

Preface and Acknowledgments

Beethoven is forever. Beethoven in the year 2000—all millennial hype notwithstanding—is a Beethoven of the moment. In the volume we offer you here, leading scholars draw from several disciplines to produce, individually and collectively, a sense of both the current status and emergent trends in Beethoven scholarship. Of the eleven essay writers, ten are music scholars. Their contributions exemplify the trend of the last fifteen or so years to place music into dialogue with the texts and interpretive methods of literary, historical, and cultural analysis.

In this context, Reinhold Brinkmann explores the post-revolutionary milieu of Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony, showing how music participates in the making of a new sense of time. In particular, Brinkmann's interpretation of the celebrated coda of the first movement as actually conjuring the future moves beyond the usual invocation of closure and apotheosis and serves to open up our sense of Beethoven's heroic style. By asking what “heroism” really means in the context of works like *Fidelio*, Lewis Lockwood also broadens our vision of the heroic music, offering an informed taxonomy of Beethoven's musical heroic types. Though Beethoven's heroic style is easily the composer's most public manner—it is still the prevailing soundtrack of his stature in the modern West—Brinkmann and Lockwood bring fresh nuance to our understanding of its commanding presence within our culture.

The second grouping of essays explores the emergence of Beethoven's late style, with regard to themes of temporality, memory, and voice. The late style has been the site of much recent activity in musical thought, even prompting Charles Rosen to return to his landmark study, *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven*, in order to add a new chapter. Ever drawing on the work of Theodor Adorno, critical fascination with the late style and its implied critique of Beethoven's earlier music (and indeed of the Viennese classical style) has reached a high tide. Analyses abound, particularly of the late quartets and piano sonatas, for this music seems somehow to stage the dilemmas of modern subjectivity. With its staggering disjunctions in formal process and stylistic register, its expressive intensity that is somehow both lyrical and

impersonal, Beethoven's late music invites musicologists and music theorists to entertain poststructuralist and postmodern values while continuing to engage in a more traditional kind of analysis that would find and nurture an underlying coherence to this often discontinuous music. In the present volume, Elaine Sisman addresses a group of pieces written around 1815–1816 that share a preoccupation with memory, traced here in the ways that Beethoven stages the return of music from the opening movement in later movements. Sisman situates these unusual works in a post-Kantian context, linking invention and fantasia with the work of reminiscence. Glenn Stanley shows how a vexing performance problem in the first movement of op. 109 can be read as a symptom of the incursion of voices into the genre of the piano sonata—and he goes on to speculate about the nature of their conversation. Beethoven's celebrated song cycle *An die ferne Geliebte* (the locus classicus of this quintessentially Romantic genre) is Nicholas Marston's quarry in an exciting new interpretation that turns the tables on the usual way of construing the presence of the Distant Beloved and that, like Brinkmann and Sisman, reveals a Beethoven deeply engaged with the vicissitudes and possibilities of human temporality.

Moving into a more concrete world, Tilman Skowroneck peers behind the scenes into Beethoven's workshop, explaining how the young Beethoven chose his pianos, and showing along the way that the titan and the myth was also a practical worker with an interest in machinery. William Kinderman reveals a similarly workmanlike Beethoven in the process of sketching and revising his compositions; more important, Kinderman offers compelling evidence of several of Beethoven's abiding aesthetic concerns as well as keen insight into the ways that different genres come to inform and enrich each other in his music. Beethoven emerges from these two essays as a discerning musician from a specific time and place, facing the usual problems of production and dissemination, and concerned as much with the real as with the ideal.

The volume concludes with four essays engaging the broader question of reception, of Beethoven's impact on his world and ours. This emphasis represents a much worked recent trend in Beethoven studies, in line with the spread of reception theory and the related question of canon formation. Christopher Gibbs's study of Beethoven's funeral and its aftermath features documentary material appearing in English for the first time. As companion pieces to his essay we have translated some purple poems written in memory of the composer; these will never be recognized as great works, but they emerge as fascinating documents in the history of literary emotion. Above all, Gibbs shows

how characteristic constructions of artistic greatness quickly gathered in the various “performances of grief” surrounding the memorialization of Beethoven. Art historian Alessandra Comini offers an illustrated discussion of Beethoven’s ubiquitous and iconic frown and traces how the myth of the frown relates to the actual practices of taking life masks as well as death masks. Sanna Pederson shows how the “new musicology’s” critical engagement with gender and the ideology of masculinity in fact reopens ambiguities that were crucial to the Romantic theorists of Beethoven’s generation. In so doing, she deepens and contextualizes the feminist backlash to Beethoven famously broached by Susan McClary’s vividly explicit suggestion of masculinist violence in the first movement of the Ninth Symphony. Can Beethoven survive without the ideology of masculinity? This is the question that rings in our ears at the end of Pederson’s essay. Finally, Leon Botstein surveys the reception of Beethoven in two *fins-de-siècle*, showing how pioneering music scholars in turn-of-twentieth-century Vienna squared off on the issues of rhetoric and narrative and the question of the extramusical in Beethoven, setting the terms of an often acrimonious debate that continues in our own day.

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Beethoven and His World is the eleventh annual volume in a series to appear in conjunction with the Bard Music Festival and its reconsiderations of canonic composers. Those of us who have followed the festival over the last decade have developed an ardent respect and affection for its audiences. We imagine the readers of the volumes to have a similar profile: professionals and amateurs with a commitment to the aesthetic and cultural importance of music, eager to hear good music and to learn more about it in its various contexts. You will notice immediately that this volume is built differently from its predecessors. It contains no discrete section of primary documents. This was an editorial decision resulting from our sense of the “Beethoven difference.” The man, music, and myth have remained so iconic for so long that the most telling documents and commentaries are widely known and easily available. Moreover, if there is any one thing that Beethoven can be said to have done these last two hundred years, it is to continue to confront and provoke his audiences, to demand fresh interpretations from performers, critics, and analysts. Beethoven has always been a Beethoven of the moment. We too have acceded to this demand: with a few exceptions, such as the poems of Kanne and Mayrhofer, we have

filled the volume with new work, offering you eleven essays rather than the five or six of the previous volumes.

This is the first of the Bard/Princeton volumes to be co-edited—in this case by a cultural historian in addition to a music theorist. Permit us to gloat for a moment in how well we got along throughout our work on the book—a good omen for the potential of interdisciplinary work. We were supported throughout by colleagues at the Bard Music Festival, as well as at the Bard Publications Office, the Princeton University Music Department, and Princeton University Press. We would like to acknowledge in particular Leon Botstein, Paul De Angelis, Saralyn Fosnight, David Kasunic, Mark Loftin, Robert Martin, Ginger Shore, and Irene Zedlacher. We want also to thank the eleven contributors for their enthusiasm, punctuality, and intellectual generosity.

Collectively, the eleven essays that follow do argue for a symptomatic asymmetry in the politics of interdisciplinarity. They suggest as a group that music scholars are currently more eager to engage questions of cultural history than cultural historians are to think about music. As a body of work and mode of cultural experience, music remains discursively remote to historians, still much more so than word- or image-based “texts.” The themes developed in this volume—such as time, memory, heroism, revolution, and gender—are prime categories for cultural analysis. The scholars engaging the themes show how music in general and Beethoven in particular participate in defining them for historical interpretation. Historians have not yet paid enough attention to music. In this respect, we hope that this book will serve as an invitation to interdisciplinary reciprocity.

BEETHOVEN
AND HIS WORLD

PART I

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