

## Preface

Together with the symphonies and the string quartets, Beethoven's piano works constitute the core of his output both in terms of their compositional ambitiousness as well as their reception. This book reflects the state of the art for research on these topics on the occasion of the Beethoven jubilee year 2020. Beethoven's piano works are considered from three main perspectives: performance practice, philology, and the technical development of the piano. The relationship between the notated score and its realisation is a key issue in performance practice studies: how much and what kind of information is implied in the presence or absence of certain notational signs? If no indication is present, the performer is expected to resort to common standard practice. But what was the standard practice in the time of deep transformation in which Beethoven lived? And was the composer himself not constantly unsettling the rules and consciously working against expectations of all kinds?

In order to interpret the suggestions contained in the notation, a second perspective – the philological approach – is obviously necessary. Though generations of scholars have examined the sources, new insights can still be gathered from the manuscripts and printed scores regarding the composer's working habits in preparing his compositions and some peculiar traits of notation that he invented.

Finally, Beethoven's time witnessed the greatest development in piano building, which is the third perspective from which his works are examined here. Many questions remain open with respect to the instruments he knew and played, which has wide-ranging consequences for how today's scholar and performer should view his piano compositions.

The section on notation and performance in this book starts with Clive Brown's masterful, rich examination of the different performance suggestions of Beethoven's pupil Carl Czerny. Focusing on embellishments and trills, Brown shows how Czerny's own approach changed over time; in fact, Czerny advocated the necessity of adapting performance practice to contemporary taste, and it is precisely on these grounds that his suggestions may inspire present-day musicians.

Barry Cooper explores the interrelation of technological evolution and notational habits with respect to pedalling and pedal marks. Drawing on work carried out with Chi-fang Cheng, he presents a review of various open issues surrounding this challenging topic. Given that pedal marks are scarce in Beethoven's early works, the question is, what was the common practice at the time? What did Beethoven not bother to write down, assuming that the performer would know where to use the pedal? Cooper considers the rapid changes in instrument building, the scarcity of contemporary sources describing

a standard practice, and the suitability of later sources as insights into pedalling in Beethoven's time.

One pivotal example of unwritten piano performance practice is the arpeggiation of chords, which Anselm Gerhard addressed in articles about implicit arpeggiation in the nineteenth century in previous volumes of the *HKV* series.<sup>1</sup> Here, Neal Peres Da Costa reviews the evidence for arpeggiation in the Classical repertoire. His contribution encourages modern performers to make use of their artistic creativity and experiment with this deeply rooted practice, which was all but universal until well into the twentieth century.

A notational habit that is quite unique to Beethoven is his tied-note notation with a change of fingering between the two notes; there is no known performance-practice source that explains the meaning of this notation. Siân Derry suggests that this notation was inspired not by keyboard practice (specifically, clavichord playing) but by string practice, citing passages of string tremolo from a diverse array of composers from François Couperin to Christoph Willibald Gluck. Beethoven would have been particularly acquainted with Gluck's notation, which he encountered when playing viola in the Bonn court orchestra.

Marten Noorduyn also addresses questions of score interpretation, examining the precise meaning and scope of expressive indications such as *dolce*, *cantabile* and *espressivo*. Beethoven appears to have been remarkably consistent in his use of these marks; thus, attempting to decipher them can enrich the interpretative lexicon of the historically informed performer.

Yew Choong Cheong devotes his article to dynamic markings, accents and hairpins. The cases presented are numerous, as are the range of possible interpretations. It is noteworthy that many dynamic markings imply agogic effects as well, a phenomenon which has also been identified in studies of the music of Schubert, among others.

Leonardo Miucci focuses on Beethoven's early compositional and notational styles. The three Piano Quartets WoO 36 composed in Bonn in 1785 serve as a case study. These works show a strong relation with Mozart's violin sonatas and with the eighteenth-century notational mindset. Beethoven's notation of rubato, staccato expressed with dots and strokes and other aspects of performance practice show a strong connection with the eighteenth-century musical world, which exerts less influence over Beethoven's works after his first experiences in the Viennese style.

1 See e.g. Anselm Gerhard: "You do it!" Weitere Belege für das willkürliche Arpeggieren in der klassisch-romantischen Klaviermusik, in: *Zwischen schöpferischer Individualität und künstlerischer Selbstverleugnung. Zur musikalischen Aufführungspraxis im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Claudio Bacciagaluppi, Roman Brobeck and Anselm Gerhard (Musikforschung der Hochschule der Künste Bern, Vol. 2), Schliengen 2009, pp. 159–168.

Sometimes a single source may reveal unique details about the performance and reception of Beethoven's works. Furthermore, exploring the interrelationship of the compositional and publication processes can reveal other precious information concerning the interpretation of this music as well. Sandra Rosenblum describes two such sources for the Quintet Op. 16: a copy of the Simrock 1802 edition and a first edition from Mollo. The Simrock 1802 edition was used by Aristide Farrenc as a guide for the engraver of his own edition published between 1831 and 1836; the Mollo edition was owned by a certain "AHL", who can be inferred to have been a skilled amateur, judging from his handwritten inserts, which were intended to enhance the virtuosity of the piano part.

Susanne Cox explores the definition of a category of Beethoven manuscripts called 'concepts'. The term, used by Beethoven himself, denotes an intermediate stage between sketches and the final score. Only few concept scores have survived, and most of them are incomplete. Among these are scores for Op. 101, Op. 111 and Op. 126 No. 2. A list of all surviving concepts is provided at the conclusion of the article.

Mario Aschauer recently published a modern edition of all variations published by Diabelli on his famous theme. In his article, he draws upon this experience to reconsider philological questions about the sources for Beethoven's Op. 120, the other variations, and Diabelli's waltz itself.

In Roberto Scoccimarro's contribution, we dig even deeper into philological aspects of Beethoven's works. Examining the intricate situation of the autograph sources for Op. 106, for which numerous sketches but no full score is preserved, Scoccimarro highlights some tendencies in the variants that depict Beethoven's compositional struggle with the fugue. These findings in turn make it possible to propose a new chronological order for some of the sketches.

Claudio Bacciagaluppi traces the presence of Beethoven's piano works in the catalogues of Hans Georg Nägeli, the first publisher of his Sonatas Op. 31. Nägeli's belief in a cultural mission embedded in his profession as music publisher inspired the remarkable series, the "Répertoire des clavecinistes". Nägeli also had a unique position as a mediator between the German and the French markets.

No other moment in history witnessed such a rapid evolution in piano construction as Beethoven's time. It is therefore essential to understand the relationships between the types of instruments to which Beethoven had access and how they influenced his aesthetic and notational attitudes.

With great erudition, Michael Ladenburger describes the astonishingly vast panoply of different keyboard instruments Beethoven was known to have encountered in his youth in Bonn as well as others that he may have known or experienced. He had many opportunities to try new instruments, such as his time spent with the family of Johann

Gottfried von Mastiaux, who had an impressive array of instruments, and through the network of his own mentor Christian Gottlob Neefe.

In his early works, Beethoven may have had a device in mind that was sometimes found on Viennese pianos: the divided knee lever, with which the performer can lift the dampers either from only the upper half of the keyboard or from the whole range of the instrument. Tilman Skowronek describes this mechanism and shows numerous passages in which the device may be advantageously applied as well as one instance – in the *Waldstein Sonata* – where Beethoven explicitly warned players not to use it.

Robert Adelson examines the bookkeeping practices of the Érard firm in order to address the question of whether or not the piano Beethoven received in 1803 from the Paris firm was a gift. Although some researchers had speculated that Beethoven had merely not paid for the instrument, through a comparison of similar bookkeeping entries, Adelson concludes that the Érard firm had in fact fully intended to offer Beethoven the piano as a gift. Given that the Érard firm presented pianos on several occasions to composers they had under contract, the 1803 gift may be directly connected to the Paris publication of the *Pathétique Sonata* in 1801.

The *Waldstein Sonata* Op. 53 is Beethoven's first piano work written after the arrival of his new Érard piano in summer 1803 and uses at least part of its extended keyboard range. Martin Skamletz looks at the influence of instrumental development on compositional structure and finds a prefiguration of Op. 53's transgression of the traditional boundaries of the keyboard in the *Violin Sonata* Op. 12 No. 3 and the *Gassenhauer Piano Trio* Op. 11.

The present collection of essays was inspired by a conference organised in November 2020 by the Hochschule der Künste Bern together with the Conservatorio della Svizzera Italiana in Lugano under the patronage of the Beethoven-Haus Bonn and the Italian Musicological Society, and funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF),<sup>2</sup> which also supported this publication. Our thanks go to all the authors who contributed to this volume, and to Dalyn Cook for proofreading the English texts.

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 Daniel Allenbach  
 Martin Skamletz

<sup>2</sup> See [www.hkb-interpretation.ch/beethoven2020](http://www.hkb-interpretation.ch/beethoven2020) (last accessed 29 October 2022). On this occasion, we would like to express our sincere thanks to all organisers and participants, in particular to Radio Svizzera di lingua italiana and Giuseppe Clericetti, who supported the conference and helped spread interest in its main themes beyond the core audience.

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# BEETHOVEN AND THE PIANO

Philology, Context and Performance

Practice • Edited by Leonardo Miucci,  
Claudio Bacciagaluppi, Daniel Allenbach  
and Martin Skamletz





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