in Haydn's other orchestral essays... the closest parallel is to be found in the unmeasured prelude, or free fantasia'<sup>473</sup>.

Texturally, the 'Chaos' Overture is far more fragmentary than Bach's *Adagio* (although both begin to emerge gradually from their short opening fragments) but the same sense of unfolding is inherent to both works. In the *Adagio*, this occurs more immediately, with the descending semitonal appoggiatura unfolding into a full descending scale within the first three bars. While in the Overture, the same descending semitone (see bars 2-3, violin 2, viola and cello) is extended more gradually across the movement, lengthening to three notes in bars 10-12 (oboes), four notes in bars 13-16 (double bass), seven notes in bars 18-21 (cello and double bass), where the D flat is held for four bars before finally completing the full octave descent in bar 25 on a triumphant *fortissimo* chord. This complete descending line can be traced in its fragmentary form throughout the movement, working in tandem with the predominantly semitonal motion of the melodic lines, forming chains of descending scales spread throughout the various instruments.<sup>474</sup> Indeed, Brown suggests the movement 'has no subject except in the process of its unfolding from a minor second'<sup>475</sup>, much like the free, developing variation process that takes place in Bach's *Adagio*. This underlying coherence frames an otherwise very fluid surface, whose allusions to the fantasia match very closely with those identified in the 'Württemberg' Sonata. Rising triplets contradict the work's simple, duple metre (notably in bars 45-47), again opening out the otherwise predominantly conjunct melodic motion. Arpeggiated motion punctuates the melodic phrasing (see bars 21-24), while broken chordal accompaniment (clarinet, bars 27-30), pulsating pedal points (strings, bars 21-26) and syncopation (strings, bars 26-30) drive the music onwards, creating a continuous forwards momentum reminiscent of Bach's unbroken melodic lines. Indeed, both works are saturated with characteristics C.P.E. Bach attributes to the fantasia in his *Versuch* (arpeggios, broken chords, runs, sequences, and imitation in both parallel and contrary motion), but which, as Head rightly observes, are all rooted in North German keyboard music, notably the toccata or prelude.<sup>476</sup>

Rink, too, hopes to trace Bach's influence further and decides to 'take up the challenge Schenker poses in *Der freie Satz*, where he comments, "it would be of [the] greatest importance today to study thoroughly the fantasies, preludes, cadenzas, and similar embellishment which

---

<sup>473</sup> Brown, 'Haydn's Chaos: Genesis and Genre', p. 37

<sup>474</sup> For a more comprehensive account of this process, see A. Peter Brown, 'Haydn's Chaos: Genesis and Genre'.

<sup>475</sup> Brown, 'Haydn's Chaos: Genesis and Genre', p. 37

<sup>476</sup> Head, *Fantasy in the Instrumental Music of C.P.E. Bach*, p. 44

the great composers have left to us”.<sup>477</sup> He goes on to examine works by Beethoven, Schubert and Chopin, tracing the relationship between their background structures and foreground diminution techniques. His achievement is to demonstrate the close relationship between improvisation and composition in the three works, each of which features elements of surface disorder that can be traced back to a well-defined plan or *Hauptform*. Examining Beethoven’s *Fantasy*, Op. 77, Rink shows that the background structure of the work is ‘an uncomplicated tonal structure’ that produces an ultimately coherent musical work. But Rink’s analysis is baffling and incomplete in one major respect. Having earlier drawn the conclusion that one of the fundamental tenets expressed by Schenker is to relate ‘to an Urlinie the partimento-like plan specified by Bach as the “skeleton” [das Gerippe] of the work, which the composer fleshes out according to the principles of thoroughbass’<sup>478</sup>, Rink entirely bypasses any analysis of thoroughbass when testing Schenker’s method. His background graph is compelling and helps to explain the large-scale harmonic idiosyncrasies of the work, but it evades one of the central features of Bach’s theory of the fantasia – the importance of bass-line patterns.

While Rink shows that Op. 77 is driven by the large-scale semitonal relations between B flat major, B major and C major – linear patterning that echoes relationships identified in both the Bach and Haydn examples cited above – he does not follow this through to small-scale stepwise motion. Writing in his *Versuch*, Bach advises the composer to ‘fashion his bass out of the ascending and descending scales of the prescribed key, with a variety of figured bass signatures; he may interpolate a few half steps, arrange the scale in or out of its normal sequence, and perform the resultant progressions in broken or sustained style.’<sup>479</sup> Of course, not all fantasias are scripted according to linear bass-lines: Douglas A. Lee sets out a transcription of the bass-line as part of his analysis of Bach’s *Fantasia* in E flat major (see Figure 5.4), showing that it is an extremely disjunct and chromatic line.<sup>480</sup>

Figure 5.4

Douglas A. Lee’s transcription of the structural bass-line of C.P.E. Bach’s *Fantasia* in E flat major



<sup>477</sup> Rink, ‘Schenker and Improvisation’, p. 13

<sup>478</sup> Ibid., p. 6

<sup>479</sup> C.P.E. Bach, *Versuch*, Vol. 2, pp. 431-432

<sup>480</sup> Lee, Douglas A., ‘C.P.E. Bach and the Free Fantasia for Keyboard: Deutsche Staatsbibliothek Mus. Ms. Nichelmann 1N’, from *C.P.E. Bach Studies*, ed. Clark (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 182

But what such disjunct bass-lines and the descending scalar patterns advocated by Bach share is the absence of harmonic cues and tonal implication generated by traditional, functional patterns. While a cycle of fifths implies to the listener the direction of the harmony, Bach's chromatic and linear lines obscure this patterning and open up a new realm of harmonic possibilities, designed to take the listener on a surprising harmonic journey. Where recognisable harmonic patterns such as the fifths cycles are used, Head shows, Bach disguises this progression through 'voice-exchange, enharmony, and ellipsis'<sup>481</sup> (ellipsis being the omission of chords).

In Beethoven's *Fantasy*, Op. 77, the conjunct chromatic movement that governs the large-scale semitonal motion identified in Rink's analysis also pervades the bass-line patterns, which in turn govern the local key progressions. Tovey writes of this particular Beethovenian device: 'Beethoven was mystical enough, but his use of the gradually rising or falling bass is neither decorative nor mysterious. Its purpose is to give the most solid dramatic reasons for modulations which would otherwise be mere accidents.'<sup>482</sup> Figure 5.5 shows the linear patterning that underpins the opening of the *Fantasy* to the fermata after the *Allegro ma non troppo*.

Figure 5.5

Linear bass patterning in Beethoven's *Fantasy*, Op. 77



Note how the bass-line descends from D at the opening of the first *Poco adagio*, via sequential repetition to C at the start of the next *Poco adagio*, moving upwards to D flat for the *L'istesso tempo*. A leap in the bass in the third bar of the *L'istesso tempo* moves the bass to G flat, which then winds chromatically upwards through G natural, A flat and A natural to the fermata. This A natural then forms the pivot to the B flat which, after a scalar flourish, signals the beginning of the *Allegro ma non troppo*. This semitonal relationship is cemented once more at the closure of this section, as B flat shifts downwards once more to A natural for the second fermata. Melodic linear patterning also mirrors this conjunct motion throughout the opening of the *Fantasy* (see Figure 5.6).

<sup>481</sup> Head, *Fantasy in the Instrumental Music of C.P.E. Bach*, p. 61

<sup>482</sup> Tovey, Donald, *Beethoven* (London: Oxford University Press, 1944), p. 43

Figure 5.6

Melodic linear patterning in Beethoven's *Fantasy*, Op. 77



From the *Allegro* descending scalic flourishes to the stepwise descending melodic line of the *Poco adagio* (note the registral transfer from d to c<sup>1</sup> in bar 1 and from c to b flat<sup>1</sup> in bar 3), and even the opening bars of the *Allegro ma non troppo* – the *Fantasy* is saturated with linear patterning. Later, in the short *Adagio* passages which follow the *Allegro con brio*, the bass-line moves entirely via stepwise motion (see Figure 5.7) – note the enharmonic tone between B flat and G sharp three bars before the *Presto*.

Figure 5.7

Bass-line stepwise motion in Beethoven's *Fantasy*, Op. 77



The same is true of the development section in the slow movement of Mozart's Symphony No. 40 in G minor, K. 550, where a rising scale through B flat-C flat-C natural-D flat-D natural-E flat-E natural-F effects a series of passing modulations that create a tumultuous opening to the development. Neither is this the only appearance of unprecedented chromaticism in the work: the opening eight bars of the development section in the finale feature every note but one of the chromatic scale – with the elusive tone being the tonic.

Linear key progressions and linear melodic patterns go hand in hand in the fantasia and although Beethoven's Piano Sonata *quasi una fantasia* in C sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 2, does not employ the large-scale linear key progressions in the same manner as Op. 77, it too is driven by linear patterns – both in the melody, and in the bass-line which anchors it. Unlike the *Fantasy*, Op. 77, the C sharp minor sonata's fantasy associations do not derive from the scalic flourishes, dramatic fermatas and sudden changes in register and texture that characterise many fantasy works. Only the final section of the last movement exploits these more rhapsodic textures. Rather, the first movement of the sonata explores bass-line patterns that are far more common to the fantasia than to an opening sonata movement. While this is a slow opening movement,

and it may therefore be absolved of some of the more normative functions of sonata first movement (chief among them being to establish the tonic and with it the mood of the sonata), the shifting harmonic progressions of this *Adagio sostenuto* are nevertheless more befitting of the fantasia than the opening of a sonata. As Rosen writes: ‘The harmonic plan of the first movement gives the impression of a free improvisation, but it is guided both by convention and by Beethoven’s previous treatment of the minor mode.’<sup>483</sup> Rosen finds a parallel between Op. 27, No. 2 and Beethoven’s very first Piano Sonata, Op. 2, No. 1: in both cases, Beethoven modulates to the relative major before replacing it almost immediately with its own minor mode. Interestingly, the opening movement of Op. 2, No. 1 is also driven by linear bass-line patterning, but there is an important distinction to be made. The replacement of the relative major with the minor mode in Op. 2, No. 1 (bars 40-48) is simply a moment of harmonic colouration, that is quickly swept aside with a return to the major mode at the double bar (bars 47-48). In Op. 27, No. 1, the shift from E major to E minor is not revoked: it is just the first in a series of chromatic shifts that drives the ‘impression of free improvisation’ in this opening *Adagio*. Having reached the relative major at bar 9, note the descending bass-line across bars 9-15 which connects the modulations between E minor, C major and B minor. Here, in an inverse echo of the arrival on E major, Beethoven exchanges B minor for B major (bar 15), ostensibly so that this may function as the dominant of the relative major and provide a harmonic link back to the tonic. But this proves not to be Beethoven’s harmonic course after all: instead, a modulation to F sharp minor (the dominant minor of B major) in bar 23 sets up another stepwise bass-line shift, as F sharp rises to G and thence to G sharp (bars 27-28) to prepare the dominant pedal on G sharp. Just as in the *Fantasy*, Op. 77, these linear bass-line patterns are also mirrored in the melody. Rosen has observed that the melody is ‘held within the extremely confined space of a few notes’<sup>484</sup>, noting too that Berlioz characterises it as a ‘lamentation’. Indeed, the melody’s power derives not just from the restricted register to which it is confined, but also from the chromatic linear motion that echoes the descending bass – the melody is almost exclusively conjunct throughout the movement.

Similar major/minor conversions take place in Beethoven’s Piano Sonata in A flat major, Op. 110, although here they take place on a larger structural scale. But like the *Fantasy*, Op. 77, Beethoven also explores stepwise key relationships in Op. 110. The slow movement begins in B flat minor – the supertonic minor of the work’s tonic – before segueing into A flat minor for the *Arioso dolente*. In turn, this is exchanged for the major mode at the onset of the Fugue, but when the *Arioso* returns, it is in G minor – the flattened leading-note key. While this accentuates the *dolente* expression of the *Arioso*, it also provides a platform for the continuing stepwise

---

<sup>483</sup> Rosen, *Beethoven’s Piano Sonatas*, p. 157

<sup>484</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156

progression, which shifts to G major for the return of the Fugue (the leading-note now brightened in preparation for the return of the tonic) and thence to A flat major for the close of the work. Such fantasia-like traits are not confined to the solo piano works: one is reminded of the String Quartet in C sharp minor, Op. 131, and its intersecting key schemes – as explored by Spitzer and detailed in Chapter 4. Here, a ‘functional’ set of rising fifth key progressions intersects with a more fluid descending linear progression<sup>485</sup>: sonata meets lyric. But the quartet is also reminiscent of fantasia in other ways – notably in its multisectional design and formal fluidity between sections and movements. Head writes of the fluidity of boundaries in C.P.E. Bach’s works: ‘One of the most distinctive features of Bach’s fantasia-like sonatas, concertos and symphonies is continuity across the boundaries between movements.’<sup>486</sup> Such formal planning, without pause for contemplation or regrouping, reinforces the perception that the composer-performer is caught in the act of improvisation. As Pamela Fox suggests, ‘Bach apparently did not regard form as a source of dramatic and expressive potential, but rather as a necessary formal stereotype into which he crowded intense moment-to-moment activity’<sup>487</sup>.

This detailed look at the fantasia and its development through the works and writings of C.P.E. Bach is not without context in a study dedicated to Beethoven’s slow movements. As discussed in Chapter 4, we know that Beethoven was fascinated with both Bach’s music and his *Versuch*. Although he published just two self-titled ‘fantasias’ (the *Fantasy*, Op. 77 and the *Choral Fantasy*, Op. 80) the formal processes with which the genre is associated can be seen infiltrating a much wider number of his works, particularly in the realm of keyboard music. Lockwood notes the presence of the fantasia in Beethoven’s early sketches, including a complete fantasia in D major that was never published, but which shows him attempting to capture a variety of musical ideas within a loosely-structured, extended work.<sup>488</sup> But the fantasia also has specific musical connections with the slow movement, often sharing its paratactic formal design, fluid approach to modulation and speech-like patterns of articulation. Beyond which, the fantasia – given its implied spontaneity – shares a level of expressivity with the slow movement that is rarely found in outer movements. Discussing C.P.E. Bach’s aesthetic position at the height of the Enlightenment, Etienne Darbellay suggests that the ‘central key’ to understanding his music is with regard to ‘the notion of musical expression, as opposed to the parallel domain of musical creation, a domain in which we may characterise music as formal. This notion, though extremely difficult to define systematically, can be easily grasped intuitively.’<sup>489</sup> Expression does not

---

<sup>485</sup> Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*, p. 174

<sup>486</sup> Head, *Fantasy in the Instrumental Music of C.P.E. Bach*, p. 52

<sup>487</sup> Fox, Pamela, ‘The Stylistic Anomalies of Bach’s Nonconstancy’, from *C.P.E. Bach Studies*, p. 108

<sup>488</sup> Lockwood, Lewis, *Beethoven: The Music and the Life*, p. 106

<sup>489</sup> Darbellay, Etienne, ‘C.P.E. Bach’s Aesthetic as Reflected in his Notation’, from *C.P.E. Bach Studies*, ed. Clark, p. 43

preclude creation, neither does the opposite apply, but Darbellay's maxim highlights a shift in priorities – one which is just as relevant in understanding the slow movement.

## Interruption

Our traditional perception of Classical form tends to rely on language that refers to 'balance', 'grammar' and 'clarity' – terms that are juxtaposed with the 'freedom' of the 'Romantic' period that follows. Caplin, for example, begins his overview of Classical form by describing 'hierarchical arrangements', 'theme-types', and 'a conventional set of formal functions'<sup>490</sup> which allude to a degree of apparently inherent order and clarity that we can analyse across works and genres. When balance is overthrown, we rarely have the linguistic and analytical tools to adequately describe it, hence Caplin refers rather ambiguously to 'looser sentential functions'<sup>491</sup> to characterise the more lyrical 'subordinate theme'. As Caplin's terminology suggests, such lyrical formal areas have typically been relegated to a lower ('subordinate') order of formal types that cannot be easily categorised. Hepokoski and Darcy have gone some way towards correcting this misleading terminology in their more recent appraisal of sonata form types (using 'S space' instead of 'subordinate theme'). But even their understanding of form is based on a strongly directional listening that presupposes the eventual outcome:

'Whenever one hears the onset of S-space within any exposition, one should listen with an alert sense of anticipation for any subsequent PAC – how it might be approached, secured, delayed, thwarted, or deferred. One should experience any sonata form with a strongly "directed" preparatory set, pressing forward conceptually and anticipating genre-defining events-to-come.'<sup>492</sup>

Moreover, those formal functions that do not conform to such expectations are credited as 'deformations', a term that implies an agreed set of rules to which composers subscribe. The truth about lyrical genres is that often they deliberately 'break' these rules, or rather that they are more fluidly designed in a way that invites interpretation and suggests a heightened level of expression. These are not 'deformations' but the fundamental building blocks of lyricism.

Bach's fantasias and fantasia-like sonatas are dappled with moments of surprise and interruption that endow the music with a quasi-natural immediacy and spontaneity, but which are so varied in their manifestations that they may be difficult to ascribe to a particular set of

---

<sup>490</sup> Caplin, *Classical Form*, p. 9

<sup>491</sup> Ibid., p. 99

<sup>492</sup> Hepokoski and Darcy, *Sonata Theory*, p. 18



rules or formal types. But this fluidity of style has also made its way into the slow movement which, as we saw in Chapter 4, may endow the movement with a sense of speech-like expression and create the impression of a direct link with an individual narrator. While in some cases this is created by vocal topoi or speech-like interpolations, elsewhere interruptions that 'break' the expected musical patterning may have much the same effect. Sisman recognises that this type of musical narrative may be often found in the slow movement, and in particular that it is emblematic of the pastoral style:

"That slow movements offer a "respite" in some sense from the length and complexity of the first is suggested by the term "pastoral", but the pastoral as a musical topic is generally more specific than "mere" respite: it applies to those movements that employ some combination of the compound meter, a melody with dotted rhythms (especially the dotted rhythms of the siciliana) or trochees in thirds and sixths, and prominent passages of drone bass. Just as a pastoral literary topos could include real-world pain in contrast to idyllic bliss, there may be substantial disruption in the musical pastoral.'<sup>493</sup>

This is not to suggest that the fantasia's influence in the slow movement is limited to pastoral topics. Rather, it demonstrates that the disruptions and contrasts that are inherent to the fantasia may be integrated into recognisable lyrical idioms – not as 'deformations' but as markers of a lyrical style.

In fact, such disruptive episodes are not just characteristic, but they may even fit in with Caplin's views of 'normative' Classical formal types. Caplin suggests that Ternary form (or ABA<sup>1</sup> structure) is 'one of the most important forms in all of classical instrumental music.'<sup>494</sup> Yet where, in outer movements, this principle of contrast is typically played out through the boundaries of a sonata form structure, in the slow movement, formal freedom allows contrast the possibility of expansion. The slow movement allows otherwise typically transitory moments to grow: antithesis can become thesis. Indeed, when surveying Beethoven's slow movements, one notices a tendency for the element of contrast – which might otherwise constitute a B section – to explode the form. Contrast is introduced with such a level of vigour and disruption that it can create a fracture in the form of the movement, and have consequences for what follows. Not only is this degree of formal rupture unique to the slow movement, but it can be traced back to earlier composers such as C.P.E. Bach as characteristic of the slow movement's absorption of the fantasia aesthetic. Moreover, this dislocation and expansion at the centre of the slow movement heightens the degree to which the slow movement can be considered culminatory in the context of the complete work.

---

<sup>493</sup> Sisman, Elaine, "The spirit of Mozart from Haydn's hands", p. 49

<sup>494</sup> Caplin, *Classical Form*, p. 71

Interestingly, many of these instances of dramatic B sections may be elided with the presence of vocal topics. The elegant aria-like opening section in the slow movement of Op. 31, No. 1, for example (discussed briefly in Chapter 4), gives way to a tumultuous central episode that moves flatwards to C minor (the tonic minor), then courses through A flat major, F minor and G major. Like the fantasia, these tertiary shifts are driven by linear bass-line patterns, which allow the harmony to move chromatically through otherwise distantly-related keys. Note the rising bass-line in bars 35-39 that moves chromatically from C<sup>1</sup>-F<sup>1</sup>, leading to a dominant seventh on E flat in bar 40 which prepares the modulation to A flat major in bar 41. Thence the bass-line moves stepwise downwards to G in bar 47 to prepare the dominant seventh for the move to F minor, which is effected by a further stepwise descent to F in bar 48. Thereafter, the linear bass-line descends once more through F-E flat-D-C-B flat across bars 48-51, before a modulation to G major in bar 53 signals the beginning of dominant preparation for the return of the tonic. This series of harmonic excursions is coupled with punctuating *fortepiano* chords every other bar (bars 41-50), driving *staccatissimo* semiquavers and dramatic registral leaps. When the storm passes and the opening melody returns, it is imbued with the memory of the turbulent episode, coloured by the new *staccatissimo* broken chordal accompaniment in the left hand. The movement's relationship to the fantasia is cemented further by the rapid scalic figuration that colours both the central section and the dramatic fermata in bar 26, and which is captured in the florid ornamentation of the aria-like A sections – another reminder of the lyrical links between fantasias and vocality.

We are also reminded of another 'vocal' slow movement – the *Cavatina* from the String Quartet in B flat major, Op. 130 (discussed briefly in Chapter 4) whose 'otherworldly' central *Beklemmt* episode forcefully ruptures the movement's form. The *Cavatina* is the linchpin of the quartet, forming a lyrical counterweight to the other slow movement – the 'whimsical' *Andante* – which for Spitzer is emblematic of the quartet's *galant* style. Spitzer goes further to suggest that the work is characterised by its 'ultra-conventionalised and frankly shallow character'<sup>495</sup>, out of place among the high style of the late quartets. This, he suggests, is the work's real problem: a fracture between style and context, something that poses a difficulty in terms of satisfactory resolution within its aesthetic context. How to reconcile this 'shallow' music and its potential as a great Beethovenian 'late' work? Beethoven had evidently wrestled with the same problem and originally conceived the *Grosse Fuge* as a grand finale to the work: a moment of transcendence in which the work's aesthetic 'value' is restored. But this apparently proved too weighty – and extensive – a finale to this modest work, rather out of proportion with the *galant* noisettes of the preceding movements. Beethoven's alternative solution, it seems, was to probe an altogether different mode of salvation for the work, somewhat more understated than the

---

<sup>495</sup> Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*, p. 139

grandiosity of the *Grosse Fuge*. The *Cavatina*, meanwhile, tackles what Spitzer characterises as the work's 'hankering for affective and intellectual substance'<sup>496</sup>.

At its centre is the agitated *Beklemmt* section, a feature that may have its origins in the work's earlier slow movement – the *Andante*. As Hatten notes, in bar 17 of the *Andante*, a sudden shift from A flat major to F major has dramatic expressive implications: 'The abrupt, operatic interruption in m. 17 suggests a persona "taking stock" of her own discourse, perhaps seized by a sudden thought from another realm of consciousness.'<sup>497</sup> Notably, Hatten observes that this interlude is not resolved but 'dissolves' away into 'static quibbling'. The emergence of the *Beklemmt* section in the *Cavatina*, therefore, may function as a renewed attempt to resolve this disruptive episode. This fractured passage in the *Cavatina* sees the movement break out of its lyrical song form and plumb hitherto unimagined expressive depths. As Chua suggests, the effect is remarkably dramatic and has implications for what follows: '[The *Cavatina* has] as its core an excursion into a different world whose emotional and structural contingencies eventually impinge upon the unfolding of the form.'<sup>498</sup> This altogether declamatory breakthrough seems to (quite literally) voice its anger at the harmonic inertia of the movement; for despite skirting around moves to the relative minor and its major variant, the lyrical outer sections of the *Cavatina* are almost entirely rooted in the work's subdominant key (E flat major), with barely any chromaticism to add harmonic colour, something Hatten has suggested lends the movement a 'primal expressivity'. This lack of colour makes the *Beklemmt* rupture all the more surprising, and its downwards chromatic shift sound – by contrast to Hatten's 'primal' outer pillars – uncharacteristically modern. Indeed, Hatten also supports this idea of a temporal shift, he notes: 'This episode is not a straightforward B (or C) section, but more like a suspension of time.'<sup>499</sup> Its eerie effect derives partly from Beethoven's choice of modulatory technique – a (C.P.E.) Bachian device imported from the fantasia that sees the bass-line descend tone-by-tone from E flat – D flat – C flat to segue between the tonic and the mediant major of C flat. The resultant form becomes an expanded variant of Caplin's Large Ternary form: in this case A<sup>1</sup>A<sup>2</sup>BA<sup>1</sup>. Yet, where Caplin notes that Large Ternary structures need not touch upon the dominant in the central section, typically, one might expect a modulation to the subdominant, relative minor or tonic minor. This unusual tertiary shift to C flat major presents a deliberate and dramatic thwarting of expectations, driven by the linear bass-line, that places the *Beklemmt* interlude in a familiar but somewhat ethereal harmonic space. Enharmonically the implication is also of B major – suggesting a dramatic oversharpener that reinforces the section's 'otherworldliness'.

---

<sup>496</sup> Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*, p. 139

<sup>497</sup> Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, p. 176

<sup>498</sup> Ibid., p. 193

<sup>499</sup> Ibid., p. 208

More broadly, however, what is most extraordinary about the *Beklemmt* episode is that, despite its dramatic rupture of form and harmonic planning, and suprising chromatic modulation, the moment of rupture itself is remarkably understated. On the page, its distinction from what precedes and follows it is all too clear, but aurally the recitative seems to emerge seamlessly from the soft, pulsating accompaniment that introduces it. It is almost apologetic in character, creeping in *pianissimo* so as not to be noticed, as though to mask the disruptive effect of the shift to C flat major. The faltering recitative breaks stride with the preceding lyrical lines, stuttering out of time with the subtle accompaniment, but it is over almost as soon as it began. With no dominant preparation for the tonic return, we are wrenched out of the *Beklemmt* and thrust back into the *Cavatina*, with the *molto espressivo* song continuing effortlessly as though nothing had intervened. And as C flat major slides into A flat minor, the movement's subdominant minor and a more normative key for this middle section, the moment passes and it is as though time were momentarily suspended and then restarted. But of course, this is not the end of the story: the rupture at the heart of the *Cavatina* has a powerful effect on what follows. The *Beklemmt* episode breaks the prescribed mould of this song-like movement, and in doing so it throws the spotlight on the form of the quartet as a whole – and its predilection for poise and balance. The recitative *unbalances* the movement, albeit temporarily, but this small wobble is enough to tip the music over onto an edgier, more radical course in the finale, a movement which seems to wipe away the *galant* smile of the preceding movements and tackle issues of form and harmony in a manner more befitting of a late work. It might be considerably less challenging as a finale than the *Grosse Fuge* would have proved, but it signifies a distinct change in direction from the idle dance movements of the first half of the quartet. The *Cavatina* is thus not just 'the expressive centre of the work'<sup>500</sup> but a formal pivot, providing a point of both culmination and new beginning.

Contrasting worlds are also combined to dramatic effect in the *Heiliger Dankgesang* from the String Quartet in A minor, Op. 132, which Kerman suggests 'forces contrast more profoundly than any previous piece of music.'<sup>501</sup> These differences are made clear in the title, a contrast between earth and the heavens, described by Beethoven as a 'Holy song of thanksgiving of a convalescent to the deity in the Lydian mode'. Programmatic readings of this movement are easily accomplished, for Beethoven signposts the music at every turn. His 'deity', played *Molto adagio* and in the simplest of metres (Common time) is a pure and unadorned, *sotto voce* chorale-like theme in the 'purity' of the Lydian mode – not a single chromatic note blemishes the opening 29 bars. Meanwhile, the new life/vigour ('Neue Kraft fühlend') that the earthly

---

<sup>500</sup> Barry, Barbara R., 'Recycling the end of the 'Leibquartett': Models, Meaning and Propriety in Beethoven's Quartet in Bb major, Op. 130', from *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (Summer 1995), p.357

<sup>501</sup> Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets*, p. 253

'convalescent' feels upon receiving the power of the deity is signified by a sprightly new metre (3/8), a sharpwards shift to D major, a new tempo (*Andante*) and a dance-like new theme, featuring dramatic dynamic alternations, trills and independent movement between the four parts. For Kerman: 'The two do not mix, they do not understand one another, and it is only by a sort of miracle that they do not wipe each other out or simply collapse.'<sup>502</sup> Kevin Korsyn has shown that the contrasts extend still further, encompassing aspects of phrase rhythm, voice-leading, form and register, noting: 'The two sections seem more like two independent movements than anything that Beethoven had dared within a single design.'<sup>503</sup>

Although Korsyn suggests that the finale of the Piano Sonata in A flat major, Op. 110 courts dramatic contrasts in a similar fashion, he misses a more obvious precedent within Beethoven's works for this multi-movement approach to a single design – namely the slow movement of the String Quartet in G major, Op. 18, No. 2. Here, too, a song-like outer frame, marked *Adagio cantabile*, is interrupted by a faster episode – in this case an *Allegro*. The two sections are also contrasted in metre (3/4 to 2/4), key (C major to F major), theme (a legato song-like theme to a series of scurrying staccato semiquavers) and texture (theme-plus-homophonic accompaniment to multilayered polyphony). When the Tempo I returns, it is elaborately adorned in the same manner as a da capo aria, but the intervening section does not belong in such a form. Its closest formal prototype, the two-tempo rondo, emerges into a faster tempo for the concluding part – not for its central section. The juxtaposition of tempos in Op. 18, No. 2 appears to be a clash of cultures – of song with counterpoint – the very same juxtaposition that Korsyn highlights in Op. 110.

The same clash is made manifest in Op. 132, in which archaism (modality) meets modernity (tonality). But the tonic-subdominant relationship between the two contrasting sections of Op. 18, No. 2 is altogether more functional than that of Op. 132. Here, the Lydian mode of the *Molto adagio* and the D major of the *Andante* represent two hermetically sealed worlds which do not interconnect. Though it is difficult to speak of tonal hierarchy in modal harmony, the two structural notes of the Lydian section – F and C (the first and fifth degrees) – are entirely absent from the *Andante*, where they are replaced by F sharp and C sharp. Beethoven exacerbates this conflict in the opening section by creating ambiguity around these structural notes, effecting what appears to be a 'cadence' into C major at the end of the second phrase (bars 11-12) before pulling back towards F once more with a modal close (maintaining B natural) in bars 23-24.

---

<sup>502</sup> Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets*, p. 254

<sup>503</sup> Korsyn, Kevin, 'J.W.N. Sullivan and the *Heiliger Dankgesang*: Questions of Meaning in Late Beethoven', from *Beethoven Forum*, Vol. 2 (December 1993), p. 159

But when Kerman suggests that these two worlds ‘do not mix’, he is not entirely correct, for these harmonic worlds are not quite as disparate as they may seem. The two worlds are connected to one another by the implied related key of D minor, which functions as the relative minor to F (the Lydian section) and the parallel minor to D major (the *Andante*). That is, they are but two chromatic inflections away from one another – a simple step in a fantasia-like world. These are wide gulfs in historical terms, jumping from the flat harmonic landscape of modal antiquity to the implicative world of modern tonality, but fantasia processes specialise in negotiating such dramatic leaps. To traverse such disparate harmonic realms simply by chromatic inflection, rather than a prolonged period of modulation (note the simple introduction of a C sharp in bar 30, and the return via C natural and F natural in bars 82-83) is a Bachian device imported from the fantasia. So, too, is the movement’s multisectional design, which elides apparently contradictory styles within a single overarching design. This is not to suggest that the *Heiliger Dankgesang* is a fantasia per se – simply that, like many of Beethoven’s slow movements, within the late works in particular, he draws upon fantasia processes to facilitate his developing fixation with musical contrast. Note the parallel here with the slow movement of the Ninth Symphony, whose double variation form oscillates between B flat major and D major (and, later, G major): connecting the two keys are the very same chromatic shifts, swapping C for C sharp, F for F sharp, as D minor (the mediant of B flat) swaps effortlessly for D major (the new tonic) between the two sections. Both keys share a common decisive tone – A – which functions as leading-note for B flat major and dominant for D major.

In Op. 132, the same common note highlights the intersection of the antiquity/modernity divide (bar 30), which Korsyn has shown functions as a common primary tone to link the structural voice-leading of the two sections together.<sup>504</sup> After each appearance of the hymn, an A major chord functions as a pivot. Beethoven highlights this point of connection with a trill on a<sup>2</sup> (bars 32-34) – a melodic detail that bears further scrutiny. Spitzer writes about Beethoven’s use of the trill in the late works: ‘Beethoven’s most radical recuperation of the particular is his positioning of the trill – seemingly the most marginal and decorative of musical materials – at the centre of his works. The trill is the epitome of Adorno’s *Floskel*: the empty cliché or flourish.’<sup>505</sup> Like the chromatic inflections that form a bridge between the Lydian mode and D major, the trill functions as an emblem of oscillation that signifies a pivotal point between the two opposing worlds. The two worlds may not ‘mix’, but they are closer to one another than it first appears. Joseph de Marliave writes that this movement ‘is the climax of the quartet and, in a way, the pivot upon which its spiritual inspiration turns.’<sup>506</sup> Like the *Cavatina*, the Heiliger

---

<sup>504</sup> Korsyn, ‘J.W.N. Sullivan and the *Heiliger Dankgesang*’, pp. 156-157

<sup>505</sup> Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*, p. 149

<sup>506</sup> de Marliave, Joseph, *Beethoven’s Quartets* (New York: Dover, 1961), p. 343

Dankgesang is the expressive centrepiece of the work as a whole, hinging upon the expressivity of contrast at its centre.

## Dislocation

The extreme contrasts of the *Heiliger Dankgesang* and the eerie ‘suspension of time’ at the heart of the *Cavatina* may be emblematic of Beethoven’s prioritisation of the slow movement in the late works, but it is not without precedent in his oeuvre. As early as the Piano Sonata in E flat major, Op. 7, Beethoven tackles similar questions of traditional formal planning. In all three works, the stylistic plurality and tonal exploration of the fantasia are very much in evidence. Lockwood writes of the first movement of Op. 7: ‘The flow of ideas in the exposition is so smooth that we realise only with some effort how different they are melodically, motivically, and rhythmically.’<sup>507</sup> Adorno also acknowledges the ‘inventive richness’ of this movement, noting the lack of transitional elements which contribute to music that is ‘pure becoming’. There are so many themes, he suggests, that the individual element is dissolved: ‘none can make itself autonomous’<sup>508</sup>. These fluidly-evolving themes are interspersed with rapid broken octaves, long glissandi scales, written-out tremolos and dramatic dynamic alternations, creating a movement that is, in Rosen’s words, ‘difficult’, both for the performer and for the analyst.<sup>509</sup>

But Beethoven also carries these fantasia-like impulses over into the slow movement, at the same time prefiguring the formal dislocation, tonal shifts and disembodied central episode that we witnessed in the *Cavatina*. Rosen writes: ‘Nothing like this had ever been heard before.’<sup>510</sup> I have shown elsewhere (see Chapter 2) that slow movements situated in keys brighter than the tonic are much more uncommon in Beethoven’s oeuvre than flatwards shifts, and that in many cases a slow movement in a brighter key may go on to develop formal problems (see, for example, the Allegretto of Op. 95). The *Largo* of Op. 7 is a similar case (with a slow movement in C major, to the work’s tonic of E flat major) and it, too, goes on to deliberately reject certain traditional tonal cues. As I showed in Chapter 2, Beethoven appears to juxtapose conflicting tonal markers of both ternary and sonata forms – setting up the expectation of a dominant modulation, which is continually thwarted by dramatic interruptions that instead send the central section to the flattened-submediant. Recall the leading-note F sharp in the bass (see Figure 2.12, bars 3-4) that falls away to F natural, instead of rising to the implied new tonic; this is followed by the incomplete tonic – leading-note - tonic figure in the melody (see Figure 2.13). It is perhaps the clearest example in his oeuvre of Beethoven ‘doing a Bach’ – feigning

---

<sup>507</sup> Lockwood, *Beethoven: The Music and the Life*, p. 106

<sup>508</sup> Adorno, *Beethoven*, p. 24, fr. 57

<sup>509</sup> Rosen, *Beethoven’s Piano Sonatas*, p. 130

<sup>510</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132

modulation to one key, before heading off in the direction of another. In turn, this creates another large-scale interruption – with one form interrupting another. Beethoven draws attention to this conflict of genres through the contrasting sections of the ternary form. It is worth taking a moment to look in more detail at the effect of these small- and large-scale interruptions, since it deepens our understanding of the relationship between the topic of dominant evasion explored previously, and the influence of the fantasia in question here.

In a manner befitting of ternary form, the A and B sections of the slow movement are clearly delineated thematically, with the central B section (bars 25-50) introducing a new *tenuto* melody and driving accompaniment that delineates itself from the frequent pauses of the A section. But instead of modulating to the dominant, as the aforementioned hints of G major might have suggested, the B section sits in the flat submediant key of A flat major. Moreover, this modulation itself is effected simply by means of a common tone, using the C in bar 24 as a pivot note between C major and A flat major. This method, a favourite of both C.P.E. Bach and Haydn, creates an abrupt transition: the A section closes with a strong perfect cadence in the tonic (C major) into bar 24, after which the two hands circle around the tonic in unison, effecting a 5-4-3-2-1 descent towards the new tonic of A flat in bar 25. There is no prepared dominant, and the harmony itself is only implied by the descending E flat-A flat melodic line. Nevertheless, these unison voices punctuate the texture, delineating the two sections from one another by means of a truncated transition, the same device that is used later before the recapitulation of the A section (bars 47-50).

This bold, unprepared swing to the flat submediant is reminiscent of C.P.E. Bach's advice that the composer should always seek to surprise the listener through modulation, particularly in the free fantasia where the tonal trajectory is less well-defined. Except that in this case the chromatic key Beethoven chooses is the 'wrong' one: like the move to C flat major in the *Cavatina*, the move to A flat major here has the effect of an overstep, just a semitone higher than the dominant modulation we were led to expect, but rather more remote in terms of its tonal relationship – a factor that gives this central section a somewhat unstable, disembodied status. This instability is mirrored by the B section's incongruous accompaniment: a *moto perpetuo* of broken chords that continue to tick over mechanically beneath the broad, *sempre tenuto* lines of the right hand's chordal melody. This strange splicing of textures adds to the sense of fracture in this section, with the left hand's chromatic octaves in bar 32 laid bare to emphasise this dichotomy.

While the B section is abruptly introduced, it appears initially to be structurally stable. The B section begins to outline a neat ternary structure that is divided into clear four-bar units. Opening in A flat major, the first 4 (2+2) bar unit closes with a strong V<sup>7</sup>-I perfect cadence in bar 28, before the central unit of the ternary structure modulates to the relative minor (F minor) to



cadence in bar 31. Thence the outer four-bar unit returns in D flat major (the subdominant), leading to the liquidation process that begins in bar 35 and precedes the recapitulation of the large-scale A section. Although all this circles around the ‘wrong’ key of A flat major, its internal phrasal and harmonic structure is remarkably stable. But the liquidation process is not as straightforward as we might expect: the disruptive F sharps return (recall the unresolved F sharps of the A section) in bars 39-40, descending to F natural in bar 41, accompanied by huge registral contrasts – apparently exacerbating the disjuncture introduced by the abortive G-F sharp unit of bar 9. In turn, these leads to a surprising harmonic diversion that passes through B flat major (bar 42) and C minor (bar 44), before cycling through thirds in bars 45-46, marked by dramatic *sforzandi*, to reach a diminished seventh in bar 47. Finally, the chromatic downwards spiral reaches F sharp in bar 50 – and for the first time this F sharp rises to G, paving the way for a return to the tonic in bar 51. But there is one final twist in the tail within the recapitulation: the B section is recapitulated in the tonic (and shifted into the left hand, bar 74), in what amounts to one final gesture to sonata form. Across the whole form, the dominant thus remains an elusive symbol of suppression and is the catalyst for the various interruptions and dislocations that pervade the movement.

While both the *Cavatina* and the Largo from Op. 7 may not fit in with our ‘traditional’ perceptions of ternary structures, and the harmonic structures with which they are commonly associated, the widespread occurrence of such dominant evasion across Beethoven’s works indicates that this need not be considered a ‘deformation’ of a normative type, but rather a characteristic of lyric forms, something our current terminology struggles to deal with. It is disappointing that in their otherwise comprehensive surveys of sonata forms, neither Caplin, nor Hepokoski and Darcy devote any attention to lyrical sonata structures and their tonal planning, since it is clear from these analyses that such unusual tonal excursions are in fact indicative of lyric genres. Moreover, it appears to be a trait that may be traced back to the fantasia, where more distant tonality – particularly trending flatwards – is typically explored at the expense of more normative tonal areas. This is bolstered by the presence of dramatic, form-severing interruptions, which generate sudden shifts in texture, dynamics and musical topic, and imbue the movement with a sense of improvisation and fantasy-like fluidity. But the influence of the fantasia in Op. 7 goes much further than this: alongside the topics that are spliced together to create something of a musical montage, more subtle allusions to the fantasia help to make sense of some of the work’s ‘difficult’ elements. The use of the flat submediant key for the central section, for example, may have been influenced by Haydn’s own predilection for mediant keys, but it also has its roots in the fantasia tradition. While Beethoven may have chosen the key just a semitone higher than the dominant for its disorienting aural effect, its position as an upper neighbour-note key to the dominant also reminds us of C.P.E. Bach’s own

advice on modulation. Bach suggests that in the fantasia one should use chromatic, neighbour key relationships wherever possible, since this quick modulatory step introduces an entirely new realm of harmonic possibilities. Although the dominant is never established in this movement, its presence is so strongly implied that the shift to A flat major is both strangely familiar and altogether dislocating.

In his extensive exploration of C.P.E. Bach's fantasias, Matthew Head notes that although the fantasia may fall into any number of musical categories, in general it is characterised by three 'fundamental liberties': those of time, tonality and the arrangement of ideas. These three 'liberties' are exploited to dramatic effect in the Op. 7 sonata: time, by the disruption of metre and phrase structure; tonality, by the suppression of the structural dominant and its replacement with mediant keys; and the arrangement of ideas, by the strong topical contrasts and dramatic interruptions both across the movement as a whole and within the individual sections themselves. Although, as Head writes, 'the idea of a fantasia style is untenable because fantasias come in all styles'<sup>511</sup>, I would argue that the various 'problems' that infiltrate the slow movement of the Op. 7 sonata are characteristic of Beethoven's absorption of Bach's fantasy ideals. Moreover, it is through a close analysis of the work that one might come to understand its 'difficulty' not as problematic but as emblematic of a new kind of musical expression. Rather than representing a formal quirk or 'deformation', even the fantasia is grounded in certain conventions, as Salzer notes: 'Such adventure, no matter how bold, ultimately rests on a foundation of tonal coherence.'<sup>512</sup> The move to A flat major, while superficially 'problematic', is founded on its neighbour-note relationship to the dominant, which hangs over the movement as a strong (albeit suppressed) tonal marker. The sonata's 'problems', therefore, need not necessarily be considered problems at all, but rather as indicative of a widening approach to form, one that embraces the influence of the fantasia as a strong precedent for the developing slow movement.

## Expression and Effect

The fantasia's lineage from Bach to Beethoven may represent the fulfilment of a pre-Classical ideal that is all but lost in the 'normative' Allegros of the Classical period, which typically celebrate poise and elegance above disorder and fluidity. As Ratner asserts: 'Symmetry, as a quality in art, was admired in the latter part of the eighteenth century.'<sup>513</sup> But as self-expression re-emerged as a celebrated ideal towards the mid-nineteenth century (as

---

<sup>511</sup> Head, *Fantasy in the Instrumental Music of C.P.E. Bach*, p. 12

<sup>512</sup> Salzer, Felix, 'Haydn's Fantasia from the String Quartet, Op. 76, N. 6', from *Music Form 4* (1976), p. 161

<sup>513</sup> Ratner, 'Eighteenth-Century Theories of Musical Period Structure', p. 443

explored in Chapter 4) so too did the fantasia return to prominence, becoming integrated with the newly 'Romantic' style that turned inwards upon itself. The fantasia's excursions into an altogether 'different world' (note the connection with the suspension of time at the heart of Op. 130) became a strong model for the Romantic 'mood piece' in which, with the increasing emergence of self-reflection and intimate expression in music, one must probe every aspect of one's character.

This leaves us, however, with an apparent gulf in the history of the fantasia, in which it became dormant for half a century or more until Beethoven once again took up its reins. For some writers, this may have been no great loss, since the fantasia represented for them a somewhat 'lesser' form of composition. David Schulenberg, for example, perceives the paratactic structure of the fantasia as 'little more than one thing after another'<sup>514</sup>, while Rosen has suggested that the fluid expressivity in C.P.E. Bach's works is evidence of a composer out of his depth: 'Carl Philipp Emanuel's [music] was expressive, brilliant, continuously surprising, and often incoherent.'<sup>515</sup> But more accurately the influence of the fantasia continues its presence throughout the Classical period, nestled in the works of other composers within the free-ranging form of the slow movement.

As Solomon rightly suggests, with our 'lenses adjusted to Beethoven's heroic style', we may often overlook the fact that many of Beethoven's most prevalent and iconic ideas can frequently be traced back to his predecessors and contemporaries. What is more, given the persistent preoccupation with Beethoven's 'middle' period of works, we often valorise goals and endings, thereby obscuring our view of the path that takes us there. As a consequence: 'We are often impelled to perceive the classical slow movement as a transitional stage in an overarching narrative that terminates in an apotheosis or other transcendent state of being.'<sup>516</sup> Solomon's own findings support the claims I have made in the preceding analyses: that the slow movement is often the expressive centrepiece of the work, rather than a transitional stage on the path to the finale, and that this may be reinforced by moments of rupture within the slow movement. Indeed, Solomon shows that this is not just the case for Beethoven, but can be identified in many of Mozart's Adagios and Andantes, in which calm, contemplative states give way to rupture and the emergence of more troubled episodes of anguish. His analysis of the slow movement of Mozart's Piano Sonata in A minor K. 310, bears striking functional similarities to the *Adagio grazioso* of Beethoven's Op. 31, No. 1, discussed earlier. Both movements are in a singing style, with accompanimental repetition, a stable sense of pulse and a 'comforting intensity' deriving from the placid song form. But like the *Sturm und Drang* episode at the centre of Op. 31, No. 1,

---

<sup>514</sup> Schulenberg, David, cited by Head, *Fantasy in the Instrumental Music of C.P.E. Bach*, p. 19

<sup>515</sup> Rosen, Charles, *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven* (London: Faber, 1971), p. 44

<sup>516</sup> Solomon, *Mozart: A Life*, p. 206

the floodgates also open in K. 310, unleashing a torrent that injects a new darkness into the movement. This is made manifest through similar devices: sudden, striking contrasts of dynamics and register, piercing dissonances and chromaticism, relentless and turbulent modulations and an increase in surface tempo all add to the effect. But once the energy of this episode is spent, like Op. 31, No. 1, calm is restored and the A section returns, but not without bearing the hallmarks of what has passed and demonstrating a state of transformation. New ornamentation and melodic elaboration signify the journey that the movement has undergone during the turbulent rupture, imbuing the music with a new sense of growth and maturity, the memory of the pain only adding to the heightened sense of bliss that ensues.

W. Dean Sutcliffe has also written about similar passages in slow movements by Haydn, suggesting that while such stylistic polarity was not always greeted favourably by critics of the period, it remains a characteristic trait of his slow movements. He writes:

‘This slow-movement manner is characterised by unusual gestures or oddly timed events but largely retains an equanimity of tone and a polished style of delivery. Such attributes produce an expressive ambivalence that is in fact one of the strongest attributes of Haydn’s art, and it takes a particularly challenging form in the 1770s.’<sup>517</sup>

Sutcliffe reports on a number of slow movements in Haydn’s oeuvre, particularly clustering around works from the 1770s, that feature passages ‘out of keeping with most of what has gone before.’<sup>518</sup> These interpolations are typically incongruous with the ‘calm, contemplative’ states with which the slow movement is more readily associated, and are reminiscent of the interruptions that characterise the Beethoven and Mozart examples cited previously. But the effect, for Sutcliffe, is altogether different from what we have witnessed elsewhere, resulting in ‘a familiar Haydnesque game of problems and problem-solving... Its incongruity with the preceding music lays it open to comic interpretation.’<sup>519</sup> Rather than plumbing hitherto unexplored expressive depths, as in the *Beklemmt* section of Beethoven’s *Cavatina*, or in the slow movement of Mozart’s Piano Sonata in A minor, K. 310, the effect of Haydn’s interruptions is more ambivalent. Sutcliffe suggests it is altogether more difficult to judge the tone of Haydn’s of these interpolated passages: ‘This leaves us potentially with a strange combination of affective attributes: sensibility and comedy, elevation and calculation.’<sup>520</sup> What Sutcliffe describes is a composer reluctant to ‘stand still’ and a certain impatience for uninterrupted lyricism – a characteristic that could just as easily be attributed to Beethoven. In one extreme

---

<sup>517</sup> Sutcliffe, ‘Ambivalence in Haydn’s Symphonic Slow Movements of the 1770s’, p. 85

<sup>518</sup> Ibid., p. 95

<sup>519</sup> Ibid.

<sup>520</sup> Ibid., p. 98

example, the *Andante* of Haydn's Symphony No. 52, Sutcliffe notes that Haydn takes the element of surprise to new levels:

'Nothing could more obstruct listener absorption than its unparalleled feat of failing to offer a single functional perfect cadence throughout... If there are no proper cadences, then there can be no proper sections: the movement is therefore in a sense formless, even though the recurrences of the opening material clearly create some sort of structure.'<sup>521</sup>

Haydn's own 'imaginative play' nevertheless bears all the hallmarks of the fantasia's style, in which C.P.E. Bach recommends moving 'audaciously from one affect to another'<sup>522</sup>, though Haydn appears to be more concerned with the effect of surprise on the listener, than on a deepening level of expression. As Sutcliffe writes: 'The focus is less on expression and more on discourse, on the mechanisms that underpin what we believe to be natural or touching or melancholy in expression. Haydn seems above all interested in perception—in what it means to sit and listen.'<sup>523</sup> The effect of all these formal ruptures, however, is to make the music 'speak', and to transgress the normal boundaries of form. As C.P.E. Bach writes: 'It is a distinct merit of the fantasia that... it can accomplish the aims of the recitative at the keyboard.'<sup>524</sup> Where else, other than the slow movement, could such dramatic and imaginative plays with formal structuring take place?

In each case these 'ruptured' slow movements represent a stretching of form at the centre of the work, positing the slow movement as place of unhindered invention that draws the work's centre of gravity inwards. Such forms may not be adequately conveyed by our traditional terminology, but this is because they typically represent moments of new, and even ground-breaking, formal manipulations that were previously assigned to the fantasia. This 'pattern-breaking' allows the slow movement to draw upon different layers of musical expression, giving the impression that while the outer movements may be well-honed and designed, the slow movement offers a snapshot of the composer composing freely. As Sisman suggests:

'We as listeners become privy to the composer/performer's search for material, indeed the process of invention (*inventio*)... In a fantasy, the invention of topics and arguments comes to the fore and one witnesses a piece creating itself as it goes along; less to the fore is the second stage in the rhetorical compositional process.'<sup>525</sup>

---

<sup>521</sup> Sutcliffe, 'Ambivalence in Haydn's Symphonic Slow Movements of the 1770s', p.110

<sup>522</sup> C.P.E. Bach, *Versuch*, p. 153

<sup>523</sup> Sutcliffe, 'Ambivalence in Haydn's Symphonic Slow Movements', p.109

<sup>524</sup> C.P.E. Bach, *Versuch*, p. 153

<sup>525</sup> Sisman, Elaine, 'After the Heroic Style: *Fantasia* and the "Characteristic" Sonatas of 1809', from *Beethoven Forum*, Vol. 6 (1998), p. 71

On an expressive level, this only heightens the importance of the slow movement, since the outer movements become distanced as more objective constructs, as Solomon writes: ‘Some opening movements are crafted to serve as prologues to an exploration of feeling and subjectivity and the weight of the composition resides in the slow movement.’<sup>526</sup> More specifically, the preceding analyses suggest that the weight of the composition resides not just in the slow movement – i.e. at the centre of the work – but, at the centre of the slow movement’s ternary arch, or the point of rupture. This has consequences for our understanding of the expressive drive of the work as a whole. If the weight of the composition resides at the point of rupture then this suggests that the work follows an expressive arch, or formal crescendo, of which the centre of the slow movement is the highpoint. At the same time, if the slow movement represents the point of highest tension or heightened expressivity, then what follows must generate a release. The slow movement therefore acts as an expressive pivot – at once providing a point of culmination and climax, while also creating a teleological drive towards the finale.

The dual-aspect slow movement also has a small-scale, internal partner: to be found in the form of the cadenza. As Denis Matthews writes: ‘The traditional cadenza fulfilled both a structural and a psychological need: a place was required where the soloist could flourish unhindered’.<sup>527</sup> Here, as in the fantasia, the soloist (or composer) is encouraged to extemporise and elaborate freely, with abrupt modulations, textural shifts and thematic variety characteristic of this unconstrained formal space. As the name suggests, the cadenza is an elaboration of a cadence: a moment of arrival that is deliberately highlighted – even celebrated – as ‘a function of conclusion on a high structural level.’<sup>528</sup> But while celebrating a point of arrival, the cadenza also represents a parenthesis in the musical structure, as Richards writes: ‘In the cadenza the drive of the movement is temporarily suspended, and the tight temporal fabric of the formal organisation is split open by digression.’<sup>529</sup> The cadenza thus represents a passage into an alternative expressive world, one that is both free from the constraints of formal conventions and conducted ‘outside’ the normal passage of the work. Drabkin cites Daniel Gottlob Türk, an eighteenth-century theorist who suggests the cadenza is ‘musically analogous to a dream’, which, if successful, ought to ‘give the impression of “ordered disorder”’.<sup>530</sup> We are reminded of the ‘otherworldly’ *Beklemmt* passage in Op. 130 and of Adorno’s suggestion that

---

<sup>526</sup> Solomon, *Mozart: A Life*, p. 206

<sup>527</sup> Matthews, Denis, ‘Beethoven and the Cadenza’, from *The Musical Times*, Vol. 111, No. 1534, Beethoven Bicentenary Issue (December 1970), p. 1206

<sup>528</sup> Swain, Joseph P., ‘Form and Function of the Classical Cadenza’, from *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Winter, 1988), p. 30

<sup>529</sup> Richards, *The Free Fantasia and the Musical Picturesque*, p. 138

<sup>530</sup> Drabkin, William, citing Türk in ‘An Interpretation of Musical Dreams: Towards a Theory of the Mozart Piano Concerto Cadenza’, from *Wolfgang Amadè Mozart: Essays on his Life and Music*, ed. Sadie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 163

authentic artworks are often forced to 'step outside of themselves.'<sup>531</sup> But at the same time, cadenzas are necessarily transitory: while they dramatise the imminent point of arrival, they are passageways to the fulfilment of the cadence that ensues. Like the slow movement, they are both parenthetical and wholly integral. Drabkin terms this the 'cadenza paradox': 'The cadenza is essential to the performance of [the] work but is not actually a part of it.'<sup>532</sup> As Matthew Bribitzer-Stull writes, its categorisation is complex:

'Specifically, the cadenza is heard simultaneously as a local, harmonic event and as a global, formal event. On the local level, it may either prolong one harmony or progress from one to another. On the global level, it can serve a variety of formal functions: highlighting salient cadences; opening a space for virtuosic display; and developing, relating, and rehearsing elements of the concerto movement proper. The cadenza's dual function grants it a potential far exceeding the simple characterization as parenthesis.'<sup>533</sup>

This link between the slow movement and cadenza is most clearly made manifest in J.S. Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 in G major, BWV 1048, in which the 'slow movement' itself constitutes just two chords and a caesura, upon which the performers are invited to improvise freely. Indeed, as the practice of implementing cadenzas became more widespread during the Baroque era, central slow movements in the works of composers such as Telemann, J.S. Bach and Handel were typically shorter in length than those of the Classical period, and centred around an improvised cadenza. This suggests that at one time, the two may have been to some extent interchangeable.

As Joseph P. Swain has shown, it was some time before the Classical cadenza took shape:

'Evidently, aside from the basic conception of the cadenza as an elaborated cadence, there was no consensus about what form that elaboration should take until late in the eighteenth century, when the cadenza had gained the status of a performance tradition. Even then, the practice maintained considerable variety, evident in the cadenzas of Mozart and Beethoven alone.'<sup>534</sup>

What is notable, however, is the shift away from improvised cadenzas and the growing tendency for composers, particularly during the Classical era to write their own suggestions. Many of these may often be disregarded by performers in favour of alternatives, but by the early nineteenth century it was common practice for composers to transcribe their own intentions for

---

<sup>531</sup> Adorno, cited by Hoeckner, *Programming the Absolute*, pp. 29-30

<sup>532</sup> Drabkin, 'An Interpretation of Musical Dream', p. 162

<sup>533</sup> Bribitzer-Stull, Matthew, Abstract for 'The Cadenza as Parenthesis: An Analytic Approach', from *Journal of Music Theory*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (Fall, 2006)

<sup>534</sup> Swain, 'Form and Function of the Classical Cadenza', p. 31

cadenzas. Mozart left cadenzas for almost all of his piano concertos and despite improvising regularly in performance, Beethoven was also persuaded by his publishers to leave transcriptions for his own cadenzas – coincidentally (or perhaps not), these were completed in the same year as his two Sonatas *quasi una fantasia* Opp. 78 and 79 and the *Fantasy*, Op. 77 (1809). Drabkin has also shown that, like the fantasia, the cadenza is designed to give the *impression* of improvisation: ‘All writers agree that the cadenza should sound spontaneous, regardless of whether it is improvised on the spot, sketched or fully written out... The ideal performer ought to extemporise (or feign extemporisation) on the basis that he or she is reflecting upon the performance that has just taken place.’<sup>535</sup> The cadenza thus mirrors the fantasia’s quest for fluidity and compositional freedom, despite also adhering to a planned framework. A written-out cadenza cannot be otherwise, as Drabkin notes: ‘The moment one sets pen to paper, one must have at least some rational basis for proceeding.’<sup>536</sup> These plans frequently incorporate fantasia traits: sequential progressions, the iteration and re-iteration of a single idea, free and varied rhythmic patterning, scalar and arpeggiated figuration, registral leaps, cadential evasion, chromaticism and trills, all sewn together to create ‘a fleeting succession of ideas’.<sup>537</sup>

If the effect of the cadenza – and of fantasia-like excursions in the slow movement – is to give the impression of spontaneity, and with it a sense of the composer ‘speaking’ and ruminating untethered, then one further formal precursor may come into play. The *ricercare*, whose title literally means ‘to search out’, shares with the fantasia a desire to explore freely a particular motive or idea, shifting the fragment through different colours and shades to tease out its possibilities. But while one branch of the *ricercare* led on to such free-form genres as the fantasia, the idea of ‘searching out’ also assumed contrapuntal implications and generated fugal forms in which the ‘subject’ or idea was explored through imitation and counterpoint. It is certainly no coincidence that the fantasia originally served as a prelude to a fugal movement – for example in J.S. Bach’s Chromatic Fantasia in D minor, BWV 903 – though for C.P.E. Bach, this type of fantasia constituted a more restricted form of writing: ‘Because such an improvisation is to be regarded as a prelude which prepares the listener for the content of the piece that follows, it is more restricted than the fantasia, from which nothing more is required than a display of the keyboardist’s skill.’<sup>538</sup>

The two may seem polar opposites – one strict and the other fluid – but they share the same basic premise, and are not as disparate as one might first expect. Both embody the concept of *Erzählung* (from the verb *erzählen* – ‘to narrate’): expanding upon and developing a given

---

<sup>535</sup> Drabkin, ‘An Interpretation of Musical Dreams’, p. 162

<sup>536</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>537</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165

<sup>538</sup> C.P.E. Bach, *Versuch*, Vol. 2, p. 41



subject. Head links them within the frame of the *stylus phantasticus*, a term which originally referred to works conceived freely and without restraint, particularly as applied to contrapuntal works.<sup>539</sup> The style was characterised by the elision of contrasting sections, the evasion of logical goals and sudden changes in direction, although the emphasis on contrapuntal works gradually waned and the term soon applied to a wide range of genres. Indeed, Gregory Butler traces the connections between the fantasia and a fugal style back as far as the likes of Josquin des Prez, demonstrating that works assigned the title of ‘fantasia’ at this time were largely fugal, imitative and sequentially repetitive in design. His descriptions of the form portray a genre that is both formally fluid and, paradoxically, mechanistically regular: ‘The fantasia, then, is seen basically as something which is imaginary, something unreal and intangible. Because of its mechanistic regularity, it is looked upon as a purely artificial contrivance, an inherently unnatural progression springing directly from the imagination’.<sup>540</sup> The peculiar mix of styles that Butler describes reminds us of the fine line between rigour and freedom that characterises the fantasia; as Schenker notes: ‘Art can only express chaos through its strict media!’<sup>541</sup> Artistic freedom is largely contextual and relies upon a framework to operate within; as Schiller suggests, aesthetic freedom may only be achieved by triumphing over technical form: ‘Freedom needs rules to kick against’<sup>542</sup>. We are reminded of C.P.E. Bach’s advice throughout his *Versuch* that fantasias should be underpinned by a strong theoretical framework, and in particular of his grounding in the eighteenth-century theory of *regola dell’ottava*.

Indeed, a closer look at Beethoven’s fantasias suggests that he too understood two layers to the fantasia, coupling surface fluidity with elements of a more ‘learned’ style. Among the more lyrical topics explored in his *Fantasy*, Op. 77, for example, Beethoven also includes two telling references to the *ricercare*: a brief fugato passage that is interrupted by two caesuras (see Figure 5.8) and a more extensive two-part canonic texture – which Sisman calls a ‘false fugato’<sup>543</sup> (see Figure 5.9).

---

<sup>539</sup> Head, *Fantasy in the Instrumental Music of C.P.E. Bach*, p. 79

<sup>540</sup> Butler, Gregory, ‘The Fantasia as Musical Image’, from *The Music Quarterly*, Vol. 6 (1974), p. 614

<sup>541</sup> Schenker, cited by Brown, ‘Haydn’s Chaos: Genesis and Genre’, p. 19

<sup>542</sup> Schiller, cited by Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy*, p. 259

<sup>543</sup> Sisman, ‘After the Heroic Style’, p. 77

Figure 5.8

Beethoven *Fantasy*, Op. 77, bars 32-39



Figure 5.9

Beethoven, *Fantasy*, Op. 77, bars 120-131



For Sisman, this mix of genres within Beethoven's *Fantasy* is simply idiomatic of the changing moods of the fantasia, which 'swings back and forth between styles'<sup>544</sup>. But more accurately, I would suggest that such references may hark back to the fantasia's twin roots and to Beethoven's fascination with C.P.E. Bach. We know, for example, that Beethoven immersed himself in Bach's writings during the time he composed both the *Fantasy*, Op. 77 and the three 'interlinked' sonatas – Opp. 78, 79 and 81a. According to A.W. Thayer: 'During the tedious weeks of this miserable summer [1809], Beethoven was busy selecting and copying in order extracts from the theoretical works of C.P.E. Bach'<sup>545</sup>. This was also the same year that Beethoven committed his concerto cadenzas to paper, and Matthews draws our attention to the stormy fugato passage amidst the cadenza for the Concerto No. 3 in B flat major, asking: 'Had he any inkling at this time, as an acutely key-conscious composer, that B flat would be the venue of his

<sup>544</sup> Sisman, 'After the Heroic Style', p. 77

<sup>545</sup> Thayer, Alexander Wheelock, *Thayer's Life of Beethoven*, ed. Forbes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 467

two greatest fugal adventures, the *Hammerklavier* and the *Grosse Fuge*?<sup>546</sup> Brown suggests further links between the slow movement and the *ricercare*, noting that the latter is characterised by its *alla breve* metre, slow tempo, soft dynamics, low pitches and mournful sighing figures.<sup>547</sup> Beethoven's absorption of the fantasy style is thus revealed to be double-edged, at once both fluid and precise, both lyrical and mechanical. We are reminded of the juxtaposition of styles in the Piano Sonata in A major, Op. 110, explored in Chapter 4, where aria and fugue sit side by side as hollowed out emblems of Baroque convention. This, too, signals the presence of the fantasia – as Beethoven extracts and distils the two constituent components of the genre.

While Op. 110 may represent the fantasia at its most abstract, and the fugato insertions in the *Fantasy*, Op. 77 reveal tantalising glimpses of a genre grounded equally in mechanical rigour and improvisatory fluidity, Beethoven foregrounds this relationship to dramatic effect in the slow movement of the Piano Sonata in E major, Op. 109. In this elaborate variation set Beethoven not only segues the florid, fantasia-like figuration of Variation 4 directly into an extensive fugato, more importantly the set as a whole draws our attention to Beethoven's celebration and reinterpretation of Baroque practices. Fantasy, aria, chorale and variation are all present – genres which are intrinsically linked with the slow movement, and which are juxtaposed here with a fugal style in a revaluation of the archaism of these Baroque idioms. When Richard Kramer suggests that song and fugue feature in Beethoven's late works as 'the ruins of genre' he underestimates Beethoven. For although these appear to be fossilised relics of an outdated era, here in Op. 109, Beethoven celebrates these pillars of the Baroque and makes them newly relevant for the Classical style. In the world of sonata form, they may indeed seem like fossils – irrelevant and archaic in a form-driven world – but in the slow movement they are the markers of lyricism.

Reviewing Op. 109 in the Berliner *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* in February 1824, A.B. Marx expresses ambivalence concerning the work's success, an account that is worth citing at length for its intriguing insights:

'The present sonata in E major will not become familiar until one has repeated it often out of some inner impulse. It begins in the manner of a prelude, as if one were testing a harp to see if it were in tune. An Adagio, with a noble, sad, but consoling melody, interrupts the opening, makes strange (almost convulsive) enharmonic shifts, and returns playfully to the first prelude, somewhat as though this idea had pleased its inventor. He continues the figure in an interesting manner and then takes up the theme of the Adagio once more, which however again moves consolingly back into the Prelude-form and with this closes sentimentally. The reviewer must

---

<sup>546</sup> Matthews, 'Beethoven and the Cadenza', p. 1206

<sup>547</sup> Brown, 'Haydn's Chaos: Genesis and Genre', p. 50

admit, however, that he has not found a principal idea [*leitende Idee*] in the entire first movement; it must consist then of the fact that the illustrious singer wished to divert himself by playing (there is very pleasant piano-writing in this movement), but that it does not entirely succeed for him. Actually, the entire movement is somewhat restrained and, in spite of the lovely places, somewhat unsatisfying.<sup>548</sup>

Though this review was written when Marx was still rather young (and perhaps inexperienced), several features of his account are particularly striking. His complaint that he cannot find 'a principal idea in the entire first movement' and that the work will not become familiar 'until one has repeated it often' leads us straight to C.P.E. Bach. E. Eugene Helm has written about Bach's predilection for 'non-tunes', suggesting that Bach 'will do anything to ensure that nobody is going to go around humming his melodies.'<sup>549</sup> While Helm's account may be overly-critical of Bach's melodic facilities, for Fox, Helm 'highlights Bach's innovative "post-Baroque but anti-Classical" concept of melody'<sup>550</sup> – precisely the style Beethoven appears to pursue in Op. 109. Moreover, Marx specifically identifies elements of fantasy in the *Adagio* melody of the first movement which, he says, 'interrupts' the opening, making 'strange (almost convulsive) enharmonic shifts, which are quickly dismissed and set aside.' These lyrical outbursts are unequivocally out of place in this opening *Vivace* and partly explains why Marx finds the movement 'somehow unsatisfying'.

He is not the only one to find its inconsistencies somewhat puzzling. For Czerny, 'this interesting movement is more of a fantasia than a sonata'<sup>551</sup>, while contemporary writer William Meredith suggests: 'the movement stands with one foot in both worlds – a sonata with the themes of a fantasia or a fantasia with the tonal plan of a sonata.'<sup>552</sup> As Meredith shows, Beethoven himself acknowledged its fantasia roots, writing next to a sketch for the opening theme: 'descends to c-sharp minor and in a Fantasia closes in that key'.<sup>553</sup> Though the C sharp minor conclusion was later abandoned, the imprint of the fantasia remains, not only in the swirling figuration and dramatic dynamic alternations of the *Adagio espressivo* but, as Marston has shown, in the distant key relationships explored through the composing out of the central g sharp-b motive.<sup>554</sup>

---

<sup>548</sup> A.B. Marx, cited by Meredith, William, 'The Origins of Beethoven's Op. 109', from *The Musical Times*, Vol. 126, No. 1714 (Dec., 1985), p. 713

<sup>549</sup> Helm, E. Eugene, cited by Fox, Pamela, 'The Stylistic Anomalies of Bach's Nonconstancy', p. 110

<sup>550</sup> Fox, Ibid., pp. 111-112

<sup>551</sup> Czerny, Carl, *On the proper performance of all Beethoven's works for the piano*, ed. P. Badura-Skoda (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1963), p. 59

<sup>552</sup> Meredith, 'The Origins of Beethoven's Op. 109', p. 716

<sup>553</sup> Beethoven, cited by Meredith, 'The Origins of Beethoven's Op. 109', p. 716.

<sup>554</sup> See Marston, Nicholas, 'Schenker and Forte Reconsidered: Beethoven's Sketches for the Piano Sonata in E, Op. 109', from *19th-Century Music*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Summer, 1986), pp. 24-42

Marston's invaluable study of the sketches for Op. 109 also has repercussions for our understanding of the slow movement. While I showed in Chapter 3 that Beethoven's slow movements often share material with outer movements, and that finales may resolve stray issues from earlier in the work, Marston demonstrates a level of interconnectivity between the first and third movements of Op. 109 that is unprecedented in Beethoven's oeuvre. When Marx suggests that the first movement is 'somewhat unsatisfying', he appears to refer to the peculiar mix of styles and formal design. But Marston demonstrates that the movement is not just stylistically 'unsatisfying' but formally incomplete at a background level – the oscillation between G sharp and B, and the completion of the fundamental line, remaining unresolved when the movement reaches the fermata at bar 99. That the movement segues directly into the *Prestissimo*, still oscillating between G sharp and B in the melody, reinforces its unsatisfactory closure. In fact, Marston reveals that the problems are not resolved until the very end of the slow movement. He writes: 'What was left incomplete in the first movement is completed here; the arch structure is expressed with the utmost clarity and simplicity.'<sup>555</sup>

While Marston's account is compelling, it is also somewhat incomplete: it is not just the gap between B and G sharp that is fulfilled, finally allowing the completion of the three-note fundamental line in the final bar of the finale, but also the contextualisation of the fantasia outbursts. Earlier, I suggested that moments of rupture may reinforce the slow movement as an expressive highpoint, while simultaneously providing the drive for resolution and the dissipation of tension in what follows. Op. 109 appears to represent an inversion of these principles, since the point of rupture takes place in the first movement, a *Vivace*, and it is the slow movement that provides the point of resolution. But note that these fantasia ruptures in the *Vivace* are not 'fast ruptures' – they have not been integrated into the tempo of the opening movement; instead, they are deliberately delineated by their tempo, *Adagio*. As such, they appear like 'calling cards' to the slow movement, signifying an event that takes place outwith the realms of this opening movement. A variation finale, as I showed in Chapter 3, may typically inherit the problems of the work (as in the Fifth Symphony, or String Quartet in E flat major, Op. 74) and seek to resolve these through a process of transformation. While Marston has shown that the finale in Op. 109 inherits the incomplete fundamental line and allows its resolution, so too are the disruptive fantasy insertions recontextualised within a series of variations upon a Baroque theme. It proves to be a summatory movement – not just within Op. 109 but within Beethoven's instrumental oeuvre as a whole – that brings together the disparate characteristics that make up the slow movement and unites them under the umbrella of a Baroque style.

The theme of the variations is a Baroque chorale founded, as Marston has shown, on the same motivic building-blocks as the opening movement. Although the theme derives its chorale-

---

<sup>555</sup> Marston, 'Schenker and Forte Reconsidered', p. 36

like topic in part from the chordal texture, this is also supported by the rhythmic change of harmony on each beat of the bar. In almost every bar in which the sarabande rhythm appears (crotchet-dotted crotchet-quaver), however, the only harmonic alteration across the first and second beats is a new inversion of the same chord (see bars 1, 3, 5, 9, 11, 13 and 15). This creates a sense of stasis on the second beat of these bars, drawing further emphasis to the rhythmically 'long' second beat. The rather limited range of the melody, meanwhile, reinforces the perception that this is a chorale that could be sung – only the brief  $e^1$  in bar 11 giving some hint of another possible registral world that might be opened up in the ensuing variations. Sure enough, this is exactly what Beethoven does in Variation 1, not only transferring the melody itself up an octave but also increasing the range of the melody across the variation to nearly two and a half octaves, compared with only a tenth in the original theme. The sense of expansion is also signified by Beethoven's decision to pick up on the descending fifth figure (previously introduced in bar 5 of the theme) instead of the descending third as the main melodic unit of this variation. The harmonic progression in this variation is also simplified, now outlining a one-per-bar rate of harmonic change that both 'speeds up' the implied metrical pulse and emphasises the move away from the sarabande rhythms towards a new waltz-like topic. With a clearly delineated texture suggesting a melodic instrument and supporting accompaniment, we hear implications of a dance movement from a Baroque instrumental sonata.

In the next variation, the Baroque tour continues: alternating notes between the two hands create what is effectively one single continuous melodic line – a drastic change in texture from the original chordal theme, and one that invokes the style of Bachian preludes. By contrast with the preceding variation, the two hands are effectively united through this intertwined melodic writing, though the notes of the theme itself are exclusive to the right hand, the left hand largely defining the basic harmonic outline. However, this texture changes dramatically at the onset of the A section repeat (bar 9), where a chordal accompaniment is reinstated in the left hand and a short, two-part Baroque-like canon appears in rising sequence in the left. But what may amount to a brief allusion to a Prelude and Fugue coupling is a cut short after just four bars, with the reinstatement of the continuous semiquaver motion, this time fleshed out by chords. If the Baroque topic is strong in Variation 2, then it is reinforced in Variation 3 – a two-part invention in which the theme is freely exchanged between the two hands. Beethoven also plays upon internal Baroque devices, complementing the appearance of the theme in one hand with its inversion in the other, a 'trick' he manages to maintain almost note-for-note throughout the A section and its repeat. The rhythmic values of the chorale theme are no longer evident, seeming to continue the semiquaver motion of the previous variation, this time within the context of a 2/4 time signature (the first time signature change of the movement).

In fact, it is from this vantage point that we are now able to understand Beethoven's gradual and subtle diminution process across the set of variations, proceeding from the crotchets within the original theme, to predominantly quaver movement in Variation 1, 'interrupted' semiquaver motion in Variation 2 (in the sense that it is not continuous within a single hand, where it is interrupted by numerous rests), and continuous semiquaver motion (literally speeded up with the new tempo marking *Allegro vivace*) in Variation 3. Indeed, this process continues into Variation 4, in which the time signature is altered to 9/8, thereby implying a progression to melodic triplets – the next 'level' in diminution. But this is not strictly true: Variations 3 and 4 signify an important moment of punctuation in the movement. Note that the diminution process that takes place from the theme to Variation 3 'speeds up' the tempo to the point that Beethoven introduces a literal tempo change: from the *Andante* opening, the movement now segues into an *Allegro vivace*. Beethoven has effected a *volte-face*, and in an echo of the opening (variation) movement of Mozart's Piano Sonata in A major, K.331, Beethoven turns a slow movement into a fast finale. But when Variation 4 arrives, the tempo is drastically reduced – *etwas langsamer als das Thema* – so that this variation represents the slowest point in the movement, now even slower than the theme itself. Variation 4 also brings with it a new topic – fantasia – implied both through the rhapsodic figuration, but also literally in the sense that it is the loosest variation thus far upon the original theme. As well as the eradicated rhythmic values, the original harmonic underpinnings are now lost, and the notes of the melody, though identifiable, are scattered through the figuration, obscuring the original contours. The sense of fantasia-like improvisation is also implied by the tempo direction, which in itself suggests a slowing down, 'taking stock' and perhaps a rumination on the original theme.

Thus, in a subtle twist, Beethoven reinforces the clarity of the 'arch structure' that Marston observes between the first and third movements. For here, too, a fantasia interruption dams the flow of the movement – its slow tempo forcing a rupture with the *Allegro* that both precedes and follows it, and thereby signifying a direct link with the 'calling cards' which interrupt the *Vivace*. It underlines Marston's own assessment of this unique relationship: 'If the sketches for the theme convey a sense of *déjà vu*, this is only natural, for in them Beethoven was directly retracing his earlier steps. It is perhaps not an exaggeration to say that the third-movement theme is in a sense a recomposition of the first movement of op. 109.'<sup>556</sup> In turn, Variation 4 cements the fantasia's double-edged link with counterpoint, segueing into what, it seems, is the 'goal' of this Baroque tour de force – a summatory fugue. Although not labelled by Beethoven as a 'variation', this lengthy fugal section is the final destination of Beethoven's modest theme, now developed into a complex 4-part fugal texture. Strikingly, Beethoven does not simply translate the original melody into a fugal subject, but instead spreads the notes of the

---

<sup>556</sup> Marston, 'Schenker and Forte Reconsidered', p. 35

theme across both the subject and its answer. In bars 1-2, for example, the alto voice outlines the main notes of the melody, but the theme is taken over by the soprano answer in bar 3 and then transferred back to the alto voice in bar 4. This complex interweaving continues when the fugue takes on Section B of the theme, spreading the notes of the theme across the bass voice (bar 17-18), alto voice (bars 19-20) and soprano voice (bars 21-22). Eventually, the fugue gives way to what at first seems to be a revisitation of the original theme, unadorned and simplified. But Beethoven is not finished yet and, with a dominant pedal introduced in the upper voice of both hands, Beethoven sets up a series of rhythmic diminutions (in effect a brief kaleidoscopic look back at the variation proves) which proceed from crotchets (bars 1-2), to quavers (bars 3-4), to triplets (bar 5), to semiquavers (bars 6-8), to demi-semiquavers (from bar 8). Eventually, even these demi-semiquavers are increased to trills on the dominant (from bar 12), as Beethoven pushes the performer to continue melodic lines in both hands while simultaneously sustaining these high-energy trills.

This is Beethoven's final formal twist, in effect transforming this final dominant prolongation into a written-out cadenza. The recapitulation of the theme at the onset of the *Tempo primo del tema* is revealed as illusory – the unadorned *cantabile* presentation that makes up the final 16 bars of the piece is the true recapitulation. The *Tempo primo*, meanwhile, functions as a summatory reflection on the variation set, quickly leaving behind the original theme to take on elements of the preceding variations. The catalogue of rhythmic diminutions looks back to the progress of the theme across Variations 1-4, while the virtuosic figuration, registral contrasts and the sustained dominant trill ultimately confirm that this section functions as a dramatised dominant upbeat – or cadenza – to the return of the theme. With hindsight, the variation set then seems to fall into three parts: the theme and variations 1-3 make up the first part, the fantasia-like variation 4 and ensuing fugato signify a 're-start' and create a 'Prelude and Fugue' coupling at the centre of the movement, while the recapitulation of the theme forms the final part. The 'cadenza' passage (from the *Tempo primo* to the return of the theme proper), meanwhile, straddles both the second and third parts: as a structural upbeat it 'belongs' both to the recapitulation that it precedes and to the pre-recapitulatory material from which it springs.

The finale of Op. 109 thus proves to be a summatory celebration of Beethoven's slow-movement writing. Within it, he documents the slow movement's roots in vocal forms and its strong association with variation principles; he introduces the fantasia both as an agent of interruption and as the roots of coherence within the cycle; and by spinning fantasia and fugue from the same theme, side by side, he demonstrates their shared roots – both lyrical and mechanical, improvised and well-planned. Lyricism is the goal of this movement and, ultimately, of the work – for it is to the 'cantabile ed espressivo' hymn theme that the music eventually



returns. But the variation process itself reveals lyricism to be double-edged, with what begins as a paratactic, series of repetitive events, gradually unfolding into a fluid, linear line that sheds its repeats and leads to the 'freedom' of a cadenza. Just as vocality was shown in Chapter 4 to unite both virtuosic flamboyance and direct, uncluttered expression, so too is lyricism here shown to embrace both fragmentary disruption (the fantasia) and linear continuity (*fantasieren*).

## Conclusion

That Beethoven's slow movements have been largely overlooked until now is quite remarkable. It is not that current writings on Beethoven's music eschew the philosophical, musical and aesthetic developments of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with which the development of the Beethovenian slow movement is intrinsically connected. On the contrary, writers such as Scott Burnham are attuned to the level of self-expression that characterises this period of musical history, and have identified the effect this had upon Beethoven's music:

'Beethoven's music has been felt to express the temporal machinations of our own sublunary realm (*ici-bas*), the plight of humanity in its uphill struggle for freedom – and yet it brings to this human narrative the sublimity of the beyond (*au-delà*). We can thus hear this music as another, and indeed fundamental, expression of an age characterised by the centrality of Self.'<sup>557</sup>

But while the recognition of this 'centrality of Self' led, on the one hand, to the construction of the 'heroic' image of Beethoven, it did not, on the other, lead to an appraisal of perhaps the most introspective and self-reflective of all musical genres – the slow movement. For Burnham, the 'heroic' Beethoven is characterised by 'closed systems, self-generating, self-sustaining, and self-consuming... a processive form that seems to develop as a result of the exigencies of the thematic material'<sup>558</sup>. Burnham's concept of the 'Self', as exemplified by writers such as Dahlhaus, Adorno and Réti before him, is tied to a theme-oriented approach to Beethoven's writing, where the themes are heard to be 'incipient, malleable and, above all, transitive.'<sup>559</sup> Their analyses are dominated by first movements and, in particular, by thematic organisation and the relationship of the theme to the whole. Among his fragments upon the *Eroica*, for example, Adorno's exploration of the first movement amounts to four full pages – his cursory glance at the slow movement comprises just four lines.<sup>560</sup> Of course, we should be careful not to tip the balance the other way in favour of lyric forms, but this study has suggested that the slow movement is due greater prominence than it has currently received in analyses of Beethoven's music.

Beethoven's works occur at a critical time in the history of lyric genres, and it is for this reason that his slow movements are worthy of a representative study. During the eighteenth century, the Adagio was regarded by writers such as Riepel, we will recall, as 'sad... today most music lovers are no longer pleased to listen to sad things, except in church.' But at the turn of

---

<sup>557</sup> Burnham, *Beethoven Hero*, p. 113

<sup>558</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118

<sup>559</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119

<sup>560</sup> Adorno, *Beethoven*, pp. 101-105

the century, a new change of focus towards 'the centrality of the Self' changed the role of the Adagio. The new aesthetic interest in the 'Self' did not just generate in music 'immanent' thematic logic that may gesture towards the sublime, it also brought about a revision of the role of the slow movement. Writing about the slow movement of Mozart's 'Prague' Symphony, Susan McClary identifies 'a demonstration that the persona thus fashioning itself also harbours deep inner feelings... the darker sides of subjectivity: longings and painful vulnerabilities locked away from the public view, scarcely acknowledged by the individual who bears and nurtures them.'<sup>561</sup> No longer reserved for the church, this level of introspection became celebrated as a new musical ideal. Writing about the 'interior' subject in the music of Schubert, Lawrence Kramer writes: 'By the early nineteenth century, one had learned to speak familiarly of cleavages between head and heart, classic and romantic, reason and imagination, nature and freedom, public and private, depth and surface. The subject who did so... took on a markedly high degree of intensity and dynamism, something that acted now as a compensation for the habit of self-fracture'.<sup>562</sup>

At the centre of this progression from 'the darker sides of subjectivity' to 'the habit of self-fracture' we find Beethoven. While the progression towards subjectivity began in the works of Beethoven's predecessors, in C.P.E. Bach, Gluck, Mozart, and Haydn, it is precisely within Beethoven's works that we witness the elevation of the slow movement from a 'pleasant' interlude (recalling Koch) to, as Dahlhaus suggests, 'the predominant structural principle, causing a crisis for the idea of thematic process.'<sup>563</sup> The effect of this shift from 'self-generating, self-sustaining', closed thematic forms to those which are driven by lyricism, is a reversal in priorities. Lyric genres are largely paratactic, and derive their expression from 'the noncoincidence of domains';<sup>564</sup> this represents a rejection of the sonata aesthetic, which prizes synthesis as its goal. To raise the profile of the slow movement, therefore, means to reorient our perception of the cycle, which becomes increasingly fragmentary as lyricism asserts its presence. In Beethoven's late works, such as the String Quartet in C sharp minor, Op. 131, the effect of lyricism's growth is evident in the conception of the whole: here, instead of a normative multi-movement work, we are presented with a series of fragmentary episodes, tied together by recurring slow movements. The Cello Sonata, Op. 102, No. 1, meanwhile, opens with a slow movement in the 'wrong place', and fragments of this *Andante* resurface throughout the work – so much so that 'slow' becomes realigned as the temporal norm and 'fast' is reinterpreted as the 'rogue' element.

---

<sup>561</sup> McClary, Susan, *Conventional Wisdom: The Content of Musical Form* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), p. 135

<sup>562</sup> Kramer, Lawrence, *Franz Schubert: Sexuality, Subjectivity, Song* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 28

<sup>563</sup> Dahlhaus, *Beethoven: Approaches to his Music*, p. 203

<sup>564</sup> Agawu, *Playing with Signs*, p. 113

Janet Schmalfeldt has recently argued for a type of 'formal cyclicism' in the works of Schubert, 'whereby a passage from one movement within a multi movement work overtly recurs in a later movement, thus affecting its large-scale form.'<sup>565</sup> Her theory, by no means a radical one for nineteenth-century music, is unusual in that it centres upon internal movements as the linchpins of this cyclical design. She writes:

'It is not difficult, on the one hand, to think of certain interior slow movements by Beethoven that would seem to provide the centre of gravity for the complete multimovement work; the slow movements of his Fourth Piano Concerto (in G major, Op. 58; 1805-6) and his "Ghost" Piano trio (in D major, Op. 70/1; 1808) come to mind.'<sup>566</sup>

However, Schmalfeldt believes that such examples extend to just seven works in Beethoven's output, and that these cases do not adhere to the 'more integrative process' found in the works of Schubert.<sup>567</sup> In five of these seven cases, she identifies finales which recall an earlier slow movement or slow introduction, while in the remaining two cases the finale recalls other (fast) movements. But Schmalfeldt's survey is a theme-spotting exercise that overlooks more deep-seated (and arguably more important) cases of cyclical integration in Beethoven's works, in which the slow movement functions as 'the centre of gravity' for the work itself. She misses the myriad of further examples of 'formal cyclicism' within Beethoven's works explored over the course of this study (Op. 92, Op. 97, Op. 111, Op. 131, Op. 132, to name but a few) which explore tonal, temporal, topical and expressive connections between movements – and feature the slow movement at the centre of this network. To suggest that such processes are 'less integrative' because they employ connections aside from thematic links undermines lyric genres. 'Thematicism' does not dissolve in the lyric style, but other musical elements may also be brought to the fore. Take, for example, the interconnected series of sharpwards shifts which link the movements of Op. 97 and which centralise the role of the slow movement; or consider the fleeting glimpses of recitative that act as slow movement 'calling cards' in the opening movement of Op. 132.

The Beethovenian slow movement is not, as Tovey might have us believe, a mere 'simplification' of the first movement formal blueprint. On the contrary, over the course of his oeuvre Beethoven defines the slow movement as a genre in its own right, one that outgrows its rather modest origins as an improvised Baroque interlude to assert itself as the centrepiece of the nineteenth century multi-movement work. Moreover, the slow movement acts as a catalyst

---

<sup>565</sup> Schmalfeldt, Janet, *In the Process of Becoming* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 144

<sup>566</sup> Ibid.

<sup>567</sup> The seven works cited are: Op. 18, No. 6, Op. 27, No. 1, Op. 67, Op. 102, No. 1, Op. 101, Op. 110, Op. 125. See Schmalfeldt, *In the Process of Becoming*, p. 144

for formal expansion and architectural innovation across the wider cycle. Consider, for example, the opening movement of Op. 110, which is not a slow movement *per se* but which imports traits developed in the slow movement – variation procedure, *Steigerung*, truncated transitions, subdominant emphasis – and reveals to the listener that the slow movement is not simply a genre but a ‘fundamental process of composition’. The freedom that Beethoven explores in the slow movement, a feature grounded in the genre’s principle of expression, becomes a prevalent structuring characteristic of the larger cycle.

Although statistically speaking the Beethovenian slow movement is an internal *Adagio* in 2/4 time, located in the work’s tonic major or minor key and loosely following a cavatina form, in practice the Beethovenian slow movement is a varied, intricate and often complex formal component. Temporally, it exerts its presence and its capacity for solemnity by being slower than the works of its contemporaries (*Andante* in Mozart to *Adagio* in Beethoven) and this, in turn, leads to slow movements which dominate the cycle by their sheer length (Op. 106). Tonally, it rejects the tonic-dominant polarity of first movements in favour of a rich spectrum of modulations to often-distant tonal areas (Op. 7), often in unexpected places (Op. 81a) and often without preparation (Op. 130). In turn, these harmonic complications lead to the unusual formal structures of the Beethovenian slow movement, which may often oscillate between forms (Op. 102, No. 1) or suggest multiple levels of interpretation (Op. 74). It draws upon its roots in the fantasia (Op. 109) as readily as it absorbs aria (Op. 31, No. 1) and counterpoint (Op. 127), and is as apparently fluid (Op. 27, No. 1) as it is well-planned (Op. 111). It may sing (Op. 110), speak (Op. 132) or narrate (Op. 81a), and its capacity for virtuosic display (Op. 79) is equalled by its potential for intimate, personal expression (Op. 101). It is this heightened capability for variety and expression that sees the slow movement gain prominence over the course of the nineteenth century, since it is, as Nohl reminds us, ‘richer than the entire rest of the [multi-movement] form’.<sup>568</sup> It is the slow movement, in its rejection of Classical sonata principles and its focus upon the ‘Self’, that is at the very heart of the journey towards ‘Romanticism’. As Schmalfeldt writes, such interior movements encapsulate ‘the tendency within early nineteenth-century instrumental works toward cyclic and processual formal techniques that draw new kinds of attention to deeply felt, song-inspired interior movements and secondary (as opposed to main) themes... the music itself would indeed seem to “turn inward”: an interior moment, or movement, becomes the focal point of the complete work – the centre of gravity toward which what comes before seems to pull, and from which all that follows seems to radiate.’<sup>569</sup>

---

<sup>568</sup> Nohl, cited by Notley, ‘Late Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music and the Cult of the Classical Adagio’, p. 34

<sup>569</sup> Schmalfeldt, *In the Process of Becoming*, p. 136

The pull of the slow movement would prove irresistible for composers of the mid-late nineteenth century, and the genre soon grew beyond hitherto unimagined proportions. While Beethoven developed the slow movement to become far longer than those of his predecessors, at more than 25 minutes in length the finale of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, 'Der Abschied', is longer than the rest of the movements in the work combined, and longer than many Classical symphonies. As the work's dramatic finale it also bears the imprint of Beethoven's own slow finales (such as Op. 109 and Op. 111), becoming the climactic focal point of the whole work. As it became longer, so too would the nineteenth-century slow movement become slower, and it was Beethoven who began this process – favouring the tempo marking *Adagio* over the *Andante* preferred by Mozart. Among others, Mahler would continue this trend, as Notley shows: 'Between the late-1850s and the mid-1860s, he produced significantly more Adagios than Andantes, a higher proportion than during any comparable period before the late 1880s'.<sup>570</sup>

The innovations of form that Beethoven began in the slow movement – splicing variation with sonata, rondo with ternary, creating cyclical links – would also be adopted by those that followed in his footsteps. Writing about the slow movement of Brahms' Second Serenade, Webster reveals the multi-layered nature of its form: "until the very end one can hear it in sonata form," at which point, "the movement reveals itself as an original synthesis of ABA structure and sonata style."<sup>571</sup> Thus the slow movement, once considered a 'pleasant' interlude, became not just a space for intense expressivity but also a site of formal innovation, as Sisman writes: 'Brahms thus fully reinvented the ABA form by demonstrating that one can no longer take for granted its most basic premises: what is A and what is B, where the return is, and what transitions mean. These mixed signals also turn up in his slow sonata-type movements, often resulting in a kind of synthesis of sonata and ABA.'<sup>572</sup> That is to say nothing of the impact Beethoven's works had upon the very idea of the lyric impulse, upon the centrality of melody and the dominance of expression over structure – one thinks of Wagner's *unendliche Melodie* and its roots in lyrical genres. Writing about the *Adagio* of Bruckner's String Quintet, Helm touches upon this very issue:

'What a rapturously heartfelt outpouring of feeling, flowing forth in one truly 'unending' stream! This Adagio has approximately the same effect as if it were a newly discovered piece from

---

<sup>570</sup> Notley, 'Late Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music and the Cult of the Classical Adagio', p. 45

<sup>571</sup> Webster, James, cited by Notley 'Late Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music and the Cult of the Classical Adagio', p. 45

<sup>572</sup> Sisman, cited by Notley 'Late Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music and the Cult of the Classical Adagio', p. 45

Beethoven's estate, originating in the master's final period and animated by his full inspiration.'<sup>573</sup>

To begin to trace the ways in which Beethoven's slow movements influenced the works of his successors – both immediate and distant – requires far deeper consideration than the current study allows. His oeuvre continues to be exalted as one of the most significant turning points in western music history and, as Scott Burnham observes, 'no significant ebb tide has yet been charted in the reception of his music.'<sup>574</sup> Above all, he is admired for opening the doors to a new kind of musical expression, to 'a direct outpouring of the spirit'<sup>575</sup>. This 'outpouring' is at the root of the Beethovenian slow movement: the site of musical transformation in which expression becomes the dominant structuring principle. As Burnham writes, this is the essence of Beethoven's ongoing power: 'Such inward depth is natural, universal, and pure. And its presence is sublime.'<sup>576</sup>

---

<sup>573</sup> Helm, cite by Notley, 'Late Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music and the Cult of the Classical Adagio', p. 57

<sup>574</sup> Burnham, Scott, 'The four ages of Beethoven', from *The Cambridge Companion to Beethoven*, p. 272

<sup>575</sup> Wagner, cited by Burnham, 'The four ages of Beethoven', from *The Cambridge Companion to Beethoven*, p. 279

<sup>576</sup> Burnham, 'The four ages of Beethoven', from *The Cambridge Companion to Beethoven*, p. 279

# Appendix

## List of Works surveyed in Chapter 2

### Symphonies

Symphony No. 1 in C major, Op. 21  
Symphony No. 2 in D major  
Symphony No. 3 in E flat major  
Symphony No. 4 in B flat major  
Symphony No. 5 in C minor  
Symphony No. 6 in F major  
Symphony No. 7 in A major  
Symphony No. 8 in F major  
Symphony No. 9 in D minor

### Concertos

Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 61  
Piano Concerto No. 1 in C major, Op. 15  
Piano Concerto No. 2 in B flat major, Op. 19  
Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor, Op. 37  
Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major, Op. 58  
Piano Concerto No. 5 in E flat major, Op. 73  
'Triple' Concerto in C major, Op. 56

### Quartets

Op. 18, No.1 in F major  
Op. 18, No. 2 in G major  
Op. 18, No. 3 in D major  
Op. 18, No. 5 in A major  
Op. 18, No. 6 in B flat major  
Op. 59, No. 1 in F major  
Op. 59, No. 2 in E minor  
Op. 59, No. 3 in C major  
Op. 74 in E flat major  
Op. 95 in F minor  
Op. 127 in E flat major  
Op. 130 in B flat major  
Op. 131 in C sharp minor  
Op. 132 in A minor  
Op. 135 in F major

### Piano Sonatas

Op. 2, No. 1 in F minor  
Op. 2, No. 2 in A major  
Op. 2, No. 3 in C major  
Op. 7 in E flat major  
Op. 10, No. 1 in C minor  
Op. 10, No. 3 in D major  
Op. 13 in C minor  
Op. 14, No. 2 in G major  
Op. 22 in B flat major  
Op. 27, No. 1 in E flat major  
Op. 27, No. 2 in C sharp minor



Op. 28 in D major  
Op. 31, No. 1 in G major  
Op. 31, No. 2 in D minor  
Op. 53 in C major  
Op. 57 in F minor  
Op. 79 in G major  
Op. 81a in E flat major  
Op. 101 in A major  
Op. 106 in B flat major  
Op. 110 in A flat major  
Op. 111 in C minor

### **Other Instrumental Sonatas**

Cello Sonata in A major, Op. 69  
Cello Sonata in D major, Op. 102, No. 2  
Violin Sonata in D major, Op. 12, No. 1  
Violin Sonata in A major, Op. 12, No. 2  
Violin Sonata in E flat major, Op. 12, No. 3  
Violin Sonata in A minor, Op. 23  
Violin Sonata in F major, Op. 24  
Violin Sonata in A major, Op. 30, No. 1  
Violin Sonata in C minor, Op. 30, No. 2  
Violin Sonata in A minor, Op. 47  
Violin Sonata in G major, Op. 96

### **Other Chamber Music**

Piano Trio in E flat major, Op. 1, No. 1  
Piano Trio in G major, Op. 1, No. 2  
Piano Trio in C minor, Op. 1, No. 3  
Piano Trio in D major, Op. 70, No. 1  
Piano Trio in E flat major, Op. 70, No. 2  
Piano Trio in B flat major, Op. 97  
String Trio in E flat major, Op. 3  
String Trio in G major, Op. 9, No. 1  
String Trio in D major, Op. 9, No. 2  
String Trio in C minor, Op. 9, No. 3  
Quintet for Piano and Winds in E flat major, Op. 16  
Sextet in E flat major, Op. 71  
Sextet in E flat major, Op. 81b  
Septet in E flat major, Op. 20  
Octet in E flat major, Op. 103

# Bibliography

## Primary Sources

Bach, Carl Philipp Emanuel, *Die sechs Sammlungen von Sonaten, Freien Fantasien und Rondos für Kenner und Liebhaber*, Vols. 1-6 (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1953)

----- *6 Württemberg Sonatas, Wq.49* (Leipzig: Nagels Musik Verlag, c. 1930)

Beethoven, Ludwig van, *Chamber Music for Wind Instruments* (New York: Lea Pocket Scores, 1959)

----- *Complete Piano Concertos* (London: Eulenberg Pocket Scores)

----- *Complete Piano Sonatas*, Vols. 1-2, ed. Schenker (New York: Dover Publications, 1975)

----- *Complete Piano Trios*, Vols. 1-3 (New York: Lea Pocket Scores, 1968)

----- *Complete String Quartets* (New York: Dover Publications, 1970)

----- *Complete String Trios* (New York: Lea Pocket Scores, 1959)

----- *Complete Symphonies 1-9*, Vols. 1-3 (New York: Dover Publications, 1989)

----- *Complete Variations for Solo Piano* (New York: Dover Publications, 1986)

----- *Fantasy, Op. 77* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel)

----- *Five Sonatas for 'Cello and Piano* (New York: Lea Pocket Scores, 1950)

----- *Octet, Op. 103* (London: Eulenberg Pocket Scores)

----- *Quintet, Op. 16* (London: Eulenberg Pocket Scores)

----- *Quintet, Op. 29* (London: Eulenberg Pocket Scores)

----- *Septet, Op. 20* (London: Eulenberg Pocket Scores)

----- *Sextet, Op. 71* (London: Eulenberg Pocket Scores)

----- *Sextet, Op. 81b* (London: Eulenberg Pocket Scores)

----- *Sonatas for Violin and Piano*, Vols. 1-2 (New York: Lea Pocket Scores, 1950)

----- *Songs with Piano Accompaniment* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1901)

----- *Triple Concerto* (London: Eulenberg Pocket Scores)

----- *Violin Concerto* (London: Eulenberg Pocket Scores)

Gluck, Christoph Willibald, *6 Trio Sonatas, Wq. 53* (Berlin: N. Simrock, 1910)

Haydn, Franz Joseph, *Kritische Ausgabe sämtlicher Symphonien*, Vol. IV (Vienna, Doblinger, 1966)

----- *String Quartets, Hob. III:57-59* (New York: Dover Publications, 1982)

----- *The Creation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995)

----- *The fifty-two piano sonatas, in 4 volumes* (New York: Lea Pocket Scores, 1959)

Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus, *Complete String Quartets* (New York: Dover Publications, 1970)

----- *Concerte für das Pianoforte*, Vols. 1-4 (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1878)

----- *Sonaten für Klavier zu zwei Händen* (Leipzig: C.F. Peters, 1938)

----- *Sonaten und phantasien für das pianoforte* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1978)

----- *Symphony in G minor*, K. 550 (London: Eulenberg Pocket Scores)

## Secondary Sources

Abbate, Carolyn, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991)

----- *In Search of Opera* (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001)

Adorno, Theodor W., *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*, ed. R. Tiedemann (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998)

----- *Quasi una Fantasia, Essays on Modern Music* (London: Verso, 1998)

Agawu, Kofi, 'The First Movement of Beethoven's Opus 132 and the Classical Style', from *College Music Symposium*, Vol. 27, (1987), pp. 30-45

----- *Playing with Signs: A semiotic interpretation of classic music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991)

Bach, Carl Phillip Emanuel, *Versuch über die wahre Art das Klavier zu spielen (Essay on the true art of playing keyboard instruments)*, trans. W. J. Mitchell (London: Cassell, 1951)

Barry, Barbara R., 'Recycling the end of the 'Leibquartett': Models, Meaning and Propriety in Beethoven's Quartet in Bb major, Op. 130', from *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (Summer 1995), pp. 355-376

Beach, David, 'The Cadential Six-Four as Support for Scale-Degree Three of the Fundamental Line', from *Journal of Music Theory*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Spring, 1990), pp. 81-99

Bonds, Mark Evan, *Wordless Rhetoric: Musical Form and the Metaphor of Oration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991)

Botstein, Leon, 'Sound and structure in Beethoven's orchestral music', from *The Cambridge Companion to Beethoven*, ed. G. Stanley (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 165-185

Brewerton, Erik, 'Reflections on Beethoven's Song's, from *The Musical Times*, Vol. 68, No. 1008 (February 1927), pp. 114-117

Bribitzer-Stull, Matthew, 'The Cadenza as Parenthesis: An Analytic Approach', from *Journal of Music Theory*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (Fall, 2006), pp. 221-251

Brown, A. Peter, 'Haydn's Chaos: Genesis and Genre', from *The Music Quarterly*, Vol. 73, No. 1 (1989), pp. 18-59

Broyles, Michael, *Beethoven: The Emergence and Evolution of Beethoven's Heroic Style* (New York: Excelsior Music Publishing, 1987)

Burnham, Scott, 'The Role of Sonata Form in A. B. Marx's Theory of Form', from *Journal of Music Theory*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Autumn, 1989), pp. 247-271

----- *Beethoven Hero* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995)

----- 'The four ages of Beethoven', from *The Cambridge Companion to Beethoven* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 272-291

Butler, Gregory, 'The Fantasia as Musical Image', from *The Music Quarterly*, Vol. 6 (1974), pp. 602-615

Caplin, William, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)

Christensen, Thomas, *Aesthetics and the art of musical composition in the German Enlightenment: Selected writings of Johann Georg Sulzer and Heinrich Christoph Koch*, ed. N. Baker and T. Christensen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)

Chua, Daniel, *The 'Galitzin' Quartets of Beethoven* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995)

----- *Absolute Music and the Construction of Meaning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

Cohn, Richard, 'The Dramatization of Hypermetric Conflicts in the Scherzo of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony', from *19th-Century Music*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Spring, 1992), pp. 188-206

Cone, Edward T., *The Composer's Voice* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1974)

Cooper, Barry, 'Beethoven's "Abendlied" and the "Wiener Zeitschrift"', from *Music & Letters*, Vol. 82, No. 2 (May, 2001), pp. 234-250

Czerny, Carl, *On the proper performance of all Beethoven's works for the piano*, ed. P. Badura-Skoda (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1963)

Dahlhaus, Carl, *Nineteenth-Century Music* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1989)

----- Dahlhaus, Carl, *The Idea of Absolute Music*, trans. R. Lustig (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989)

Dahlhaus, Carl, *Beethoven: Approaches to his Music*, trans. M. Whittall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991)

Darbellay, Etienne, 'C.P.E. Bach's Aesthetic as Reflected in his Notation', from *C.P.E. Bach Studies*, ed. S. Clark (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 43-64

Daverio, John, 'Manner, tone and tendency in Beethoven's chamber music for strings', from *The Cambridge Companion to Beethoven* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 147-164

de Marliave, Joseph, *Beethoven's Quartets* (New York: Dover, 1961)

Dittrich, Marie-Agnes, 'The Lieder of Schubert', from *The Cambridge Companion to the Lied* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 85-100

Downes, Stephen, 'Kierkegaard, a Kiss, and Schumann's "Fantasie"', from *19th-Century Music*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Spring 1999), pp. 268-280

Drabkin, William, *The Sketches for Beethoven's Piano Sonata in C minor, Op. 111*, (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton: 1977)

----- 'An Interpretation of Musical Dreams: Towards a Theory of the Mozart Piano Concerto Cadenza', from *Wolfgang Amadè Mozart: Essays on his Life and Music*, ed. S. Sadie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 161-177

----- 'Richard Kramer, *Unfinished Music*' (Review), from *Nineteenth-Century Music Review*, Vol. 7 (2010), pp. 123-128

Fiske, Roger, *Beethoven Concertos and Overtures* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1970)

Ford, Walter, 'The Songs', from *Music and Letters*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (April 1927), pp. 228-233

Fox, Pamela, 'The Stylistic Anomalies of Bach's Nonconstancy', from *C.P.E. Bach Studies*, ed. S. Clark (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 105-132

Gjerdingen, Robert, *Music in the Galant Style* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)

Glauert, Amanda, 'Beethoven's Songs and Vocal Style', from *The Cambridge Companion to Beethoven* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 186-199

----- 'The Lieder of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven', from *The Cambridge Companion to the Lied* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 63-84

Gorrell, Lorraine, *The Nineteenth-Century German Lied* (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1993)

Hatten, Robert, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation and Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994)

----- 'Beethoven's Italian Trope: Modes of Stylistic Appropriation' from *Beethoven Forum*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Spring 2006), pp. 1-27

Head, Matthew, *Fantasy in the Instrumental Music of C.P.E. Bach* (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University: 1995)

Hepokoski, James, 'Back and Forth from Egmont: Beethoven, Mozart, and the Nonresolving Recapitulation', from *19th-Century Music*, Vol. 25, No. 2-3 (Fall/Spring 2001-02), pp. 127-154

Hepokoski, James and Darcy, Warren, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-eighteenth-century Sonata* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)

Hoeckner, Berthold, *Programming the Absolute: Nineteenth-century German music and the Hermeneutics of the Moment* (Princeton, N.J.; Oxford, UK: Princeton University Press, 2002)

Hoffmann, E.T.A., *E.T.A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings*, ed. D. Charlton, trans. M. Clarke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989)

Ivanovitch, Roman, 'Recursive/Discursive: Variation and Sonata in the Andante of Mozart's String Quartet in F, K. 590', from *Music Theory Spectrum*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (Fall 2010), pp. 145-164

Jander, Owen, 'Romantic Form and Content in the Slow Movement of Beethoven's Violin Concerto', from *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 69, No. 2 (Spring 1983), pp. 159-179

----- 'Beethoven's "Orpheus in Hades": The "Andante con moto" of the Fourth Piano Concerto', from *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (Spring 1985), pp. 195-212

----- 'The "Kreutzer" Sonata as Dialogue', *Early Music*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (February 1988), pp. 34-49

Keefe, Simon P., 'Koch's Commentary on the Late Eighteenth-Century Concerto: Dialogue, Drama and Solo/Orchestra Relations', *Music & Letters*, Vol. 79, No. 3 (August 1998), pp. 368-385

Kerman, Joseph, *The Beethoven Quartets* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967)

Kielian-Gilbert, Marianne, 'Interpreting Schenkerian Prolongation', from *Music Analysis*, Vol. 22, No. 1/2 (March-July 2003), pp. 51-104

Kinderman, William, 'Beethoven's Symbol for the Deity in the "Missa Solemnis" and the Ninth Symphony', from *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Autumn, 1985), pp. 102-118

----- *Beethoven* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995)

Koch, Heinrich Christoph, *Introductory Essay on Composition*, ed. N. Baker (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1983)

Kolisch, Rudolf, 'Tempo and Character in Beethoven's Music', from *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 77, No. 1 (Spring, 1993), pp. 90-131

Korsyn, Kevin, 'J.W.N. Sullivan and the Heiliger Dankgesang: Questions of Meaning in Late Beethoven', from *Beethoven Forum*, Vol. 2 (December 1993), pp. 133-176

Kramer, Lawrence, Franz Schubert: *Sexuality, Subjectivity, Song* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

Kramer, Richard, 'Ambiguities in *La Malinconia*: What the sketches say', from *Beethoven Studies* 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 29-46

----- 'Between Cavatina and Overture: Opus 130 and the Voices of Narrative', from *Beethoven Forum*, Vol. 1 (November 1992), pp. 165-189

----- 'Lisch aus, mein Licht: Song, Fugue, and the Symptoms of a Late Style', from *Beethoven Forum*, Vol. 7 (1998), pp. 67-87

----- *Unfinished Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008)

Lee, Douglas A., 'C.P.E. Bach and the Free Fantasia for Keyboard: Deutsche Staatsbibliothek Mus. Ms. Nichelmann 1N', from *C.P.E. Bach Studies*, ed. S. Clark (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 177-184

Lester, Joel, *Compositional Theory in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1992)

Lockwood, Lewis, 'Beethoven before 1800: The Mozart legacy', from *Beethoven Forum*, Vol. 3 (1994), pp. 39-52

----- 'Beethoven's Emergence from Crisis: The Cello Sonatas of Op. 102 (1815)', from *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Summer 1998), pp. 301-322

----- *Beethoven: The Music and the Life* (New York: Norton, 2003)

Mak, Su Yin, 'Schubert's Sonata Forms and the Poetics of the Lyric', from *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Spring 2006), pp. 263-306

Marston, Nicholas, 'Analysing Variations: The Finale of Beethoven's String Quartet Op. 74', from *Music Analysis*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (Oct 1989), pp. 303-324

----- 'Schenker and Forte Reconsidered: Beethoven's Sketches for the Piano Sonata in E, Op. 109', from *19th-Century Music*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Summer, 1986), pp. 24-42

----- 'Schumann's monument to Beethoven', from *19th-Century Music*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Spring, 1991), pp. 247-264

----- *Beethoven's Piano Sonata in E, Op. 109* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995)

----- 'From A to B: The History of an Idea in the "Hammerklavier" Sonata, from *Beethoven Forum*, Vol. 6 (1998), pp. 97-128

----- "'The sense of an ending": Goal-directedness in Beethoven's music', from *The Cambridge Companion to Beethoven* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 84-104

Marx, A.B., *Die Lehre von der musikalischen Komposition: praktisch theoretisch*, 1841, Vol. 3 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1847)

----- *Musical Form in the Age of Beethoven*, ed. and trans. S. Burnham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

Mattheson, Johann, *Johann Mattheson's Der vollkommene Capellmeister: A revised translation with critical commentary*, ed. and trans. M. Harris (Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1981)

Matthews, Denis, 'Beethoven and the Cadenza', from *The Musical Times*, Vol. 111, No. 1534, Beethoven Bicentenary Issue (December 1970), pp. 1206-1207

McClary, Susan, *Conventional Wisdom: The Content of Musical Form* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000)

Menuhin, Yeheudi and Primrose, William, *Violin and Viola* (London: Macdonald and Company, 1976)

Meredith, William, 'The Origins of Beethoven's Op. 109', from *The Musical Times*, Vol. 126, No. 1714 (December 1985), pp. 713-716

Mirka, Danuta, *Metric Manipulations in Haydn and Mozart: Chamber Music for Strings, 1787-1791* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2009)

Muxfeldt, Kristina, 'Schubert's songs: the transformation of a genre', from *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 121-137

Notley, Margaret, 'Late Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music and the Cult of the Classical Adagio', from *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Summer, 1999), pp. 33-61

November, Nancy, 'Instrumental Arias or Sonic Tableaux? "Voice" in Haydn's String Quartets Opp. 9 and 17', from *Music and Letters*, Vol. 89, No. 3 (August 2008), pp. 346-372

Paddison, Max, *Adorno's Aesthetics of Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993)

----- 'Nature and the Sublime: The Politics of Order and Disorder in Twentieth-Century Music', from *Order and Disorder: Music-Theoretical Strategies on 20th Century Music (Collected Writings of the Orpheus Institute)* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2004), pp. 107-136

Parsons, James, 'The eighteenth-century Lied', from *The Cambridge Companion to the Lied*, ed. J. Parsons (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 35-62

Plantinga, Leon, 'When did Beethoven compose his Third Piano Concerto?', from *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (Summer, 1989), pp. 275-307

Platoff, John, 'The buffa aria in Mozart's Vienna', from *Cambridge Opera Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (July 1990), pp. 99-120

Ratner, Leonard, *Classic Music: Expression, Form and Style* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1980)

Reid, Paul, *The Beethoven Song Companion* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007)

Richards, Annette, *The Free Fantasia and the Musical Picturesque* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)

Riley, Matthew, 'Civilizing the Savage: Johann Georg Sulzer and the "Aesthetic Force" of Music' from *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 127 (2002), pp. 1-22

Rink, John, 'Translating Musical Meaning': The Nineteenth-Century Performer as Narrator', from *Rethinking Music*, ed. N. Cook and M. Everist (Oxford; New York Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 217-238

Rosen, Charles, *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven* (London: Faber, 1971)

----- *Sonata Forms* (New York; London: Norton, 1988)

----- *The Frontiers of Meaning: Three Informal Lectures on Music* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994)



----- *Beethoven's Piano Sonatas: A Short Companion* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2002)

Rumph, Stephen, *Beethoven After Napoleon: Political Romanticism in the Late Works* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004)

Salzer, Felix 'Haydn's Fantasia from the String Quartet, Op. 76, No. 6', from *Music Forum USA*, Vol. 4 (1976), pp. 161-194

Schachter, Carl, *Unfoldings: Essays in Schenkerian Theory and Analysis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999)

Schmalfeldt, Janet, *In the Process of Becoming* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011)

Schoenberg, Arnold, *The Musical Idea and the Logic, Technique, and Art of Its Presentation* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2006)

Scruton, Roger, *The Aesthetics of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997)

Sisman, Elaine, 'Tradition and Transformation in the Alternating Variations of Haydn and Beethoven', from *Acta Musicologica*, Vol. 62, Fasc. 2/3 (May - Dec., 1990), pp. 152-182

----- *Haydn and the Classical Variation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993)

----- 'After the Heroic Style: Fantasia and the "Characteristic" Sonatas of 1809', from *Beethoven Forum*, Vol. 6 (1998), pp. 67-96

----- "'The spirit of Mozart from Haydn's hands": Beethoven's musical inheritance', from *The Cambridge Companion to Beethoven* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 45-63

Solomon, Maynard, *Mozart: A Life*, (London: Hutchinson, 1995)

Spitzer, Michael, *Metaphor and Musical Thought* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2003)

----- *Music as Philosophy: Adorno and Beethoven's Late Style* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006)

Stanley, Glenn, 'The "wirklich gantz neue Manier" and the Path to It', from *Beethoven Forum*, Vol. 3 (1994), pp. 53-79

Starr, G. Gabrielle, *Lyric Generations: Poetry and the Novel in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004)

Stein, Jack M., *Poem and Music in the German Lied from Gluck to Hugo Wolf* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971)

Stewart-Macdonald, R.H., "'High-Encrusted Jewels" and Their Puzzling Reflections: Large-Scale Sharpwards Movement and Multi-Movement Integration in Works by Haydn, Beethoven, Clementi, Hummel and Dussek', from *New Perspectives on the Keyboard Sonatas of Muzio Clementi* (Bologna: Ut Orpheus Edizioni, 2006)

Stowell, Robin, *Beethoven: Violin Concerto* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1998)

Sutcliffe, W. Dean, *Haydn: String Quartets, Op. 50* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1992)

----- ‘Expressive Ambivalence in Haydn's Symphonic Slow Movements of the 1770s’, from *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (Winter 2010), pp. 84-134

Swain, Joseph P., ‘Form and Function of the Classical Cadenza’, from *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Winter, 1988), pp. 27-59

Taruskin, Richard, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, Vols. 2-3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)

Thayer, Alexander Wheelock, *Thayer's Life of Beethoven*, ed. E. Forbes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964)

Tovey, Donald Francis, *Beethoven* (London: Oxford University Press, 1944)

----- *The Forms of Music: Musical Articles from the Encyclopaedia Britannica* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957)

----- *A Companion to Beethoven's Pianoforte Sonatas* (London: Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, 1998)

Triest, Johann Karl Friedrich, “Remarks on the Development of the Art of Music in Germany in the Eighteenth Century” Leipzig, 1801. trans. Susan Gillespie in *Haydn Studies*, ed. E. Sisman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 321-94

Webster, James, ‘The Analysis of Mozart's Arias’, from *Mozart Studies*, ed. C. Eisen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 101-200

----- *Haydn's 'Farewell' Symphony and the Ideas of Classical Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991)

----- ‘Are Mozart's Concertos “Dramatic”? Concerto Ritornellos versus Aria Introductions in the 1780s’, from *Mozart's Piano Concertos: Text, Context, Interpretation*, ed. Zaslaw (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1996), pp. 107-137

Will, Richard, *The Characteristic Symphony in the Age of Haydn and Beethoven* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)

## Online Resources

Fallows, David, ‘Adagio’ from Oxford Music Online:

[http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/00149?q=adagio&search=quick&pos=1&\\_start=1#firsthit](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/00149?q=adagio&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit)

----- ‘Andante’ from Oxford Music Online:

[http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/00854?q=andante&search=quick&pos=1&\\_start=1#firsthit](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/00854?q=andante&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit)

McClymonds, Marita P., ‘Aria’ from Oxford Music Online:

[http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/43315?q=aria&search=quick&pos=1&\\_start=1#firsthit](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/43315?q=aria&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit)

Rhys Jones, Timothy, 'Variation Form' from Oxford Music Online:

<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e7067>

Sage, Jack, 'Romance' from Oxford Music Online:

[http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/23725?q=romance&search=quick&pos=1&\\_start=1#firsthit](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/23725?q=romance&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit)

Talbot, Michael, 'Concerto' from Oxford Music Online:

[http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/40737?q=concerto&search=quick&pos=1&\\_start=1#firsthit](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/40737?q=concerto&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit)

Westrup, Jack, 'Aria' from Oxford Music Online:

[http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/43315?q=aria&search=quick&pos=1&\\_start=1#firsthit](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/43315?q=aria&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit)