

**The Critical Reception
of Beethoven's Compositions
by His German Contemporaries,
Op. 73 to Op. 85**

Translated and edited by Robin Wallace

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FOREWORD

The reviews collected here begin where the second volume of *The Critical Reception of Beethoven's Compositions by His German Contemporaries*, published by the University of Nebraska Press in 2001, left off. They cover a diverse series of works, and by examining them we can learn a great deal about how perspectives on the relative significance of Beethoven's compositions has changed between his time and our own.

From a modern perspective, the most important pieces reviewed here are the "Emperor" Piano Concerto, Op. 73, the "Harp" String Quartet, Op. 74, and the "Les Adieux" Piano Sonata, Op. 81a. These are all widely performed and recorded and are considered to be cornerstones of the literature for their respective genres. The Choral Fantasy, Op. 80, is less frequently heard, due in part to the unusual performing forces required: a piano soloist, a full choir, and an orchestra for a piece that lasts barely twenty minutes. Of the incidental music for Goethe's *Egmont*, Op. 84, only the overture is widely performed today; like the play itself, the rest has fallen into neglect. Beethoven's only oratorio, *Christus am Ölberge*, Op. 85, is now considered a minor work and, with the exception of its final chorus, is rarely heard.

A quick examination of the table of contents shows that in Beethoven's time, the relative value placed on these works was roughly the opposite. Eighteen items are devoted to *Christus*, including a lengthy review in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, and the many short concert reports show how often and widely it was performed. Only slightly fewer items are devoted to the *Egmont* music, including one of E. T. A. Hoffmann's epochal Beethoven reviews. The third largest number of pages is devoted to the Choral Fantasy, while Op. 73 has mostly short concert reports, and Opp. 74 and 81a receive only a few mentions each, including a short, negative review of the former.

The wide attention given to the *Egmont* music undoubtedly reflects the extraordinary confluence that it represents; Beethoven and Goethe were both considered the most prominent German artists in their respective fields, and a work in which their talents were brought together held obvious fascination for their contemporaries. The popularity of *Christus* probably reflects the growing culture of choral festivals like the annual Lower Rhine Music Festival,

which began in 1818 and became firmly established during the 1820s. This helps explain why references to *Christus*, which was written in 1803–4 and published in 1811, became more frequent with the passage of time.

As for today's repertory standards, it is worth remembering that during Beethoven's lifetime it was still a rarity for string quartets and piano sonatas to be performed in public. There were relatively few standing orchestras and thus few opportunities to perform challenging works like the "Emperor," which also makes extraordinary demands on the piano soloist, and by this time Beethoven was too deaf to perform the work himself. Op. 74 is too difficult for most amateur string quartets to play, and Op. 81a is beyond the reach of all but the most skillful amateur pianists. During Beethoven's lifetime, these works had yet to find their public voice.

I would like to thank Wayne Senner and William Meredith for their central role in initiating this project, and to acknowledge the Retrospective Index to Music Periodicals (RIPM) for permission to copy the music examples as they appeared in the original sources. Information on the dates of composition and publication of Beethoven's works is based on the new edition of the Kinsky-Halm catalogue edited by Kurt Dorfmueller, Norbert Gertsch, and Julia Ronge. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second edition, is the default reference source for biographical information. This installment was supported by a generous grant from the University Research Committee at Baylor University.

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Op. 73. Piano Concerto No. 5 in E-flat (“Emperor”)

73.I.

“News. Leipzig.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 14

(1 January 1812): 8.¹

There followed Beethoven’s newest concerto for the pianoforte (in E-flat major, Breitkopf and Härtel, no. 4). It was performed beautifully. This is undoubtedly one of the most original and effective of all existing concertos, one of the richest in imagination but also one of the most difficult. Mr. Music director Schneider² played it so masterfully that we could not imagine greater perfection: certainly not in regard to dexterity, clarity, security, and delicacy, but also not in regard to soul and perfect comprehension of the meaning and intent of the composition, and certainly overall, as for every individual passage in particular. As the orchestra also accompanied the work and the soloist just as one might wish, with unmistakable attention and love toward the composer, the very large audience could hardly have failed to be moved to rapture, which they could scarcely satisfy with the customary expressions of gratitude and joy.

¹The “Emperor” concerto, Op. 73, was written in 1808–1809 and first published by Clementi and Co. in London in November 1810 and by Breitkopf und Härtel in Leipzig early in 1811. The performance described here, which was the seventh concert in the Gewandhaus series, was directed by J. P. C. Schulz. It did not take place toward the close of 1810, as reported in Elliott Forbes, rev. and ed., *Thayer’s Life of Beethoven* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), henceforth Thayer-Forbes, 477, but rather about a year later, in December 1811; thus it could not have been the premiere of the work, which was performed by E. H. Rudolph in January 1811 at a subscription concert at Prince Lobkowitz’s palace, as clarified in Kurt Dorfmueller, Norbert Gertsch, and Julia Ronge, eds., *Ludwig van Beethoven: Thematisch-bibliographisches Werkverzeichnis*, vol. 1 (Munich: G. Henle, 2014), 459. The December program also included a symphony by Haydn in D major; a scene and aria with choir and horn obbligato from *Corradino* by Francesco Morlacchi (1784–1841), sung by Albertina Campagnoli, daughter of one of the Gewandhaus orchestra’s previous directors; Peter von Winter’s overture to *Colmal*; and the second finale of Mozart’s *Marriage of Figaro* (this may have been either the finale of the second act or the “second” large-scale finale that concludes act four). In the Mozart, the solo parts at the end were augmented by a choir, a practice strongly approved by the correspondent.

²Johann Christian Friedrich Schneider (1786–1853) was at the time of this performance the organist at the university church in Leipzig; he became organist at the Thomaskirche, Bach’s old church, later in 1812.

73.2.

“Concert and Presentation of Three Celebrated Paintings at the Imperial Royal Court Opera Theater Near the Kärnthner Tor.”

Thalia 2, no. 15

(19 February 1812): 57–58.¹

Grand, entirely *new concerto* for the pianoforte, composed, and dedicated to his imperial royal highness the archduke Rudolph, by *Louis van Beethoven*, played by Mr. *Carl Czerny*.² If this piece of music, which essentially made up the concert that had been announced, did not receive the applause that it deserved, the reason lies partly in the subjective character of the composer, partly in the objective attributes of the listeners. *Beethoven*, full of proud self-reliance, never writes for the masses; he wishes to be understood and felt, and because of the difficulties which he intentionally creates, only connoisseurs are capable of this, and an abundance of them cannot be counted on on such occasions. In the exuberance of his genius, he almost never thinks of the *ne quid nimium*;³ he pursues his theme with tireless haste, not infrequently makes digressions which seem baroque, and thus, through exertion, he himself exhausts the eager attention of the weaker musical amateur, who cannot follow his train of thought. The nonconnoisseurs, however, are led by the length into chaotic night and become bored. If to this is added, as it was today and almost always is, the circumstance that the orchestra does not act in purest consonance with the soloist, for which the somewhat contrived style of writing is responsible, then no little displeasure must arise for a large portion of the connoisseurs as well, who look for simplicity and clarity in delivery. Mr. *Czerny* overcame

¹The performance described here, which was also reported in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (see 73.3), took place at a concert on 12 February 1812, which featured an elaborate program that also included *tableaux vivants* of paintings by Raphael, Poussin, and de Troyes. Other musical works on the program included an overture by Casimir Antonio Cartellieri (1772–1807), Kapellmeister to Prince Lobkowitz; two Italian arias and a duet; and violin variations by Joseph Mayseder (1789–1863), one of the most prominent early interpreters of Beethoven’s chamber music. The proceeds of the concert went to the Society of Noble Women to be used for charitable works.

²Czerny (1791–1857) was not only Beethoven’s pupil, but one of the most influential musicians of the early nineteenth century. His influence is felt down to the present day through his technical exercises for piano students—which, however, make up only a small portion of his enormous output as a composer. He was also the teacher of Liszt, and in that sense the spiritual forebear of many of the most prominent pianists of the next hundred years.

³Latin, “nothing in excess.”

the difficulties, of which there were many, very well, with secure facility and modulated expression. We only believe ourselves compelled to observe that on the one hand, a keyboard concerto is not, in general, entirely appropriate to a big, full theater, while on the other hand, particularly in *Beethoven's* concertos, a great many of the nuances in the supple modulations are obscured in this case.

73.3.

“News. Vienna. Concerts.”
Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 14
(25 March 1812): 210.¹

4) Grand, entirely new concerto for the pianoforte (E-flat major), composed, and dedicated to his imperial royal highness the Archduke Rudolph, by Louis van Beethoven, played by Mr. Carl Czerny. Mr. Cz. played with much security and facility; he showed that he has it in his power to conquer even the greatest difficulties. One would nevertheless like for his playing to have a purer delivery, which would round it out more. The extravagant length of the composition diminished the total effect that was nevertheless brought forth by this magnificent product of the spirit.

¹For further details about the concert at which this performance took place, see 73.2n1.

73·4·

x.

“Concert in Berlin.”

Zeitschrift für Theater, Musik und bildende Künste 2
(September 1822): 147.

Thereupon the concert performer played a concerto by L. v. *Beethoven* in E-flat major, a magnificent pattern of sounds, full of the most gripping moments, of original, striking, but also often bizarre and baroque turns, as only the ingenious Beethoven’s deep, eccentric peculiarity could bring forth. Miss Lithander¹ shows an estimable talent and achieves a great deal for her tender age. Revealing no real genius, her playing smacks rather too much of instruction and of painstaking but superficial accomplishment.

¹According to *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 21 (1819), 481, and 23 (1821), 865, C. E. Lithander was a professor in Stockholm with twin daughters, Caroline and Eva, who played the piano and gave joint concerts. They were eleven years old in 1819, and thus would have been fourteen at the time of this report. Caroline is probably the one who performed at the concert described here, since the 1821 *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* report mentions her performing the work on a similar occasion the previous year, along with the E-flat major concerto of John Field. Both sisters played and also sang at this 1821 performance, and the correspondent considered their playing to be outstanding for their age.

73.5.

“News. Leipzig, from Michaelmas 1823 to March 1824. Extra concerts.”¹

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 26

(25 March 1824): 203.²

Thereupon followed Beethoven’s E-flat major pianoforte concerto, for the performance of which we are all the more thankful, the more rarely we have a chance to hear it here, for it is reckoned by most performers among those which are considered thankless, a fact which also is not incomprehensible for those who love the brilliance of art more than art itself. He performed this ingenious concerto (we might call it the symphonic one) with the customary skill. We missed, however, the high-spirited humor of a strangely aroused power, which must live particularly in the transitions of the last movement.

¹The festival of the archangel Michael was celebrated on 29 September.

²The concert described here was given on 13 October 1823 by Johann Friedrich Schneider, who had played the “Emperor” Concerto at the performance described in 73.1. At the time of this performance he was ducal Kapellmeister at Dessau. Except for the Beethoven, the program consisted entirely of Schneider’s own compositions; it began with a symphony, which was followed by the Beethoven, and the first half concluded with a setting of Herder’s translation of Psalm 23. The second half contained an overture and a setting of Psalm 24, again in Herder’s translation.

73.6.

“News. Vienna. Musical Diary of the Month of April.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 29

(22 May 1829): 370.¹

(Arrangement for two pianos and string quartet)

Second: Beethoven’s concerto in E-flat, arranged for two pianofortes and quartet accompaniment and played by Carl Czerny with Mr. Pfaller.² The principal part, along with the accompaniment of the string instruments, has remained unchanged. The parts for the wind instruments, however, are given to the second pianoforte. Thus arranged, the beautiful work attains a broader usefulness and, in the absence of a full orchestra, will find many friends in this form as well.

¹This report describes one of Ignaz Schuppanzigh’s subscription concerts, which included two novelties, of which this arrangement of Beethoven’s concerto was the second. The first was the Schubert Octet in F major, D. 803, which the correspondent praised warmly.

²Albin Pfaller is mentioned several times in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*; he is described in 30 (1828), 228, as a dilettante pianist performing Beethoven’s Concerto no. 3, Op. 37, in Vienna. He also wrote a Singspiel, *Der reisende Schneider*, mentioned in *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 22 (1820), 333.

Op. 74. String Quartet in E-Flat Major (“Harp”)

74.I.

“Review.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 13

(22 May 1811): 349–351.¹

One cannot describe the work of an ingenious composer better than by comparing it with similar works of the same master. Mr. v. Beethoven established in his first six quartets the richness of his imagination and the abundance of technical devices which this genre of instrumental music demands. In these same works, furthermore, the loveliest melodies appeal to every feeling, and the unity, the sublime simplicity, the specific and firmly maintained character of each individual piece which makes up these quartets, elevates them to the rank of masterworks and associates Beethoven’s name with the revered names of Haydn and Mozart. We believe that we speak from the soul of all genuine friends of musical art, and of quartet music in particular, when we express the wish that our B. might have stayed with this manner and style, and have given us much that is similar to these works! The grand quartets by him which have been appearing for a year or more, however, breathe a very different spirit.² The composer has given himself over here without discrimination to the strangest and most unusual ideas of his original imagination, has fancifully bound together the most dissimilar things, and has treated everything with such a deep and difficult degree of artistry that the easy and pleasing details are nearly lost in the dreary spirit of the whole. Now the present work by this composer (in E-flat and A-flat major)³ is more similar to these latter works of his than to those earlier ones. More serious than happy, more deep and rich in artistry than pleasing

¹The “Harp” quartet, Op. 74, was written in 1809 and first published in September of that year by Clementi and Co. in London, in November by Breitkopf und Härtel in Leipzig, and in December by Artaria in Vienna. In view of the fact that Breitkopf und Härtel also published the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, the independence of this reviewer is worthy of note.

²The works of which the reviewer approves are the six quartets of Op. 18, which were published in 1801. Those to which he objects apparently begin with the three quartets of Op. 59, published in 1808. These works are described by the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*’s correspondent in Frankfurt am Main as “significant and yet unpopular” (*Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 23 [21 February 1821]: 111).

³The description of this quartet as “in E-flat and A-flat major” refers to the fact that the second movement, *Adagio ma non troppo*, is in the latter key. Today the entire work would be said to be in E-flat major, since the first movement begins and the last movement ends in this key.

and appealing, it exercises, like every work of genius, a certain power upon the listener; but not exactly—in order to embrace him with much affection. The first movement begins with a very serious, almost gloomy *poco adagio*, which, deeply gripping, would make a first-rate introduction to the following Allegro if it did not lose itself toward the end in an unnecessary jumble of harsh dissonances. The following Allegro, serious as a whole, is such an original piece, put together from a variety of ideas and notions, and is just as difficult to perform as it is to follow through all of its strange intricacies, that it is scarcely possible to characterize it precisely. The seriousness with which it begins is soon broken by a witty pizzicato passage. The minimal melodic coherence, and the humorous wandering back and forth from one idea to another, gives it more the appearance of a free fantasy than of an orderly whole. The very long Adagio which follows, written in 3/8 time—a dark night piece—comes across more as somberly melancholy, and, in the dreary confusion in which it loses itself, particularly in the last half, seems to strain harshly at the boundary of beautiful art, which is supposed to move but not exactly torture. We believe that it would be very useful to young artists to study the Adagio with its harmonic turns and progressions, but not just to imitate it everywhere. The following Presto in 3/4 time makes a glaring contrast, beginning with a rather wild unison, and maintains this spirit of a coarse, wild humor throughout. We are familiar with the bold, precise, clear-cut individuality with which B. is accustomed to writing in the last, fast movements of his quartets. The present one seems to set the hearer down suddenly amid the warlike dances of a savage nation. The *Andante con Variazioni*, which forms the conclusion of this original work, deviates somewhat from that which we are otherwise accustomed to hearing of this type. Here as well, the composer has given us something deeper and original, instead of that which is pleasing and familiar, so that this also is fully a part of the whole.

Beethoven's genius does not need our eulogies, and will scarcely heed our wishes. But if the artist—be he poet or composer—believes that he must give himself up *only* to the subjective play of his imagination, without troubling himself with unity and purity of effect, in order to create beauty: the art loving recipient must still limit himself only to the objective unity and beauty of the final product, and indicate what has disturbed his full, pure enjoyment of it. The present writer confesses, with the sincerity that has become second nature to him, and which is his duty, in art as in life—and also with the conviction that the friends of friendly art think likewise: *he cannot wish that instrumental music should lose itself in this manner and style*. But he wishes this least for the quartet—a genre that, though certainly capable of tender seriousness and of grieving melancholy, yet cannot aim to honor the dead, or to describe the feelings of one in despair, but rather should cheer the soul with a tender, pleasant play of imagination.

That this quartet is difficult to perform scarcely needs to be recalled.

74.2.

“Brief Notices.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 32

(29 September 1830), 640–41.

(Arrangement for piano four hands, by J. P. Schmidt)

Both quartets are familiar; both are beautiful, both masterly, and both as different as their masters.¹ How many people may already have been delighted by both of them? Now they have been made accessible to pianists as well, and by a man who belongs among the most accomplished at this and has already won with similar transcriptions the thanks of many who wish to make the enjoyable recollection of their favorite pieces brighter through the sounds of the keyboard. In the serious, good-naturedly happy work,² fingering given on p. 7 is probably a printing error; the 3 should be 4. The whole plays well and has a very satisfactory effect in this form as well. The second one, serious, drearily thoughtful, must, with its intricate progressions, be well practiced; both players need to have come to an understanding with each other. Many combinations of sounds will only come off tolerably with effort, for example the last measures on pp. 8 and 9. These probably cannot be improved upon. The rest plays well and the works recommend themselves.

¹The second quartet referred to here is Op. 54, no. 2 by Joseph Haydn. Op. 74 is also described as “no. 10”: “Ouev, 74. No. 10 de Louis van Beethoven, arrangé pour le pianof. à 4 mains. By the same.” Both arrangements are by J. P. Schmidt and were published by Breitkopf und Härtel. The arrangement of the Beethoven appeared in April 1828.

J. P. Schmidt (1779–1853) was a member of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* staff who also worked in a series of government positions. According to a biographical sketch in *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 46 (1844), 724–26, he was well known as an opera composer and also made many four-hand arrangements of quartets and quintets by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, as well as of Mozart and Beethoven piano concertos.

²I.e., the Haydn quartet.

Op. 75. Six Songs

75.I.

“Review. Six Songs with Accompaniment of the Pianoforte, Set to Music.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 13

(28 August 1811): 593–95.¹

Mr. v. B. writes nothing which does not bear to a greater or lesser extent the stamp of an original spirit, a deep feeling, a characteristic humor, and a special manner of working out. In order to display these preferences to their fullest extent, however, he makes use of many means, and of a large, free playing field. Where he is restricted in this regard—be it through the genre, or through the need to accommodate limited abilities on the part of the players or suchlike—then he has seldom been able to display his characteristic inner nature to its full extent, has sometimes done so only in part, and has occasionally been entirely unsuccessful in doing so. The reviewer, who regards Mr. v. B.’s works as highly, loves them as strongly and practices them as much as anyone, but who is not as blindly devoted to them as many now are (truly as little to his satisfaction as to their honor): the reviewer finds in this interesting little work evidence and proof of everything just maintained, and will declare it here entirely candidly, and as well as is possible in brief.

No. 1 comprises the well-known, unsurpassable Göthe² song: “Kennst du das Land,” etc. It is, in common parlance, through-composed, but the second and third strophes only deviate from the first one to a moderate extent, and only at those places where the words easily permit it. Every strophe is treated in two parts, the second of which begins with the refrain: “Dahin, dahin,” etc. The first part is first-rate in its simple, flowing, and passionate melody, as in the keyboard part that accompanies and beautifully supports it. It appeals to everyone immediately, and appeals to them, furthermore, in the right way. On the other hand, an unprejudiced person will scarcely contradict the reviewer’s judgment that the second half is ill-conceived in its very design. Just at the point where, after the charming description, the innermost feelings break forth unadorned (even when one considers the song just in itself, without thinking of the poor, yearning Mignon), just at this point the composer changes into cheerful 6/8 time,

¹This review refers to the Breitkopf und Härtel edition of Op. 75, published in December 1810; it had first been published by Clementi in London a few months earlier. The review is attributed to *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* editor Friedrich Rochlitz by both Stefan Kunze and Kinsky-Halm.

²The orthography of personal and place names in the original texts has been maintained.

and entirely into the manner of the commonplace, easy, agreeable Italian arietta, mangling the magnificent structure of the strophes with frequent repetitions of individual words and so forth, and superfluously adds, in regard to performance: faster. (As regards details, let it only be observed that every time, even at the repetitions, he accentuates: “dahín,” instead of: “dáhin.”) It goes without saying that otherwise, if we disregard the poet’s point of view, this part of the song as well is an agreeable piece of music: who, though, could, would do the former?— No. 2. Göthe’s “Neue Liebe, neues Leben.” Here the text more easily allows, if need be, for wanderings from the course of the song, and for the setting to be treated as a small aria. This is the way the composer took it; he conceived and rendered the character only as a whole (but strikingly), shunned no interruptions, no repetitions of individual phrases, dividing the effect between the voice and the accompaniment, etc. In this way it has become a favorite piece, which, performed in a lively way, will only win friends.

No. 3 contains the nice romance with which Mephistopheles, in Göthe’s *Faust*, fools the dumbfounded chaps in Auerbach’s cellar: the story of the great flea.³ This one piece, which Mr. v. B. has here conceived and held steady from the first to the last note, is worth more than whole volumes of mediocre songs, which are blameless in their mediocrity. With it, one must think of the whole wild scene and its design, and also of the ingenious deviltry and mood of the rhapsodist; all of this is truly contained in the adventurous, burlesque music, put together from heavily good-humored antiquity and thoroughly modern painting (particularly in the chorus at the *swatting*.)⁴ Whoever knows how to understand it in this way, and, as it were, enjoy it to the fullest, will surely allow the reviewer to maintain that no one could have hit upon this but a true artist, like B., and he only in a very happy hour and a truly unique mood!

No. 4 is the small, simple, and tender little song that about half a year ago was included in a supplement to this periodical, where all necessary information about it is also included.⁵ The reviewer will pass over nos. 5 and 6, which also consist of very simple little songs, for he must admit that they were not to his taste. In any case, they are rather insignificant. —The little work is very nicely impressed on stone.

³The story of a king who owns a flea whom he clothes luxuriously, along with all his relatives, is sung by Mephistopheles to the amused revelers at Auerbach’s Cellar before he begins to entertain them in more sinister ways.

⁴The revelers echo Mephistopheles’s statement that unlike the king’s courtiers, they can swat and smother fleas to their heart’s content. These words are reflected by amusing grace notes in Beethoven’s piano part.

⁵The song is “Gretels Warnung” (from Goethe’s *Faust*), which appears as a supplement to the issue of *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 12 (1809–1810) for 3 October, 1810. That issue concludes with a paragraph advertising several forthcoming publications of Beethoven’s music by Breitkopf und Härtel, the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*’s publisher, including “a collection of mostly highly original and first-rate songs, of which we print one here on the following page, which will surely please every reader, and which we nevertheless hold not to be one of the most outstanding, selecting it only as one of the shortest.”

Op. 76. Six Variations for Piano in D Major

76.I.

“Brief Notices.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 13

(20 February 1811): 152.¹

A sort of burlesque, which, performed by practiced keyboard players, who are also able to understand and render the piquant and strange in an appropriate way, can certainly entertain agreeably during the few minutes that it demands. Beautiful engraving.

¹This review refers to the edition of Op. 76 published in November 1810 by Breitkopf und Härtel in Leipzig; it had first been published by Clementi in London the previous August. These variations were written in 1809; Beethoven used the theme two years later as the Turkish march in his incidental music to Kotzebue's *The Ruins of Athens*.

Op. 77. Fantasy for Piano

77.I.

“Brief Notices.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 13

(7 August 1811): 548.¹

(With Op. 78, piano sonata in F-sharp major)

Both little works are perhaps connected through their origin, or else the second was seen as a consequence of the first; both, at least, are connected to each other in their ideas, in their style, in their degree of difficulty, and also in their key (B major).² The fantasy is certainly a free one, and in the novelty of numerous ideas, in the boldness and unexpectedness of the modulations, in learned voice leading, and also in the disjunct nature of the style, is for the most part similar to those of the magnificent Ph. Eman. Bach, except that Beethoven has not paid as much attention as Bach to the simplicity of the melodious passages, while the whole is put together with more fire, and, it goes without saying, with more fullness and richer use of the advantages of today’s pianoforte.³ The sonata contains, after a short introduction, a serious Allegro, rich in imagination, and a Vivace, decked out with many completely unconventional turns of phrase, full of fire and liveliness. Both works, performed well and in their true sense, make a beautiful effect, but to perform them thus is by no means easy, and harder than it appears at first glance.

¹The fantasy, Op. 77, and the piano sonata, Op. 78, were written at approximately the same time in late 1809. Both were published by Breitkopf und Härtel in Leipzig in November 1810, having been previously published by Clementi in London the previous August. This review refers to the Leipzig editions.

²This is not correct; the sonata is in F-sharp major. Perhaps the reviewer was unaccustomed to seeing works in this unusual key; B major was uncommon enough by the standards of the day. Today, the fantasy is sometimes described as being in G minor, since it begins in that key.

³C. P. E. Bach’s keyboard works were written for the clavichord, an instrument with a notoriously smaller dynamic range than the pianos even of Bach’s time.

77.2.

“Reviews of New Music in Print.”
Wiener allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 1
(27 March 1813): 197–99.

Whenever new pieces of music by Beethoven are discussed, everyone who is only moderately acquainted with Mr. B.’s compositions will approach this new piece with a double preconception: 1) as completely original in its harmonies, form, and modulations; 2) as very difficult to perform. The above-mentioned fantasy completely agrees with this double expectation. As broken off and disjointed as its individual movements appear to be at first glance, they nevertheless stand in the most beautiful harmonic connectedness and form a magnificent whole, which one would not hesitate to put forward as the model for the fantasy if it did not contradict the character and the essence of this type of music to wish to prescribe a specific form for it.

This fantasy begins with a portion of the G minor scale, which is answered in the bass. In and of itself, this beginning is certainly uninteresting; yet it is the basis of the entire fantasy, and for the keyboard player as well, who declaims it by memory (actually as if on the spur of the moment)—very appropriate. It gives the appearance that the player is as yet undecided how to begin. It is immediately followed by a cadence, likewise in G minor, and then again by a scale and cadence in F minor, which leads more or less into a harmonic alternate phrase in D-flat major. This is interrupted by a longer scale in A-flat major, then reappears in the same way and leads by means of a 6/5 chord into B-flat major. Again a long scale down and upward in F major. Now the first section begins in B-flat major (6/8 time, Allegro), which, however, lasts only 10 measures and fades away on an E-flat major chord. Here the illusion of improvisation reappears; it seems as if the player had suddenly lost the thread of his ideas and was searching for it in the following broken chords, which make up the preparation for the next Allegro con brio (D minor, 6/8 time). This section, due to its many leaps and chords, is somewhat difficult to perform with precision. It closes with an enharmonic chord, which resolves into the 4/3 chord of the A-flat major scale, and thus forms the transition into the Adagio in A-flat major, which, interrupted in the fifth measure by a little scale in B-flat minor, modulates into F-sharp major and B minor. A short Presto then leads into a Più Presto (6/8 time, B minor), where the bass maintains F-sharp for 14 measures while the right hand strikes various chords. This section is brought out in a very brilliant way if one moves in equal steps

from *pp* to *ff*. The section that follows is probably the most difficult in the entire work. The composer may even have seen this for himself, for he finds it useful to prevent embarrassment on the part of the player with repeated indications of fingering. The latter may be assured, however, that the effect will richly reward the effort of practicing and paying attention to expression. The 6/5 chord of the B minor scale then re-introduces the preceding Adagio, in the third measure of which the 6/5 chord of the C major scale magnificently surprises us. After a few measures a five-voiced theme finally enters (B major, 2/4 time, Allegretto), which, with the eight variations that follow, completely bears the stamp of Beethoven's originality. The latter are completely new; even the most experienced and strictest connoisseur of art will find no reminiscences in them. The 3rd and 7th make very striking effects; the 4th and 5th, on the other hand, are all the more melodious and good-natured. The 6th, in which the bass carries the theme, contradicts the originality praised above in form only, since it is customary to put the theme in the bass one time for the sake of variety; the accompaniment in the upper voice, however, is entirely unique here, and consequently the variation is new as well. We particularly advise the player to observe precisely the *sforzato* on the last eighth note in a few measures of this variation (the 6th), as well as the *sforzato* on the 2nd and 5th sixteenth notes in each measure of the 7th variation. These are followed once again by several scales, the second to last of which turns to C major, in which key yet an 8th variation begins, but quickly leads back to B major. Here the idea of the 7th variation is taken up again and worked out. The theme then begins again, Adagio in four voices, and after several surprising chords the fantasy finally concludes with the B major scale extending through an octave in contrary motion, with the bass entering at half the speed of the upper voice and then ending with a single contra B.

The engraving of this reprint of the original Leipzig edition, published on brown paper, is neither pure nor correct: mistakes which are all the less excusable, since when, as in the present and in similar cases, the publisher has to pay no honorarium, so that his expenses are limited to the edition itself, it can rightly be expected that all the greater attention will be given to them. As proof of the incorrectness and for the benefit of the owner of this reprinted fantasy, these corrections follow:

Page 4, line 4, measure 2, the last 8th note should be E instead of E-sharp; page 7, line 5, last measure, G-sharp should be read instead of F-sharp; page 8, line 4, the first note in the last measure of the bass is C-sharp; page 8, line 5, measure 3, in the upper voice C sharp should be read instead of E sharp; page 10, line 4, the note before last is C-sharp instead of B-sharp; page 10, line 4, the sharps are missing in both voices right at the beginning, and the second chord must be the same as the first one in the next measure; page 11, line 4, measure 1, the natural sign belongs to A, not to B.

Op. 80. Choral Fantasy

80.I.

“News. Leipzig.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 13

(27 March 1811): 231.¹

Now was performed, for the first time, a grand fantasy by Beethoven for the pianoforte, which afterward is gradually joined by all the voices of the orchestra, then by solo singers, and finally by the full choir. This again is as original a work as it is an attractive one by the ingenious master, full of spirit, life, and grace. The deep seriousness and the crowded abundance of ideas that predominate from the outset, for as long as the pianoforte is heard alone and free, are gradually resolved more and more into cheerfulness, until finally the whole ends with vigorous gaiety. The part between the first announcement of the cheerful idea that is later performed by the choir and the entrance of the voices, seems to us weaker, even though it has much that is agreeable and piquant. The ideas are too little related to each other, and brought into too little connection with each other in performance as well; but we also grant that with such a rich and unusually organized work, of which no score has been seen and which has only been heard one time, we have perhaps not discovered everything, at least among the nonessentials. In any case, this work will become an extremely welcome event for all seasoned keyboard players, very accomplished orchestras and participating friends of art, after it has appeared in

¹The Choral Fantasy, Op. 80, was written in December 1808 for performance at the “Akademie” at which Beethoven also introduced the 5th and 6th Symphonies, Opp. 67 and 68; the 4th Piano Concerto, Op. 59; portions of the C major Mass, Op. 86; and the Fantasy for piano, Op. 77. For a description of that performance, see *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 11 (25 January 1809): 167–69. The statement in the first sentence of the text presumably means that this was the first performance of this work in Leipzig.

The concert described in this report was given on 18 March 1811 by Justus Johann Friedrich Dotzauer (1783–1860), an influential cellist and composer. It was his farewell concert before leaving Leipzig to take a position as royal chamber musician and first cellist in the royal orchestra at Dresden, where he would remain for the rest of his life. The report begins with a lengthy tribute to Dotzauer and his activities in Leipzig.

The full program also included a symphony by Dotzauer, followed by a cello concerto by Bernhard Romberg (1767–1841), which Dotzauer performed. An Italian opera scene followed, after which the Beethoven concluded the first half of the program. The second half featured a violin concerto in A major by Jacques Pierre Joseph Rode (1774–1830), the French violinist who gave the first performance of Beethoven’s sonata Op. 96; a duet by Valentino Fioravanti (1764–1837); and variations on a Russian folksong for cello and orchestra by Romberg.

print here in Leipzig at Easter.² Music Director F. Schneider masterfully performed the very difficult pianoforte part, which is difficult not just in terms of the notes but primarily of the unique sensibility of the freer parts. The orchestra as well revealed anew its great skill, attentiveness, and love of Beethoven's compositions by performing the whole so satisfactorily without a score and after one rehearsal.

²Despite this prediction, the score of Op. 80 was not published by Breitkopf und Härtel in Leipzig until four months after this performance. It was first published by Clementi and Co. in London in October 1810.

80.2.

“Review.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 13

(6 May 1812): 307–11.¹

If the fantasy is the true culminating point for the genius who creates from within himself; who here draws the picture of his own soul, and makes the form of art into a mere reflecting mirror of his own innermost being, whose fullness emerges in all clarity—then the friend of art must find such a work all the more precious, the more purely the genius of the creator himself can present itself therein, without outside assistance, without a trace of any predetermined form. The fantasy is the artist’s monologue, in which he purely expresses his individual, personal experience, whereas he can only relate to given forms—to the oratorio, to the opera, and so forth—in dialogue; that is, he can only contribute that for which the required forms give occasion. If, constrained by established forms to speak only in accordance with them, it becomes more or less necessary for him to alloy himself with foreign matter, and to take up foreign material into his creation, then in free fantasy, on the contrary, all fetters are broken, and the artist’s genius is placed back in its proper domain, older than the forms, as creator and lord in the kingdom of sounds. If every artist made use of this hint—or, more properly, if the genius of most artists accustomed itself less to the forms and knew how to accomplish its own spiritual emancipation into the kingdom of freedom—then every fantasy, assuming that the artist is truly one who can think for himself and not an imitator, would be a true autobiography, and the clearest glance into his creative being, from which one could observe his workings and, so to speak, steal one’s way into the workshop of his thoughts.

Now, the present piece is a fantasy in this sense, and is so like scarcely any other. In it, the rich and great genius of the composer has shown itself in all purity and clarity, without a single feature being absent. Indeed, he has even, and certainly not arbitrarily, become a true portrait painter, who does not flatter, which can be seen in various places, and which all the more clearly characterizes the fantasy itself, as such.

At the first glance at the whole can be seen the mighty striving of a deep-thinking genius to rise up from the sea of unending harmonies to the highest degree of clarity and self-examination.

¹This review refers to the edition of Op. 80 which was published by Breitkopf und Härtel in Leipzig in July 1811.

This fantasy opens with a fortepiano solo, an Adagio in C minor, which expresses with power and fullness the inexhaustible richness of B.'s thoughts, but not without chaotic disorder, which at first causes the listener to fear that the spirit will become lost in itself, and, perishing in all its fullness, never come to light. One can think of this as an introduction of the artist's life to the course it will take. Images and dreams are crowded among and through each other, becoming lost in the fluctuating, tightly intertwined dance, and development is as yet held in reserve—self-awareness seems as yet to be absent. However, as this is only a dark entryway, from which glowing genius will lead us into the true pantheon of harmonies, this Adagio is also resolved as a suspension in various figures in the highest octaves into a finale in concerto style, which the double bass begins—contrastingly enough!—in marchlike motion with a 4 1/2 measure solo [mm. 27–31], whereupon the fortepiano strikes up again, but already, like an ascent merely ventured, fades out in the second measure under a fermata [mm. 31–33]. Now the violins enter with the theme that had previously been stated by the bass, likewise in 4 1/2 measures, and the fortepiano again dares an ascent, which likewise fades out in the second measure, but more powerfully than before [mm. 34–40]. Now horns, oboes, and bassoons enter, accompanied by a few notes stated, *pizzicato*, by the violins [mm. 41 ff.]. The forward-striving genius does not maintain this pace for long. It is taken up² into an *Allegretto* of the most original kind. The first six measures, each one constrained by a fermata, in which bare horns and oboes tease each other in an alternating echo, is so new, so singular. Now the fortepiano enters again, accompanied only by the horns [mm. 58 ff.], until its play, after a cadenza [m. 72], is taken up by a flute solo, with which the oboes and other instruments are exchanged in the most striking way, interrupted and supported by powerful tutti passages [mm. 76 ff.]. The lyrical *Adagio ma non troppo* in A major [mm. 291 ff.], which begins with a beguiling phrase in the clarinets and bassoons, while the fortepiano sustains the dominant with a lingering three-measure-long trill in the upper octave, is extremely surprising. The solo of the fortepiano now alternates in a wondrously charming way with a violoncello accompaniment. This *Adagio* is interrupted by a *march* (in F) in a truly shocking way, which all at once chases away the gentle sounds of what has come before with a genuinely military chill [mm. 322 ff.]. The fortepiano only dares for a few measures here and there to make itself heard through the noise of the instruments. But at last the racket dies away, and the fortepiano strikes up with full, resounding chords with accompaniment of the violins and of a violoncello, which leaps over the ninth in a genuinely Beethovenian way. A short *Allegro* passage [mm. 389 ff.], intended simply as a cadenza and transition to the chorus which follows, concludes the fantasy, which now truly crosses over into the language of words—as genius, which has finally arrived at self-awareness, now strives truly to express itself with the greatest possible clarity.

Now this idea is obviously completely original, new, and fortunate as well. The artist, given over to his feelings, first begins gradually to sense and to recognize himself in his own creation. He selects and searches, propelled along in the sea of notes. Gradually he concentrates upon his principal feeling, which he seeks to impart to the greater company of related sounds. This

²Actually Meno Allegro.

striving extends itself and presses hastily forward, ever clearer, ever more specific, and finally succeeds, through clear self-examination, in reaching the full language of words. The genius, who first spoke directly to the feelings in inarticulate tones, now also speaks to the intellect in articulate words, and occupies the soul with a many-sidedness from which it cannot escape, in which it must lose itself and, by joyous participation, dissolve itself in sounds. The first strophe is thus a fortunate choice. Having heard the artist's harmonies, and been transported by them, the soul can no longer withhold its approval, and the intellect passes judgment over what is heard:³

Flatteringly gracious and lovely resound
Our life's harmonies
And from our sense of beauty spring forth
Flowers that bloom eternally.
Peace and joy flow amiably
Like the fluctuation of waves;
Whatever crowded us with coarse hostility
Settles into exultation.⁴
Greatness that has penetrated our heart
Then blooms anew and beautifully on high;
If a spirit has soared
A chorus of spirits always resounds for him.

The artist, not insensitive to the opinion of the feeling listener, now responds:

Therefore, you beautiful souls, accept
Gladly the gifts of beautiful art;
When love and power are wed
The goodwill of the gods rewards mankind.

The effect of this conclusion, which in a fantasy has until now been entirely unexpected, is magnificent; it must excite everyone and place them in the most beautiful frame of mind.

The whole of this fantasy is distinguished by a rare depth of ideas, as well as by fullness and power of harmony: which, however, are often hindered from realizing their appropriate breadth by a continual pressing and striving of the spirit—which only all too often sweeps along the feelings, which so gladly seek breadth in which to expand themselves, with a truly despotic power. It must entwine the hearer so strongly in the newness and dance-like succession of the ideas, which he continually, but vainly, tries to follow, that he at last forgets himself within their magic

³The authorship of the text of the choral fantasy is unknown, although it was formerly attributed to Christoph Kuffner, author of the tragedy *Tarpeja*, for which Beethoven wrote some incidental music in 1813 (WoO 2a and 2b).

⁴The author omits eight lines of the text at this point.

circles. In addition to study of the art, an abundant quantity of the psychological traits of Beethoven's artistic character is deposited here, the elaboration of which would admittedly now lead us too far, but which could lead to interesting disclosures. As regards the mechanical aspects of the work of art, this work certainly has its difficulties for the less accomplished, and even for the accomplished, which, however, are not insurmountable. Its delivery certainly demands great technical ability and delicacy on the part of the solo player, and an unusual degree of precision on the part of the orchestra. The only rebuke that can be made to the artist, particularly pertaining to the first *Adagio*, would be his often remaining too long with one and the same figuration, followed by an often all too abrupt interruption, whereby, on the one hand, stress could arise, and on the other hand, not infrequently, obscurity, if B.'s rich genius had not known how to underlay even repetition of the same figurations with a newness and power which do not allow the interest of the whole to suffer. Accordingly, the work will deserve to be recognized and prized, not only as a thoroughly original achievement, but as a masterful one as well.

80.3.

Carl Maria von Weber.¹

“2nd Concert for the Benefit of the Poor.”

Königliche kaiserliche privilegierte Prager Zeitung no. 119

28 April 1816.²

3. Fantasy for the pianoforte, with full orchestra and chorus, by Beethoven, played by Mr. Freytag³ [sic] from Berlin. We heard this ingenious composition for the first time and were delighted to hear, under the title “fantasy,” which seemed to us to serve as a defense for a perhaps rather extravagant lack of order, a beautifully thought-out, organized work, whose structure only became completely comprehensible and clear at the end through the words of the choir, and which must therefore gain greatly from a second hearing. Mr. Freytag, who has come here from Berlin in order to study composition and perfect his pianoforte playing with our opera director von Weber, performed his part with taste and sensibility, and overcame the at times very significant difficulties with power and assurance. We believe that we may yet recommend to him above all study of the trill, but may otherwise promise ourselves a very distinguished keyboard player. The uncommonly difficult accompaniment went very precisely, which always awakens an agreeable feeling among those residents of Prague who know that in Vienna, even under Beethoven’s direction, a great misfortune once befell it.⁴

¹Due to rumors circulated by Beethoven’s biographer Anton Schindler, Carl Maria von Weber is often mentioned casually as a virulent critic of Beethoven. As this review and others by him in this collection make clear, however, his authenticated writings speak of Beethoven in terms of warm admiration. For an overview of the controversy surrounding Weber’s attitude toward Beethoven, see Robin Wallace, *Beethoven’s Critics: Aesthetic Dilemmas and Resolutions during the Composer’s Lifetime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 100–104, and Carl Maria von Weber, *Writings on Music*, trans. Martin Cooper, ed. John Warrack (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 14–17.

²The information given in the heading is from Georg Kaiser, ed., *Sämtliche Schriften von Carl Maria von Weber* (Berlin, 1904), lxxx. The entire program consisted of Weber’s overture to Schiller’s *Turandot*, an unspecified aria by Weber, the Beethoven, a duet by Giuseppe Farinelli (1769–1836), and Weber’s setting of Rochlitz’s *Der Erste Ton*.

³According to Kaiser (*Sämtliche Schriften*, 551) this was one of Weber’s longstanding pupils. There are a few references to him in *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 10 (1807–1808), 332 and 509, and 12 (1809–1810), 423, where he is praised for playing piano works by Beethoven and Steibelt. Because he was nine years old at the time of the earliest description of his playing, he would have been seventeen or eighteen at the time of this report. Despite the optimistic predictions made here, he unfortunately died young. The fact that a pupil of Weber performed Beethoven in public several times, however, is certainly significant in view of the controversy described above in n. 1.

⁴The varying accounts of the blunder that took place at mm. 90 ff. at the first performance are summarized in Thayer-Forbes, 448–49.

80.4.

“From Paris.”

Zeitung für Theater, Musik und bildende Künste 2

(12 April 1822): 71–72.

Certainly, Mr. Editor, you will allow me this time to dedicate my article entirely to music, since I not only have to send news on the *Lampe merveilleuse*¹ and the concert by our magnificent German *Moscheles*² as I promised in my last contribution, but also to report on the four Concerts spirituels organized by the Academie royale de musique.³ On 24 February, *for the first time in the great new opera house*,⁴ a grand vocal and instrumental concert took place, organized by Lafon⁵ and Moscheles.⁶ The extraordinary appeal of the two performers filled the very

¹This is probably a reference to the “magic lantern,” an optical instrument which could project a magnified image of a picture on glass upon a wall in a darkened room. Interest in the device (a precursor of the motion picture projector), which was first mentioned in the second half of the seventeenth century, increased throughout the nineteenth century.

²Ignaz Moscheles (1794–1870), a Czech-born pianist and composer, was an enthusiastic champion of Beethoven’s works. His performances of the 9th symphony—a work in many ways foreshadowed in the Choral Fantasy—with the Philharmonic Society in London in 1837–1838 mark one of the watersheds in that work’s growing acceptance by the public.

³The institution of the Concert spirituel in Paris stretches back almost a hundred years prior to this notice. Although opera and ballet have always occupied a favored position in Parisian musical taste, they were banned during the *Lenten* season, as were all forms of entertainment related to the theater. The “spiritual concerts” that took their place during this time were one of the most dependable and important forums for the performance of important new instrumental music, particularly symphonic music. These concerts were not, however, symphony concerts in the modern sense. True to their name, they always featured religious vocal music as well. The appearance of the Choral Fantasy in such a forum is particularly significant, since it reminds us that early-nineteenth-century audiences were not accustomed, as we are today, to segregating instrumental and choral music into separate categories, and would thus perhaps have found the form of this work—and of the 9th symphony as well—less unusual than we do today.

⁴The new opera house on the rue Le Peletier opened in 1821 and continued to house the Paris Opera until it burned down in 1873. It saw the premiere of Rossini’s *Guillaume Tell*, as well as of important works by Meyerbeer, Verdi, and Gounod, and of the Paris version of Wagner’s *Tannhäuser*. It was also the focus of Berlioz’s frustration when he tried unsuccessfully to have *Les Troyens* performed there.

⁵Charles Philippe Lafont (1781–1839) was the foremost French violinist of his day and a rival to Paganini.

⁶A footnote to the original text reads: “The Théâtre Favant, where for several years these concerts had been given, had never in the previous year dared to give a concert without a ballet, since the current public was given credit for so little musical sensibility, and these two gentlemen dared to attempt it in the new building, which holds three times as many people.”

spacious location to such an extent that at seven o'clock (the beginning was at eight) no more seats were to be had. The orchestra performed a Haydn symphony very well, and it was deservedly applauded. I will not venture an opinion, though, as to whether many a German would not be put off by the overly quick tempos, since they give an entirely different twist to the spirit of German compositions. Without going over the individual concert pieces of Messrs. M. and L. in detail, since each of the two artists seemed to have taken it upon himself to outdo the other in each individual work and in each genre, and both reaped extravagant applause from the public, I will only observe that Moscheles took a chance on performing *Beethoven's grand fantasy with accompaniment of chorus and orchestra* here in Paris, where Beethoven's genius has as yet so little prevailed, and Rossini's confectionery music is idolized, whereas Gluck's masterpieces are not even heard. As much as this work was out of place before a public which expected only for its ears to be titillated, the performance was correspondingly unworthy of the master's high ideal. The total effect, which in this work does not depend only on the keyboard instrument, but is divided with the effect of the performing orchestra part and the energetic choral accompaniment, was totally lost, despite the ceaseless efforts of Mr. Moscheles, who understands his instrument as a true master. The often unexpected entries of the orchestra and the frightful explosions, particularly of the female choral singers, made the public, already confused by the incomprehensible composition, even more and more confused. The listeners only became completely comfortable again when Mr. Moscheles, in his improvisation that concluded the concert, so enchanted and encompassed the sensibility and feelings of the entire audience that everyone gladly forgot what had come before in order to devote themselves entirely to what had just passed, and to recall the heavenly melodies, indeed, I would even say, notes and chords, which he created at his instrument. In the vocal parts we heard and rejoiced at the foremost talents of French and Italian opera. The vocal pieces were entirely in accordance with local taste at this time, but the French part was less trivial, since it consisted of an aria from "Demophon" by Vogel⁷ and a duet from "Abels Tod" by Kreutzer.⁸ The receipts approached 9000 francs, something almost unheard of for a concert here.

⁷Johann Christoph Vogel (1756–1788) was a German composer of French operas. His *Démophon* premiered in Paris the year after his death.

⁸Rodolphe Kreutzer (1766–1831) was a French violinist and composer of many operas and ballets. His *Abel*, later revised as *La mort d'Abel*, premiered in 1810. Beethoven dedicated Op. 47, the Kreutzer Sonata, to him in 1803.

80.5.

“News. Vienna. Overview of the Month of April.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 24

(29 May 1822): 359.

On the 28th in the hall of the provincial diet: Mr. Sedlatzek:¹ 1. Overture by Reißiger,² a successful work; 2. Flute concerto by B. Romberg,³ played by the producer of the concert; 3. Duet by Rossini, sung by Mrs. Grünbaum⁴ and Miss Unger;⁵ 4. Adagio and Rondo for the pianoforte by Hieronymus Payr,⁶ played by Miss Leopoldine Blahetka;⁷ 5. New variations

¹Johann Sedlaczek (1789–?) was a prominent flutist. According to *New Grove*, 1st ed., 17, 100, the wind quintet led by Sedlatzek was “the Viennese counterpart of [Antonin] Reicha’s Parisian wind quintet.” According to *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* [19 (1817), 430, he also included Op. 80 in a concert he gave on 4 May 1817 at the “hotel of the Roman emperor.” Albin Pfaller (see 73.6, n. 2) also played the piano part on this occasion, and there is no mention of a mishap.

²Karl Gottlieb Reißiger (1798–1859) later became a prominent conductor and composer, primarily of operas. As director of the Court Opera in Dresden, where he succeeded Weber, he led the premiere of Wagner’s *Rienzi* in 1842.

³Due to the date of this concert, this must be a reference to Bernhard Heinrich Romberg (1767–1841), rather than to his father, Bernhard Anton Romberg (1742–1814); both were prominent cellists. The younger Romberg wrote a flute concerto, published as Op. 30.

⁴Therese Grünbaum (1791–1876) was a Viennese soprano noted for her performances as Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* and as Desdemona in Rossini’s *Otello*. She sang the role of Eglantine at the premiere of Weber’s *Euryanthe*. See K. J. Kutsch and Leo Riemens, *Großes Sängerlexikon* (Bern: Franck Verlag, 1987), 1174.

⁵Although she had yet to make her official debut at the time of this performance, Karoline Unger (1803–1877) later became one of the outstanding contraltos of her time. At the premiere of the 9th symphony, at which she sang the alto part, she turned the deaf Beethoven around so that he could see the applause of the audience. Of the beginning of their lengthy association, Beethoven wrote: “Two singers visited us today [the other one was Henriette Sontag] and since they wanted by all means to kiss my hands and were really pretty, I proposed that they kiss my mouth” (Thayer-Forbes, p. 896). She was one of the few who dared tell Beethoven directly that his music was uncongenial to the voice, exclaiming, when he refused to alter her parts in the 9th Symphony and the *Missa Solemnis*: “Well, then we must go on torturing ourselves in the name of God!” (Thayer-Forbes, 907).

⁶François-Joseph Fétis (*Biographie universelle des musiciens et bibliographie générale de la musique*, 2nd ed. [Paris, 1875], 6:472–73) describes Hieronymus (Jerome) Payr (1787–1845) as an Austrian composer, pianist, and organist who lived at various times in Vienna, Amsterdam, and Paris, and wrote operas as well as keyboard works, wind music, sacred music, and works in other genres—over 150 opus numbers in all.

⁷Leopoldine Blahetka (1811–1887) is mentioned frequently in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, as well as in Fétis, *Biographie universelle*, 1:431–32. She appears to have been an extraordinary musician, successful in turn as

for the flute by Weiß,⁸ played by the producer of the concert; 6. Beethoven's grand fantasy, the keyboard part performed by Mr. Pfaler, the vocal parts by Mrs. Grünbaum, Miss Unger, Miss Weiß, Messrs. Rosner,⁹ Titze,¹⁰ and Reißiger.¹¹ It is unfortunate that an unlucky star seems to rule over this magnificent work, for the reviewer has never yet heard it completely well performed; this time the entry of the orchestra was inadequate, and at this fateful moment the performance faltered to such an extent that we were often tempted to doubt whether it would be brought to happy, mutual conclusion, and many admirers of the great master fled the hall with anxious steps in genuine concern.

a pianist, composer, and teacher (Fétis credits her with a "talent remarquable"). According to the biographical sketch that appeared in *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 34 (1832), 162–64, Beethoven heard her play in her fifth year and advised her parents to let her go into music. Later Beethoven sent her to study with Czerny. She also studied with Friedrich Kalkbrenner, Ignaz Moscheles, Hieronymus Payer (see n6, above), and Simon Sechter.

⁸This is probably Karl R. Weiss (1777–?), rather than his father Karl Weiss (1738–1795), since the variations are described as "new" at the time of this concert. Both were prominent flutists. See Fétis, *Biographie universelle*, 8:442–43.

⁹Franz Rosner (originally Rosnik) (1800–1841) was a Hungarian-born tenor particularly known for his facility with coloratura roles in the Italian repertory. The last eight years of his life were spent at the Hofoper in Stuttgart. See Kutsch and Riemens, *Großes Sängerlexikon*, 2510.

¹⁰Ludwig Titze (1797–1850) was a Bohemian-born tenor who later served with Eduard van Lannoy and Karl Holz as director of the Viennese Concerts spirituels. See *Oesterreichisches Musiklexikon Online*, www.musiklexikon.ac.at/ml/musik_T/Titze_Ludwig.xml, and *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 49:252–53.

¹¹Karl Gottlieb Reißiger (1798–1859) would later gain fame as a composer and as director of the Dresden opera.

80.6.

“News. Leipzig. From the New Year to Easter.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 25

(18 June 1823): 400–401.¹

By way of transition to concerts proper, we wish to mention here the fantasy for the forte-piano, with accompaniment of a full orchestra and choir by L. v. Beethoven, which was given at the 13th subscription concert, performed by Mr. Klengel.² The work, which begins quite simply with the fortepiano alone, weaves truly magnificently varied melodies in colorfully fantastic groupings. It often confronts the listener like an agreeably charming babble; it often rises to the level of true genius, and often to that of the fabulously strange. The performance was good, although not in all respects.

¹In the report from Leipzig, the paragraph excerpted here stands by itself, between the section on overtures and that on concerts. Further details of the thirteenth subscription concert are not given.

²August Alexander Klengel (1784–1852) is described in *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 18 (1816):139 as “one of the greatest keyboard players and foremost composers for this instrument in all Germany.” He was the son of a well-known landscape painter. His talent was discovered by Clementi, who proceeded to teach him while he accompanied Clementi on journeys throughout Europe. François-Joseph Fétis, who knew him personally, testifies to his great interest in the music of Bach and older masters (*Biographie universelle des musiciens et bibliographie générale de la musique*, 2nd ed. [Paris, 1875], 5:54–55), as does the writer in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*. In 1817 he was appointed court organist in Dresden.

Op. 81a. Piano Sonata in E-Flat major

81a.1.

“Brief notices.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 14

(15 January 1812): 67–68.¹

An occasional work, but such as an ingenious master creates! The farewell begins with an Adagio, whose simple principal idea:



FIGURE 1. *Op. 81a, first movement, right hand, m. 1 and first part of m. 2*

seems to pronounce *lebe wohl*,² quickly leads into a more vehement and more worked-out *Allegro*, which represents the pain of the separation; an *Andante espressivo*, with some severity in the principal idea, but with restless motion in the secondary figures, signifies emotions during the absence;³ (it seems designed to last for a long time, but is quickly and unexpectedly disrupted—which likewise can be interpreted in a very pleasing way); and a surprising, very lively and joyful *Allegro*, which is somewhat fully developed, stands for the reunion.⁴—As a piece of music in general, the sonata is written in the manner of the other most recent ones by Beethoven, and also approximately as difficult to perform.

¹The “Les Adieux” sonata, Op. 81a, was written in 1809–1810. This review refers to the edition published by Breitkopf und Härtel in Leipzig in July 1811; it had previously been published by Clementi and Co. in London in January 1811. There were originally two different versions of the title page, one in German and one in French; the French one is cited at the beginning of the review, but the work is erroneously described as Op. 87.

²Literally “live well,” a now somewhat antiquated German expression for “farewell.” Beethoven actually designated the first movement “Das Lebewohl,” and a note in his hand indicates that it was written in observation of the departure of Archduke Rudolph from Vienna on 4 May 1809.

³This movement is likewise designated “Abwesenheit” (absence) by the composer, with a subsidiary German tempo indication: “In gehender Bewegung, doch mit viel Ausdruck” (in walking motion, but with much expression).

⁴The last movement, which Beethoven indicated is meant to represent “Das Wiedersehen” (the return), is actually marked *Vivacissamente*, and Beethoven also indicated in German that it is to be played “Im lebhaftesten Zeitmaß” (in the most lively tempo).

Op. 81b. Sextet for Two Horns, Two Violins, Viola, and Bass in E-Flat major

81b.1.

Zeitung für die elegante Welt 10
(1810): 935.¹

(Arrangement for keyboard trio, with WoO 134, Four Settings of Goethe's "Sehnsucht")

The trio is in E-flat major and consists of an Allegro con brio in 4/4 time, an Adagio (in A-flat major) in 2/4 time, and an Allegro in 6/8 time.² The original composition is a sextet for two violins, viola, bass, and two horns, and in this form, and it has also been published by the same establishment as a quintet (for two violins, two violas, and one violoncello). The overpowering fire and enchanting expression of which the most beautiful works of Beethoven partake characterize this trio as well, which can be performed with the utmost effect. It is truly interesting and instructive when such a soulful composer as *Beethoven* himself clothes such a simple and sincere poem as Goethe's *Sehnsucht* in song in a variety of ways. Three melodies are in G minor, only one in E-flat major; two in 6/8, one in 3/4, and one in 4/4 time. The last one is excellently carried out, and might perhaps please the most, although each one speaks to the heart with true and sincere expression.

¹This sextet was written in 1794–1795 but was not published until early 1810, by N. Simrock in Bonn, simultaneously with the arrangements for quintet and trio mentioned here. The latter is listed on the title page as Op. 83. The trio version of the 1810 edition is reviewed here. Because Breitkopf und Härtel would later assign the opus number 81 to the more familiar Piano Sonata in E-flat Major, known as "Les Adieux," that work is now called Op. 81a, while the sextet is called Op. 81b. Cf. 81a.1, above.

The four settings of Goethe's "Sehnsucht" discussed here were written in 1807–1808 and were published in early 1810 by the Bureau des Arts et d'Industrie in Vienna without an opus number.

²The last movement is actually marked "Rondo. Allegro."

Op. 82. Four Ariettas and a Duet

82.I.

“Brief notices.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 14
(1 January 1812): 16.¹

A small but not commonplace little work, and one enlivened by warm emotion. Only because grand works by this master so frequently have to be extensively discussed, the reviewer will hold back from going extensively through this small one. He holds the second and fourth ariettas, and likewise the duet, to be particularly distinguished examples of this graceful genre, and he is certain that everyone who hears them sung with expression and accompanied with discretion will agree with him. They must, however, be sung and accompanied thus, and the composer can demand this all the more since he has indicated both so clearly in the music itself, and has, by the way, kept everything easy. Among the few peculiarities which are not entirely to the reviewer's taste, the foremost is the unisono on page 4, system 2.² The poet and the composer take care to create variety; one aria is even comic.³ The agreeable Italian text has not exactly been translated by the German poet (Dr. Schreiber),⁴ but treated rather freely. The result, though, is something charming, and often more meaningful than the original, which nevertheless is sometimes too serious in tone—at least in the arietta, pages 8ff., where it does not agree closely enough with the happily teasing music.

¹These five works were written in 1809 and were first published by Clementi in London in February 1811. This review refers to the edition probably released in March 1811 by Breitkopf und Härtel in Leipzig.

²Mm. 22–24 of “Hoffnung.”

³No. 3, “L'amante impaziente,” is designated “Arietta buffa.”

⁴Christian Schreiber (1781–1857) was a minister in Sachsen-Weimar and an author of spiritual and secular poems. Of the original Italian texts, nos. 2–5 are by Metastasio, while the author of the first is unknown. Schreiber's text appeared in the original edition and is reprinted in the Breitkopf und Härtel Beethoven-Ausgabe. These are indeed not translations; furthermore, in nos. 1, 2, and 5 Schreiber's German titles replaced the original Italian ones.

Op. 84. Music to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's Tragedy *Egmont*

84.I.

“News. Leipzig.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 14

(1 January 1812): 12.¹

Apart from these pieces we heard yet another scene and aria with chorus, by Federici, splendidly sung by Dem. Alb. Campagnoli;² Beethoven's new overture to Göthe's *Egmont* and Bernh. Romberg's as yet unpublished symphony on the death of Queen Louise of Prussia. That overture appears to be intentionally written in Cherubini's manner, and is worked through in the same with spirit, power, and much art.

¹This is an excerpt from a report on a benefit concert for the sick and widowed of an unspecified institute. The program also included Cherubini's cantata on Haydn's death (written in 1805 in response to a false rumor; Haydn did not die until 1809) and Beethoven's "Emperor" concerto, both of which the correspondent says received "the same distinguished applause that they received at the first production" (cf. 73.1, above).

²Albertina Campagnoli was one of two daughters of Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra director Bartolomeo Campagnoli (1751–1827), both of whom had careers as singers.

84.2

“News. Munich.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 25

(30 September 1812): 656.

The overture and the other musical numbers for the tragedy *Egmont* may also by no means be passed over. Beethoven’s original style is evident here, as in all of his works. We recognize his manner even in the first measures. The overture is full of power and bold turns of phrase, but we miss in it that inner order and clarity through which alone an artwork of this type can lay claim to our emotions. At Egmont’s dream in the 5th act the allegorical representation which belongs here was left out—we do not exactly know why.¹ Thus what the composer expressed must certainly have remained incomprehensible to many people. The symphony of victory that follows, having been anticipated in the overture, is full of fire. The composer is so thoroughly permeated by his emotion that he lets the violin rise to *c*”, which for many orchestras will probably cause a disagreeable squeaking.

¹During the melodrama that precedes the *Symphony of Victory*, which concludes Beethoven’s incidental music, a vision of the recently deceased Clara as “freedom” appears to Egmont while he sleeps; she holds a wreath over his head, indicating that his death will lead to victory. While the context of this report is confusing, it appears that the Egmont music accompanied an actual performance of the play, from which this significant apparition was omitted.

84.3.

Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann.

“Review.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 15

(21 July 1813): 473–81.¹

(Mentioned: Keyboard reduction of the overture and entr’actes)

It is indeed an event to be rejoiced at when two great masters appear joined together in one magnificent work, fulfilling every demand of the thoughtful connoisseur in the most beautiful way. Probably (the exact circumstances are completely unknown to the reviewer) B. was invited to compose the appropriate music for use at a performance of *Egmont*, and he has shown that truly, among many composers, he was *the one* who understood the tender and yet powerful poem in his innermost being: each sound which the poet struck resounded within his soul as though upon a correspondingly tuned, sympathetically vibrating string, and so was formed the music that now, like a brilliant ribbon woven from radiant sounds, winds throughout the whole and binds it together. This composition is an all the greater gain for art, since in fact, strangely enough, none of Göthe’s larger works that are designed for music, or also just for musical adornment, can yet rejoice at a single pure, classic composition. As sensibly, for example, as a master of musical art has set many a good-natured song by Göthe, as truly classic in this type as the songs to *Wilhelm Meister*² have turned out to be, the music written for the thoroughly lovely, tender *Claudine von Villa Bella*, which is so congenial to the composer, has nevertheless not been successful.³ The reviewer may say this freely, since the public has long since condemned this composition

¹Beethoven’s incidental music to Goethe’s *Egmont* was written in 1809–1810 for the Viennese premiere of the play at the Burgtheater, which took place on 24 May 1810, although the music was not ready until the fourth performance on 15 June. This review refers to the first published edition of the overture, which was released by Breitkopf and Härtel in Leipzig in December 1810, and that of the songs and entr’actes, which was released by the same publisher in January 1812, as well as to the keyboard reduction of the overture published by Breitkopf und Härtel in February 1811 and that of the songs and entr’actes that they published in May 1812. Both orchestral editions appeared in parts only; the music was not published in score until 1831.

This is the last of the five Beethoven reviews that E. T. A. Hoffmann wrote for the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*.²A variety of composers, including most notably Schubert (whose settings appeared after this review was written) set poems from Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister* to music.

³*The Mellen Opera Reference Index, Opera Librettists and Their Works: A–L*, 288–89, lists eleven settings of Goethe’s *Claudina von Villa Bella* that had been performed by the time this review was written, by F. H. Kerpen (1775), J. André (1778), I. Beecke (1780), C. G. Weber (1783), K. Schall (1787, in Dutch), I. F. Mosel (1788), J. F. Reichardt (1789), J. C. F. Schneider (1805), K. L. Blum (1810), J. C. Kleinlen (1810), and K. T. Eisrich (1813). It is not clear whether Hoffmann is referring to a particular setting or to all settings with which he is familiar.

through total neglect and forgetfulness. *Lilla* and the *Triumph der Empfindsamkeit*, both of which might make magnificent opera texts with only small changes, have, as far as the reviewer knows, never been set to music.⁴ The music to *Erwin und Elmire*⁵ is antiquated, and the reviewer can only remember having heard the joyous, genuinely Italian buffonade *Scherz, List und Rache* performed several years ago in Posen by the company of the impresario Carl Döbbelin,⁶ who was there at the time, with a successful composition by an unknown master.⁷ Score and hand-written orchestral parts were later accidentally burned and can no longer be obtained at all. —Many a good composer of more recent times is at a loss for opera texts. May he then turn to the classic works of the great poet, and seek to gain the wreath, as yet unwon, through a composition in which true inspiration glows. —After this digression, which may certainly be allowed him, the reviewer comes to the present work itself.

What must most deeply excite every soul in Goethe's *Egmont* is Egmont's and Clärchen's love. Exalted well above her closest surroundings, the magnificent young woman can only cling firmly to the hero of the fatherland, can only live in *him*, with an ardor that, truly of another world, despising the trivial circumstances of life, steps out above all worldly things; and, without his clearly suspecting it, she is his own higher being, who nourishes the heavenly fire which blazes in his breast for freedom and fatherland. Fate wills his death, if the highest of his wishes is to be fulfilled; but she goes before him, and in heavenly transfiguration, like freedom itself, she secures him the magnificent reward of his martyrdom. He recognizes that the two sweetest joys of his heart are united, that he is dying for freedom, for which he lived and fought, and he goes valiantly to his death, for shortly before he did not wish to depart from the "sweet, friendly familiarity of being and doing."⁸ Many a composer would have written a warlike, striding overture for *Egmont*, but our master limited himself in the overture to that deeper, more romantic feature of the tragedy: in short, to Egmont's and Clärchen's love. In the dreary key of F minor, Clärchen's rapturous love is nevertheless expressed, just as, in the related keys of A-flat major and D-flat major, otherworldly transfiguration shines in bright lights. —The overture begins with a *Sostenuto*⁹ in 3/2 time, and with an F sustained by all the instruments except the timpani and piccolo, and there then enters a chorale-like idea which, in its high simplicity, has the most magnificent effect, even while, as we have already come to expect from this ingenious composer, it accurately proclaims the character of the whole from the beginning:

⁴Actually, according to Mellen, 288, a setting of *Lilla* by K. Seckendorff had been performed in 1776.

⁵*Mellen*, 288–289, lists nine settings of *Erwin und Elmira* that had been performed by this time, by J. André (1775), Anna Amalia (1776), C. C. Agthe (1777), K. D. Stegman (1780), G. J. Vogler (1781), E. W. Wolf (1785), J. F. Reichardt (1790), J. M. Rupprecht (1794), and C. G. A. Bergt (1804).

⁶This probably refers to Conrad Carl Casimir Döbbelin (1763–1821), a German actor and impresario. See Ludwig Eisenberg: *Großes biographisches Lexikon der Deutschen Bühne im XIX. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig: Paul List, 1903), 204–5 for further details.

⁷Hoffmann's setting of *Scherz, List und Rache* was performed in 1801. *Mellen*, 288, also cites a setting by Peter von Winter (1790). According to the same source, however, the most frequently set dramatic text by Goethe was *Jery und Bätely*, which had received six settings by this time and would ultimately receive twenty-four.

⁸This is a quote from the prison scene in Act V of Goethe's play.

⁹Actually *Sostenuto ma non troppo*.

Already in the fifteenth measure, the theme of the following Allegro enters in D-flat major, which is then begun twenty-five measures later in 3/4 time by the first violin and violoncello:



FIGURE 2. *Op. 84, overture, reduction of mm. 2–5, beat 1. This should be read with treble and bass clefs and a key signature of four flats.*

The composer sustains the same clarity with which he began throughout the entire overture, while the two themes of the *Sostenuto* often return and weave themselves into the Allegro. With-



FIGURE 3. *Op. 84, overture, mm. 25–28, clefless version of the first violin and cello parts, which are in different octaves. The key signature is four flats.*

out further development of details, of which he will only say that they are entirely intertwined and arranged according to the classical manner of the master, the reviewer can refer the reader to an attentive hearing of the worthy composition. He believes, that is to say, that he has so accurately delineated the tendency according to which the master was working that any listener who has been moved by the overture will find it resonating again of its own accord in many of Clärchen's speeches—particularly the lamenting sounds that penetrate the innermost being, and likewise the chords that announce a higher life at the transitions to harmonically related major keys, in the first scene with Brackenburch and the mother, and also in the first scene of the fifth act.¹⁰ The reviewer will mention in this regard only the idea that begins at the eighteenth measure of the Allegro, along with the transition into A-flat major in the fiftieth measure, and the enharmonic twists after the repetition of the theme that first appeared in the *Sostenuto*!

¹⁰In the third scene of the first act, Clärchen argues with her mother about her love for Egmont, and after they leave, her rejected suitor Brackenburch threatens to poison himself. At the beginning of the fifth act he tries to talk Clärchen out of her continuing loyalty to the imprisoned Egmont and begs her to “come home.” Hoffmann is suggesting that Clärchen's struggles and divided loyalty are anticipated in the music of Beethoven's overture.

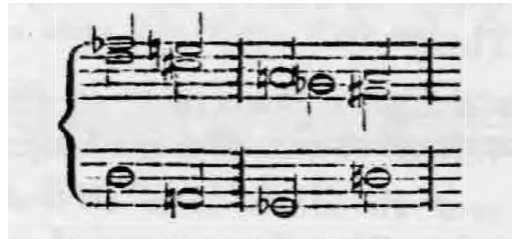


FIGURE 4. *Op. 84, overture, harmonic reductions of the transitions from m. 91 to m. 92 and m. 234 to m. 235. These should be read with treble and bass clefs and a key signature of four flats.*

At the conclusion of the Allegro this theme enters once again in the principal key of F minor, and the music dies out in sustained *ppp* chords in the oboe, clarinet, and bassoon.



FIGURE 5. *Op. 84, overture, reduction of mm. 279–86. This should be read with treble clefs in the oboes and clarinets, bass clef in the bassoons, and a key signature of four flats, which is modified to two flats in the clarinet part since the instruments transpose to B-flat.*

But there now begins, at first *pp* and then ever mounting and mounting, an *Allegro con brio* in F major, which, warlike and noisy, alludes primarily to the tumultuous events at the beginning of the piece, and which concludes the overture. This last Allegro is also kept simple, without any contrapuntal twists, calculated entirely, as it should be, with regard to the proper effect.

The little song “Die Trommel gerührt,” etc. also belongs to the first act. The melody is very simple, in F minor, 2/4 time; it receives a very picturesque accompaniment, though, from the rolling timpani, the piccolo flourishes, and through the brief chords of the clarinets, bassoons, and horns. In an operetta, this song would be a masterpiece; for a stage play it is, in the reviewer’s opinion, much too heavily ornamented. In an opera, it is insupportable for any other motive to be sought for singing than that which serves generally as the basis for the opera as a whole: namely, the elevated poetic state which in passionate moments causes human speech to become song of its own accord. All the “Do we not wish to sing a song?,” “Sing me my favorite song, dear daughter,” etc. are thus uncommonly ridiculous, since in an actual opera

they cause opera to be destroyed. In a stage play, on the other hand, a song should be genuinely a song, such as would be struck up in life itself, and thus the participation of the orchestra, as something extraneous which steps in, destroys the properly intended effect of the whole. If Clärchen is singing in a quiet house a warlike song about the excitement of the drums and the resounding of the fife, therefore, if we also actually hear both of them, it is as though we were suddenly snatched out of the room in which we have been allowed to look and placed in the open countryside, upon which Brackenburg and Clärchen disappear into the far distance. To such songs which arise in the course of a stage play, the reviewer would set, at most, *that* accompaniment which can at least be plausibly presented by those persons who are present in the theater.

Die, poor man! Why do you hesitate? (He draws a little flask from his pocket.) I will not have stolen you in vain from my brother's medicine chest, healing poison! You will at once devour and free me from this fear, this giddiness, this cold sweat of death.

With these words by the unfortunate Brackenburg the second act ends,¹¹ as is well known, and, in the entr'acte, the composer has been able to portray this lament, so very different from Clärchen's pain, very tellingly in notes. Brackenburg, an excellent, deeply feeling youth, who is, however, far too tender for the circumstances into which fate has cast him, is searching more for solace in the idea of killing himself than for the strength and courage actually to carry it out. He has already thrown himself into the water, but has saved himself again by swimming. He carries poison with him, which Clärchen jokingly takes away. When she has departed, however, leaving him the remainder of the fatal drink, he nevertheless chooses life. An Andante, in A major, with a tender theme, paints Brackenburg's situation very strikingly in disconnected phrases:

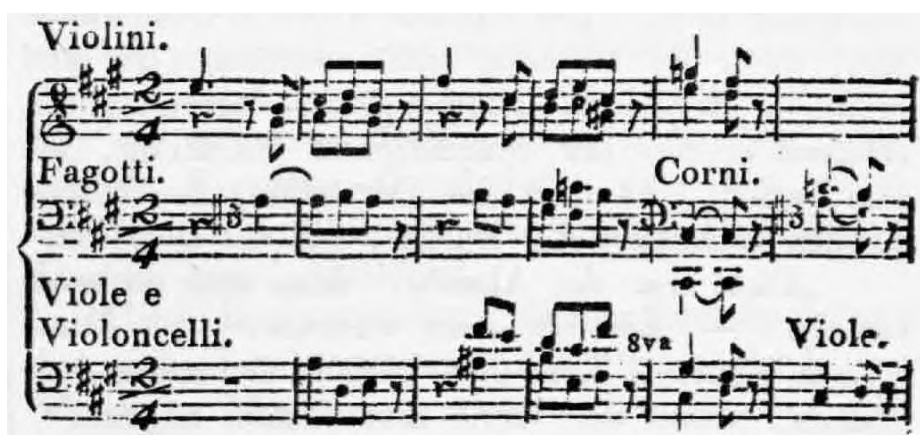


FIGURE 6. *Op. 84, entr'acte 1, reduction of mm. 1-6*

¹¹Hoffmann is mistaken here; it is the first act that ends with these words.

The lament dies out in individual notes, and now the violoncellos begin in 16th notes the *Allegro con brio* in A major, which signifies the inner ferment among the people, the unrest, the consternation of spirits, as they are portrayed in the first scenes of the second act.

Orange's noteworthy conversation with Egmont, in which the latter does not wish to hear his friend's warning voice, concludes the second act, and a *Larghetto*, in E-flat major, with resounding horns and timpani, not only paints Egmont's great soul, which despises every petty suspicion, but leads at the same time to the third act, which begins again with political events. With regard to the song: "Freudvoll und leidvoll"—the reviewer refers to what he has already said with regard to the first song, and must only add that, in regard to melody, this song strikes him as too expansive, too operatic. Reichardt has set it much better, with the greatest simplicity and yet with the deepest, most heartfelt feeling.¹² The close of Beethoven's composition almost completely degenerates into an aria.

"So let me die: the world has no greater joy than this!" cries Clärchen, and a rejoicing passage, *Allegro* in C major, begins. Already in the second measure, however, there is a fermata; the oboe makes a cadenza, again a boisterous measure, and the oboe has a second cadenza. Would it not have been a happy idea to let the melody of the song "Freudvoll und leidvoll" enter here? —The beginning of the *Allegretto* does in fact have similarities to that theme, but immediately deviates from it completely. —The march that follows is in fact a masterpiece. It is so solemn, dreadful, and even, in the most powerful places, frightfully happy, that we can see Alba's mercenaries reporting for duty, rejoicing at theft and murder. The march is still continuing in C minor when the curtain goes up, and, dying out in small, disjointed phrases, it fits perfectly with the dramatic action that now begins, namely the representation of the terrifying circumstances of the citizens.

"This was the goal? You called me to this? —Have I then no weapon?" —We can still hear these words of Egmont in the first three measures with which the fourth entr'acte begins.¹³

¹²Johann Friedrich Reichardt (1752–1814) was known for writing straightforward strophic settings that did not elaborate musically on the words in the manner of later, more familiar Lieder by Schubert, Beethoven, et al. (His settings of singspiel texts by Goethe are also cited in notes 3 and 5, above.) His songs tend to strike modern audiences, accustomed to these later works, as rudimentary and uninspired. However, the works of Reichardt and contemporary song composers like Carl Friedrich Zelter (1758–1832) were based on a different aesthetic, according to which an involved, elaborate setting of a poem with any literary merit of its own was excessive and confusing in effect—and hence undesirable. For more on the aesthetic of the late-eighteenth-century German Lied, see Raymond Monelle, "Word-Setting in the Strophic Lied," *Music and Letters* 60 (1984), 229–36. Interestingly, Hoffmann still seems to share this viewpoint, at least in this instance.

¹³David Charlton writes: "Possibly owing to a discrepant source, Hoffmann totally mistakes the composer's intentions at the beginning of No. 6. The words cited by Hoffmann constitute Egmont's penultimate speech in Act 4, whereas Beethoven cites his final speech, adding, 'After these words the orchestra comes in immediately, even before the curtain has fallen.' At this point, Egmont realises he is under arrest and has been tricked." (*E. T. A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings* [Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989], 348n26).

Poco sostenuto e risoluto.

Corni in Es.

Trombe in B.

Violini.

Viole e Bassi.

(Flaut. Ob. Clar.)

FIGURE 7. *Op. 84, entr'acte 4, reduction of mm. 1-4*

The following *Larghetto*, in 3/4 time, with the hollowly resounding timpani, proclaims the downfall of the hero; the *Allegro agitato*¹⁴ that follows, however, refers entirely to Clärchen's situation and to the first scenes of the fifth act, which follows. The reviewer quotes the conclusion, which grips heart and soul in the simplest tones, while the curtain has already gone up and Clärchen has already entered with Brackenburg:

Clarinetti in B.

Fagotti.

FIGURE 8. *Op. 84, entr'acte 4, reduction of mm. 92-107*

¹⁴Actually *Andante agitato*.

The music gives voice to the most moving of laments, which indicates Clärchen's death. It is a *Larghetto*, in D minor, 9/8 time, which the horns alone begin *pp*. Then the oboes, clarinets, later the bassoons, and only in the seventh measure do the string instruments join in. As the lamps are put out, the horns again play alone, and finally the string instruments sound individual notes *pizzicato* against a sustained D minor chord in the horns and clarinets. The whole is interpreted and portrayed according to the deepest sensibility of the poet, who expressly called for the addition of music at this point.

In the closing scene, beginning at the point where the poet calls for music—namely, as Egmont sinks onto his couch to sleep—the composer has set Egmont's speeches in melodrama, and, in the reviewer's opinion, has done so very well. The musical phrases that interrupt the speeches are, upon inspection, not treated the least bit obtrusively, but conform entirely to the words; this is not a case of garish tone-painting. The heavenly, glowing apparition of freedom is announced by a luminous A major chord, indeed by 16th-note triplets in the wind instruments. The music that follows is in accordance with the prescribed pantomime, but it is predominantly descriptive from that point on, where the apparition of the sleeping hero indicates that his death will secure freedom for the provinces, and extends to him the victor's laurel-wreath. The trumpet sounds, and a kind of warlike march, which consists, however, of simple, sustained chords, expresses with high pathos the apotheosis of the hero falling victoriously for freedom. We hear the drum, and at the *più allegro*, when the wind instruments enter with 8th-note triplets, the apparition disappears and the music dissolves into individual notes. Completely in accordance with the poet's sensibility, the composer closes with a noisy symphony, which is only fifty-five measures long and is woven together almost entirely from cadential figures.

We are accustomed elsewhere in Beethoven's instrumental music to a rich crop of ingenious contrapuntal twists, bold modulations, and so forth. The composition under discussion here, however, shows how well the master understands how to economize with his riches, and to spend them at the appropriate time; without in the least seeking to shine in its own right, it follows completely the poet's sensibility, and conforms to his intentions. The reviewer has therefore striven as well to bring to light and to evaluate properly the successful aesthetic treatment of the material that was given to the composer.

The keyboard reductions of the overture and the entr'actes are appropriately prepared, with taste and insight; they deserve to be in the hands of every thoughtful musical amateur, just as the directorship of every theater that intends to produce *Egmont* should obtain Beethoven's music, since it is to be regarded as intimately fused with the whole, and as an essential part of it, which should absolutely never be lacking.

84.4.

Gottfried Weber.

“News. Mannheim.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 16
(9 March 1814): 167–68.¹

Among the performances at the musical museum, these are worthy of mention: Carl Marie v. Weber’s symphony in C major, his overtures to the *Beherrscher der Geister* and to *Silvana*, and finally his musical declamatory piece *Der erste Ton*, with a first-rate interpretation of the text by Rochlitz,² so magnificently suited to musical declamation, spoken by Mr. Gley³ with decorum and a sonorous voice to the outstanding satisfaction of the listeners. Then Haydn’s well-known *Salve regina*,⁴ and Beethoven’s overture to Göthe’s *Egmont*, published by Breitkopf and Härtel and as yet unknown here. This is a magnificent tone-painting, which like a magical mirror reflects the principal features of the entire play. In the first half, in alternation, first the heavy impulsiveness which is woven through the whole action, then the noble, impartial greatness of the hero, then the tenderness of his love, then Klärchen’s lament; in the second

¹Gottfried Weber (1779–1839) was a German jurist and music theorist. He was the editor of the journal *Caecilia*, which published some of the most important critical reactions to Beethoven’s later works. He was also chair of the Museum Society—one of several early-19th-century organizations aimed at promoting middle-class musical life in Mannheim.

²C. M. von Weber wrote two symphonies in C major, both in 1807. His overture *Der Beherrscher der Geister* was written in 1811 and premiered in Leipzig in 1812. Weber’s romantic opera *Silvana* was written in 1808–1810 and premiered in Frankfurt am Main in September 1810. The cantata *Der erste Ton*, for reciter, choir, and orchestra, was written in 1808 and revised in 1810; its text was written by Friedrich Rochlitz, the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*’s editor.

³This singing actor is mentioned several times in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 14 (1812), which states that he performs together with his wife and that both are from Hamburg (667). While obviously unimpressed by his singing, the correspondent does not feel qualified to comment on his acting. A reference in the next volume, *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 15 (1813), to a performance in Amsterdam makes it clear that Madame Gley is “the foremost female singer in the Hamburg theater,” and that Mr. Gley acted well enough to make people forget that he is not a singer (405).

Such comments are common in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*’s correspondence sections, and they serve to remind us that in the early 19th century, an accomplished actor did not have to have a highly trained voice to appear successfully in opera, at least under some circumstances.

⁴Haydn wrote two settings of the Salve Regina, one in G minor and one (of questionable authenticity) in E-flat major, both in the early 1770s.

half, however, the high triumph of his death, before which every lament falls silent, and the high glory and transfiguration of the one who has fallen without being humbled. I am unable to grasp how anyone can have understood this last half as a disagreeable allusion to the war-like scenes with which the piece begins (?).⁵ In order to give full play to the attentiveness that the first performance of such an interesting composition must excite among the public, it would have to be performed at the opening of a concert and repeated at its close on one and the same evening. Such an arrangement would perhaps be worthy of imitation in the case of great pieces of music being performed for the first time, since pieces of this kind, particularly purely instrumental compositions, cannot easily be thoroughly grasped and enjoyed merely through a single listening. It cannot always be agreeable for the serious listener to have full enjoyment, which is only possible upon the second hearing, delayed, perhaps for months, if not made more difficult and weakened, or even entirely destroyed, by the length of the intervening time.

⁵The question mark here is in the original; it is not clear whether it is editorial or whether it was included by Weber.

84.5.

K. B.

“Beethoven’s Music to Goethe’s *Egmont*.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 16

(30 March 1814): 205–7.¹

Overture.

What a sweet, wondrous sound
Steals upon my ear, in heavenly chords!
It comes streaming forth from the primal source of all beautiful things;
It has already become a torrent around me.
It awakens a deep longing in the breast,
And images move, as though through golden portals,
From out of the inner depths of my soul,
Hidden in which, they slept quietly and darkly.

The hero’s image wants to take shape before me,
Who fell for the freedom of his native land!
I already feel presentiments of his inspiring acts,
Which break triumphantly through the brass bonds of slaves.
Certainly from out of the dark womb will yet unfold

¹The practice of writing poetic translations of works of instrumental music, of which this contribution to the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* is an example, is a reflection of one thread of early Romantic aesthetics, according to which the different arts could each, in their own way, translate an ideal reality that was assumed to have an independent existence. One of the earliest examples of this practice was Johann August Apel’s article “Musik und Poesie” in *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 8 (1805–1806): 449–57, 465–70, which included a poetic counterpart to Mozart’s symphony in E-flat, K. 453. For a description of a more satirical reaction to this practice, see the review of Friedrich Rochlitz’s *Für Freunde der Tonkunst* in *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 27 (1825): 433–44. See also Wallace, *Beethoven’s Critics*, 79–83, in which Rochlitz’s satire and its background are discussed at length. Since the *Egmont* music is meant to portray specific aspects of the story, the writer had more to go on in constructing the poems than did Apel, and is less fanciful in his descriptions. For a similar reaction to three of Beethoven symphonies, see S. v. W. “Miscellaneous (Submitted): Beethoven’s Symphonies,” *Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 2 (1825): 24.

Much misery; much blood will run out onto the sand:
But the good cause inexorably triumphs
God fights for it! Already the day of vengeance nears!

And yet another image rises up from out of these sounds:
It is love, holy and pure!
And also how the mighty force of dismal fate
drags him down amid the great society of the people:
He walks the path as among songs of triumph,
For even in death Klärchen is still his.
Transfigured, she crowns him in his final dreams,
How gladly he follows her to brighter places!

Like a distant choir a song resounds in celebration
Of the two departed ones, who now live united.
And thereupon arise, quietly at first and then more freely,
resounding waves; they strive jubilantly upward:
The spirit perceives that the mighty giver of victory
Will grant triumph to those who struggle for freedom.
Up with the curtain! show those who struggle among us
What their brothers once attained through struggle!

Entr'acte 1. Andante, A major.

We are apprehensive. The curtain has fallen.
Gentle, painful laments press themselves
Upon us, which soon fade softly away,
As though in oppressive, irresolute hesitation.
And every glance from every listener
Seems to say, fearfully and compassionately:
These sounds come from deeply ruptured hearts!
These, poor Brackenburg, are your sorrows!

Allegro con brio.

But hark, how a dull murmur is raised,
Which now swells, becoming wilder and stormier!
The crowd is enraged; the quiet citizen trembles;
Fury and terror prevail on all sides.
But Egmont draws near: upon powerful words let
The spirit of order hover; it strikes, and prevails, and quiets
The wild commotion's unfettered rage,
Which had held up the coarse as valiant and the insolent as brave.

Entr'acte II. Larghetto.

Do you hear the friend, Orange, the loyal one,
How he prudently warns, in order to rescue Egmont?
Will he not regret this rash step?
Will he not escape from the chains which are already in place?
No, he stands high and free! He can shrink from nothing!
No distrust can lie in this breast.
Fate has chosen him as a sacrifice:
He listens not, his breast steeled with courage.

Entr'acte III. Allegretto.

“To be joyful
And sorrowful,
And thoughtful;
To wait
And to fear
in unsettled pain:”
Do you not hear
The echo
of the fortunate one,
How,
In bliss,
He sweetly speaks?

Marcia vivace.

But suddenly let the joy indeed die out,
You, approaching destroyer! Hear the firm steps!
Terror comes, death comes, and ruin:
Already they are in the midst of the noble people!
Like cold disdain it fills our breast with horror
At the harsh chords: neither entreaties nor laments
Move Alba's heart; blood, blood must flow,
The night of the dungeon must soon envelope Egmont as well.

Entr'acte IV. Poco sostenuto

It is the hero's ominous words,
Which ring out to you in the first notes!
The friend's warning awakens at the place of terror;

Too late! It cannot bring deliverance!
The mighty command of fate, alas,
The hero must not penetrate until at death's door,
If what it menacingly pronounced in vain
Has now inevitably come to light.

Last Scenes and Death of Klärchen.

Klärchen has now learned the worst;
With his fate, hers is decided as well.
What use is life to her without him?
Why should the faithful one remain here below?
Released from the storms of the heart and from the world,
She finally feels the higher, calmer peace.
The cup of the world's fairest flower closes,
And blooms (we still lament) in the holy shrine!

No. 8. Poco sostenuto.

Behold the hero now lovingly embraced
In his loneliness by the bonds of slumber!
When he had scarcely perceived their harmonious sounds,
Earthly joy and earthly pain disappeared for him;
Penetrating through the light of golden clouds,
There sinks toward him, in heavenly raiments,
Freedom, extending to him the laurel wreath:
Her brilliant figure resembles Klärchen.

His death will give victory to the fatherland,
Will also crown his temples with eternal green;
His memory will live in blessedness,
His people, liberated, will no longer grovel before tyrants.
We hear the sound of trumpets resounding joyously,
To adorn his death with the sounds of victory — —
The morning dawns! The drum is beaten!
A gentle resonance carries off the heavenly image.

No. 9. Symphony of Victory

Does the hero go to his death? No, only to the celebration
Of eternal triumph! He and Klärchen will live!
And once again there arise, quietly at first and then more freely,
Resounding waves; they strive jubilantly upward.
The spirit perceives that the mighty giver of victory
Will grant triumph to those who struggle for freedom.
And all hearts beat loudly with joy,
Borne upward, upward from the sea of sounds.

84.6.

“On 17 May. *Egmont*, Tragedy in 5 Sections by Mr. von Goethe
(the Overture and the Incidental Music Is by Beethoven).”

*Dramatisches Wochenblatt in der nächsten Beziehung
auf die königlichen Schauspiele zu Berlin* 2, no. 48

(31 May 1817): 378–79

The music by Beethoven that was recently given at the performance of *Egmont* had fully the deep, fantastic, often melancholic character that impresses the works of this genius with the stamp of originality, but that often leads it into bizarreness as well. And the music that pleased most of all was that which expresses Egmont’s loving intimacy with Klärchen, ending the third act tenderly and leading into the fourth, while taking on the proud, Spanish grandiloquence that announces the approach of the obstinate Alba and the misfortune it brings. Klärchen’s deathlike slumber was also described pictorially; the deathly silence on the stage and the simple extinguishing of the lamp, however, seem all the more shocking to us here because of the strangeness of the music at this point. The music for the dream in the fifth act seemed to contain traits of genius, but was performed too hesitatingly to be able to bring about the intended effect. The allegorical pantomime, on the other hand, was first-rate.

84.7.

R

“Theater.”

Colonia, no. 122
(20 October 1818).

Theater.
On 28 October: *Egmont*. Tragedy in five sections by Göthe. Music by Bethoven

Not stormy, like the forest stream plunging down over broken stones, then laying waste to the valley and powerfully destroying all life: no, gentle, like the evening sky of a cloudy summer's day, here and there flushed with glowing clouds, which are still lovely to behold, even though they already send reflections of the nearby lightning into the dark gray shadows of the neighboring clouds; solemn and serious, like the hero striding among those felled by his sword, this tragedy flows past the agitated soul of the spectator. Its contours are great and powerful, but they are only contours! Colors and shadings must be supplied by the onlooker; whoever cannot do this does not grasp the loftiness of this masterpiece! No dead body offends the eye; no cry of pain, nor does the convulsive quivering of tormented mankind lacerate the soul! Klärchen is dead, but we see the lovely maiden only as an angel, as she extends the laurel wreath to the sleeping hero.

Honor to this magnificent poet, the pride of all Germans! He will remain ours, even when at length the angel of death enwreathes his noble head. He wrote for a free people that which only a free people is worthy to behold. That we belong to a country where words such as those spoken in these scenes are not forbidden: who would not know how to value trust, that cannot be expressed more beautifully? Go forth, friend of mankind! to France or Sweden, to Spain or Russia; you will find no Egmont calling to you from the stage: only tyranny frightens me!

And now the magnificent music of Bethoven, specially composed for each act. Through it the soul is set in the mood for the most sublime emotions, and it attaches itself again to these like the glow of evening to the day that is over.

Was it any wonder that this time the house was not large enough to hold all the spectators? But the genius of art certainly finds its native land where genuine flowers of the spirit are received as they were here, and no disfavor may dare to drive it away; for it finds its temple in the hearts of the people.

Only a few words about the performance. Count Egmont found in Mr. Karschin his worthy representative upon the stage. The lovely Klärchen was naively and charmingly played by Miss Stephani the younger. Mr. Solbrig as William of Orange, Mr. Dobritz as Brackenburg, Mr. Tilly as Vansen, Mr. Ruppert as the Duke of Alba, Mr. Böhm as Ferdinand, and Mr. Köpper as Jetter left nothing more to be desired. On the other hand, Mrs. Herz as Klärchen's mother had transformed herself into a grandmother, if not into a great grandmother, and the disagreeable impression made by the performance of Mr. Schmidy as Egmont's private secretary and as Gometz is not to be described. The words clattered from his mouth like the sound of a slowly moving wagon wheel. He does not seem to be made for youthful roles; why then is he not spared them?

The costumes were well chosen and lavish; the choice of the scenery, among which that for the prison was particularly outstanding, bore witness to comparable good taste. We must nevertheless complain bitterly about the monstrous smoke that rolled through the theater at the close of the piece, and threatened to suffocate everyone. The vision of Klärchen was thus made truly palpable. Was it not possible to introduce a current of air behind the stage to lead away the clouds of smoke, or did no one think of this? Woe to us if the next world has such an atmosphere; we would then have to wish to remain here below.

In the scene where Egmont's prison is transformed into Klärchen's dwelling, it became evident how inappropriate the curtains at the room entrances would become. Folding doors, similar to the actual doors to the room, can never cause this disturbance, and heighten the illusion not inconsiderably. It would be desirable that a change here be brought about as soon as possible.

84.8.

“News. Leipzig.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 23

(11 April 1821): 240.¹

(Mentioned: Op. 72, *Fidelio*)

For overtures we heard that by Cherubini to the *Portuguese Hotel*,² the first overture to *Fidelio* by Beethoven,³ two brilliantly written overtures by Lindpaintner,⁴ a splendid new overture by A. Romberg, then the overture to *Egmont* by Beethoven, and, upon its repetition, all of the Entractes to *Egmont*, with poetic commentary by Mosengeil,⁵ splendidly spoken by Mr. Stein, connecting the pieces of music to each other. —We were able thereby to partake of the great enjoyment of hearing these compositions, which belong among the great master’s most splendid works, in context. It is greatly to be wished that this poetic adaptation should be more widely disseminated, so as to be the occasion for similar enjoyment elsewhere.

¹This is an excerpt from a lengthy summary of the weekly subscription concerts at the Leipzig Gewandhaus.

²Cherubini’s *L’hôtellerie portugaise* was premiered in Paris in 1798.

³This probably refers either to Leonore no. 2 or Leonore no. 3, both of which were used at early performances of *Fidelio*, rather than to Leonore no. 1, which was never performed with the opera.

⁴Peter Josef von Lindpaintner (1791–1856) was a prominent conductor and the composer of twenty-eight operas.

⁵For the text of Mosengeil’s poetic commentary, which was intended to summarize the stage action during a concert performance of the incidental music to *Egmont*, see no. 84.10, below. The publication of the complete text in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* apparently constitutes fulfillment of the wish expressed by the correspondent in the final sentence above.

84.9.

“News. Frankfurt am Main, in April.”
Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 23
(May 1821): 367.

*T*heater. The 23rd. For the first time (!) *Egmont* by Göthe, with music by Beethoven. A critique of the production of this tragedy does not belong within the scope of these pages. The music, one of the most splendid works of this great tone poet, is magnificent, the product of a deep, inspired soul. Now portraying vigorous, earthly striving and the valiant struggle for freedom, now again harmonious strains from the distant homeland, to which Klärchen has returned, and to which every heart yearns, even if it finds nothing more to love here below! —The performance of all the musical numbers was entirely satisfactory, and we had only to regret that Miss Lindner, a most excellent actress, was not musical enough to sing Beethoven’s setting of the two songs, through whose omission many passages in the entr’actes lost their meaning. She sang Reichard’s “Freudvoll, leidvoll.”

84.10.

Friedrich Mosengeil; Amadeus Wendt.

“Beethoven’s Entr’actes to Goethe’s *Egmont*, with Declamatory Accompaniment;
Postscript.” Supplement no. 3 to no. 22
of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 23
(20 May 1821): 392ff.¹

Concerning Supplement no. III.

Church Councillor Mosengeil² in Meiningen, a respected poet and intimate friend of musical art, wished for Beethoven’s music to Göthe’s *Egmont*, which is first-rate in every respect, to be heard in its entirety (overture, entr’actes and conclusion); and since in his place of residence there is, to be sure, a praiseworthy princely orchestra but no theater, while this music cannot be completely understood and enjoyed without some recollection of the principal scenes of the play, and the principal situations of the persons involved, he has therefore written a poem wherein these recollections and intimations can be given in a worthy, satisfying, and agreeable way, and which is to be recited as a declamatory piece in between the individual movements of this music. The work was performed in this way this past winter at our local concerts, and met with unanimous, extraordinary applause.³ We may thus assume that, performed in the same way, it would find the same applause everywhere else, and would, furthermore, be particularly welcome at the many places where there is no theater or where Göthe’s *Egmont* is not performed with Beethoven’s music. Since the enjoyment even of a performance of this music in keyboard reduction can be increased and elevated with the assistance of the poem, we have allowed this poem to be printed as a supplement to this issue of our periodical with the author’s kind consent, and hope that we are thereby performing a service to all those mentioned above.

The Editor

¹The note from the editor appears on p. 392, which is the last page of this issue of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*. The remainder of this item appears in Supplement no. III to v. 23.

²Mosengeil (1773–1839) also wrote the review of the “Pastoral” symphony that appeared in *Zeitung für die elegante Welt* 10 (1810): 1049–53.

³Cf. No. 84.8, above, and the descriptions by Wendt in the postscript, below. Both refer to performances in Leipzig (the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*’s home) in March and April 1821. The *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*’s correspondent also testifies to the success of the performance on 8 March.

Beethoven's Entr'actes to Göthe's Egmont;
with declamatory accompaniment

by
Friedrich Mosengeil.

Introduction.

Egmont appears only all too rarely upon our country's stages, and many friends of this dramatic masterwork are reluctant to forfeit the enjoyment of a musical one along with it. We refer to the incomparable entr'actes which Mr. van Beethoven has composed for this tragedy.⁴ If one were to declaim them as concert music, most of the effect would necessarily be lost as long as the missing representation of the piece itself was not replaced in some way, and poetic unity for the whole established through some artistic medium. The following declamatory pieces are intended for this purpose. They presuppose listeners who are familiar with the great dramatic picture from an inner or an outer point of view, and for whom a sketch will thus suffice to evoke the principal moments in a lively manner.

Perhaps Beethoven's music will be better heard and valued with this declamatory accompaniment than at a theatrical performance of *Egmont*. For where is there a theater audience disposed to listen to musical entr'actes (particularly of such proportion!) with the necessary quiet and attentiveness? The more a piece holds the attention while the curtain is up, the more it tends to languish when it falls; and it is unfortunately the custom, at any dramatic representation which is not expressly announced as an opera or a melodrama, to treat the music only as something extra to fill up the gaps.

Upon these observations the author of this experiment has based the hope that many friends of musical art, in making the acquaintance of these speeches, may be helped with those entr'actes. These days an orator may certainly be found everywhere among you, and with his assistance this magnificent composition by Beethoven can also be performed at music-loving assemblies where one would otherwise not have a chance to hear it.

The author will touch only briefly upon another cherished hope, convinced that a detailed explanation of its basic principles to the public would be inappropriate, lest he himself should be in error about its content, which better experts may decide.

Specifically, it seems as if, with this experiment, the prospect is opened of a new point of unity between sister arts: to the art of poetry—by making language into music, and to musical art—by making music into language; —and the so gloriously distinguished composers of our fatherland may yet find here a great deal of inspiring material to work with.

Concerning the inadmissibility of musical miniature painting, such as is to be found not infrequently in the works even of good masters (as, for example, here and there in Haydn), in

⁴A footnote in the original text reads: "Published several years ago by Breitkopf und Härtel in parts as well as in keyboard reduction." Cf. no. 84.3, nn. 1 and 2. Readers are reminded that Breitkopf und Härtel was also the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung's* publisher.

many melodramas, indeed even in a few productions of our Beethoven, expert voices have long since passed judgment. Nevertheless, they are certainly in agreement as well that the effect must be all the more satisfactory if a master already dedicated to musical art understands how to take in as a whole poetic representations that have become familiar to the national soul and to paint them, as it were, *al fresco*.⁵ It is not a question here of indicating the chirping of individual bird voices and “How the hound wanders through the field” —and with how it becomes night and day—how the lion roars, and the stormwind howls, and the rain rustles. No, we are speaking here of evoking great conditions of the soul, first through the divine power of the poet in himself, and then irresistibly in the listener. We are speaking here of expressing in inspired notes that for which no words are sufficient, the utmost that a hidden destiny and virtue and guilt have poured out over human hearts from the cup of joy or from the vessel of anger—enchantment, love, joy, peace, consolation; —melancholy, misery, spiritual anguish, doubt—even, indeed, crying and moaning them out, to the extent that this does not cross beyond the boundaries of the beautiful.

The monotony which must gradually become noticeable in the structure of our symphonies as their number grows toward infinity could perhaps be avoided in this way through an agreeable variety, and ever more ears and hearts won over to one of the most noble of arts.

Beethoven found his entr’actes to *Egmont* necessary primarily because of those moments in the piece which explicitly call for musical accompaniment. But he has accomplished infinitely more than was required, and than has perhaps been generally recognized until now. We believe that we see set forth here a model for that musical fresco painting, and it would certainly admit of a variety of further applications in many other dramatic works. We mention here only Göthe’s *Faust* (which, in any case, in its colossal format, finds no place in our theaters). Great masterworks of a genius who is foreign to our language, for example those of the Greek tragedians, which can never really be adapted to the German stage, either in translation or in arrangement, must also, thus set forth and thus treated, call attention pleasingly and instructively to their eternal merit. —Individual simple scenes could be recited in dialogue. Here and there great song choruses must enter, summarizing the total impression of entire acts; even mime tableaux, as they are practiced in our time, appearing with sagacious restraint at the appropriate places (for example, Clärchen’s image in Egmont’s dream), would have an agreeable effect. In short, from this prospect, a broad field seems to be opened up to the poet, the composer, and the declaimer, which it would certainly be rewarding to cultivate. The last-mentioned of

⁵This argument parallels Mosengeil’s statement, in the review of the “Pastoral” symphony that he wrote eleven years earlier, that “[Beethoven’s] tableau is distinguished from the customary musical ones like the work of a painter who idealizes nature from that of an ordinary copyist of it.” However, he does not object, in that earlier review, to the depiction of the three bird songs in the second movement —certainly an example of “musical miniature painting.”

In general, his argument here parallels a growing conviction among music critics of this time that tone-painting, which was understood in the eighteenth century in straightforward descriptive terms, was being practiced by more recent composers at a deeper psychological level that broadened music’s expressive power without trivializing it. See Wallace, *Beethoven’s Critics*, 46–53, 69–73 ff.

these may hereby emerge from his heretofore narrow circle, and rise to the brilliant ranks of the Greek protagonists and choregi.⁶

But it is probably evident that this idea appeals so deeply to the writer of the following experiment that he has almost been untrue to his first intention of only touching upon it fleetingly, and, overpowered by it, has gone all too far ahead of the judgment of others, instead of waiting quietly and confidently for it.

At the close of this introduction it might also be mentioned that the gratifying effect brought about by the enthusiastic cooperation of a very educated company at repeated performances of this declamatory piece—most of all, though, the favorable judgment which *Egmont's* great poet himself conveyed to him—have encouraged him to communicate it to the public. May friends and guardians of the arts take up this idea with love, just as it has been given to them with love, and continue and complete this imperfect beginning in a more skillful way.

Fr. Mosengeil.

Postscript.

Church Councillor D. [sic] Mosengeil kindly communicated to me, the undersigned, the manuscript of the following poetry along with the preceding introduction. I gladly concurred with the beautiful intention of adapting Beethoven's great music to Göthe's *Egmont* to concert performance, where it may be more frequently and more perfectly enjoyed than on the stage, by means of a poetic-declamatory link between the pieces which are separated by the events of the drama. I communicated this idea to the worthy directors of the Leipzig subscription concerts, at which the greatest works of Beethoven had always been received with the same fire with which they had been rehearsed and presented under the direction of Concertmaster Matthäi.⁷ The idea was taken up, all the more so because Beethoven's music was known only very imperfectly from an earlier theatrical presentation of Göthe's *Egmont*, and the great musical artist's genius had, since then, ever more reconciled itself to the musical public and won it over to him. So, at the local subscription concert on 8 March, the experiment of joining together the individual musical pieces by Beethoven to Göthe's *Egmont* into a whole, in a way suitable to concert performance, through a poem indicating the spirit and course of the action of this tragedy, was performed with such success that already, on 15 April, popular demand led to a repetition. In this regard it should not be forgotten, to be sure, that the poetical words were recited entirely in accordance with the overall meaning by Mr. Stein, a member of the local theater.

The undersigned begged the worthy author for permission to make this material more generally useful through public communication of the poetic interludes, and he responded that

⁶The German term *Choragen* derives from the Greek idea of the choregos, that is, the elite patrons of art who were responsible for the education and support of the members of the chorus in ancient Greek theater.

⁷Heinrich August Matthäi (1781–1835) was concertmaster of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, one of the first and foremost professional civic orchestras in Europe.

it would delight him if the masterwork of the great musical artist could now be more assiduously heard and more valued than would have been the case without these interludes. The text, as it was submitted to him by the author, is now communicated below. Several annotations indicate the alterations which were made to it at the performance in Leipzig mentioned above. I am pleased to add that the publisher has arranged for a special copy of these poetic interludes for the buyers and owners of the music published by him.

Prof. A. Wendt

Leipzig, 30 May 1821.

*Prologue*⁸

The spirit, —oppressed, bound by the limitations
Of narrow, often not happy reality, —
Floats easily and freely in the kingdom of the ideal.
In the evening the hot day's burdens sink down,
If, from the clear heavenly source of the muses,
We create new strength for ourselves with new courage.
Then, led by happy art, we wander
Without fetters in the halls of its temple,
And in the grove yonder, where at a sign from the goddess
The pleasant, wondrous flowers joyfully sprout,
which, tenderly plucked for a colorful wreath,
Bloom unfadingly around her lyre.
Soon we listen enchanted with ear and heart,
Whenever she powerfully strikes the golden strings;
And every curtain must soon be lifted,
Which, shimmering magically, conceals a world,
Where, in gentle motion, the loveliest of forms, —
Embellishing life's joy and sorrow, —prevail.

When Carlos rests at the heart of Posa;
When Maria Stuart departs with greatness and meekness;
The virgin rises up to her constellation; —
When Torquato Tasso's harsh pains
Overflow to the sweet tones of the lute;
And Götz, with his stiff, cold hand of iron

⁸A footnote in the original text reads: "This prologue was omitted at the performance in Leipzig, probably due to the length of the whole, and Beethoven's overture thus served as the beginning."

Oppresses the gentle, warm German heart; —
Then Egmont, —free and loyal and great,
Out of powerful love for a suffering people, —
With cheeks that do not pale before death,
Courageously yields his proud head to the murderous ax of the tyrant: —
Where is there a heart that then does not beat harder?
An eye from which tears do not fall,
Emerging from the depths of the sacred wellsprings of humanity,
The eye brilliantly bedecked, —the heart touched?

We now dare, on a newly trodden path,
Most venerable one! to approach such a noble goal.
Incline unto us, when a great life,
As a great poet portrayed it for us,
We reproduce in small, fleeting images.
A great master has associated with us,
In order to raise up the feeble word with mighty sound,
Supplementing our imperfect striving.
May, then, that which escapes our glance
Rise up from our imagination in abundant forms.
Here, where the sacrificial flame of art is glowing,
She will incline the listener to sweet illusion;
She will enchantingly show him her Eden,
As it blooms, eternally young, around her temple.

The expert's censure—if it arises,
And, where we stumble, seeks to right us, —
Will yet spare, in deference to love,
Whoever consecrates himself to be among the poet's noble friends,
And, saying it himself, rejoices in this sweet hope:
“May their unspoken thanks kindly reward us!”

(Overture.)

I.

A courageous people, who know their power,
They will not always submit their wounded necks
Patiently to a foreign yoke.
Once awakened, they burst from their chains.
Then many a noble heart breaks in battle:

But not in vain! The well-being of the fatherland
Sprouts from the warriors' holy, sacrificial blood.

* * *

Oppressively there lay upon the Netherlands,
which had only recently broken free again from foreign lords,
The blood-spattered scepter of the Spaniard, Philipp.
A growing spark sprung from our fatherland,
—Alas! these people became
The kindling of a great, raging fire,
Which, stirred up by the sword, now threw its flames
All across Flanders's flourishing meadows.
Carried there by the poet's imagination,
We see with a shudder the dark cloud draw in,
Whose menacing lightning draws nearer, ever nearer.

There stands a mighty tree, as yet not uprooted,
Spreading its branches widely with flowers and fruit.
He inspires fear in some, love in others, —
The noble count is joined by him
Who cares even less to be called Prince von Gaure; —
Every heart speaks the name of Egmont! —

A horror to his enemies, gentle as a child to his friends,
Fame has crowned him in fierce battles,
And the thanks of the citizens in happy, peaceful times.
When a suppliant approaches him oppressed,
He leaves comforted, with blessings on his lips.
“Glory, —glory to our Egmont!” cry child and elderly alike,
Wherever the light-hearted youth shows himself.
A hopeful rejoicing is his greeting,
And jubilant tumult his escort.

Then the poet leads us out of the joyous crowd
To the quiet, little house
Where Clärchen lives; —a charming child,
Who chooses everyone's favorite as her beloved,
And, truly loved by him, thanks love's good fortune
For his glances alone. —Her mother warns her; —
Her pale friend stands there despairing,
From whom she withdraws her hand in favor of Egmont.

In vain! —No more retreat! —She can live
For Egmont alone; —or if not—die with Egmont!⁹

Oh, simply let your happy song resound!
Life hurries by, the sounds of joy fade away,
And the jubilation of your love is invaded by
The fearful groan of the unloved faithful one.
Where Brackenburg stands impoverished in the distance,
Bleeding, life is torn away from joy
Forever! A slight shudder is breathed
Like a presentiment of death from out of the life of the notes.
A deep woe arises from a heart torn asunder; —
So is love's joy united with love's pain!

(Clärchen's song: "Die Trommel gerührt,"
which is followed by the Andante, No. 2 a.)

II.

To the small heart, which is tormented,
Only its own suffering seems great; To the great soul,
Personal suffering is small compared to the distress of beloved brethren.
Pity does not remain long with the weak,
Who despair without acting in the pain of love.

A higher suffering holds our glance captive!
For the well-being of an entire people
Our heart must tremble with ominous concern.
Soon the uproar towers up into violent storms;
Good laws turn into demand and punishment; —
The lion shudders before the doors of the dungeon,
And swings its tail: —thus, with wild bluster,
The fury of the crowd has destructively arisen.

⁹A footnote in the original text reads: "The following passage, together with Clärchen's song, which pertains to it, was omitted at the Leipzig performance, since this song, both in its text and in its musical setting, seemed detrimental to the serious effect of the whole in the concert hall. In its place there followed immediately the Andante, together with the Allegro con brio, No. 2, as Beethoven himself joined these two pieces together into one, whereupon the declamation continued with 'To the small heart etc.'"

But like a storm at sea amid torrents of flame
The crowd of sailors looks to their ferry-man,
Who bravely grasps the rudder to steer them: thus we greet
in Egmont the savior. To him the people
Entrust their well-being. Ashamed and silent, the transgressors
Make atonement when he draws near; order is built up
Upon the ruins; hope, newly born,
They freely breathe, and believe the storm exorcized.

(Allegro No. 2 b.)¹⁰

When, in the midst of fate's perfidious turns,
The highest good fortune, a loyal friend, persists,
To him life will extend no wreath of thorns,
Until it is laced with roses throughout!

Where Egmont travels, high on the steep path, —
Long distrusted and hated by the Spaniards,
A friend always goes at his side to warn him.
In nobility, not just of rank,
But of the heart as well, —William of Orange
is Egmont's equal. By heaven itself
He seems to have been joined to him, that he may show him
The fall right at the steep edge of the abyss.
Less rash, wisely heeding treachery,
William has seen through his opponents' game.
Soon he is counting Alba's steps, pondering the chains,
Which, for the noble prince and for his people as well,
He has cast deep in the dark hell of fanaticism.
Margareta's gentle scepter
He sees already stolen and desecrated;
She herself driven off from the land that had protected her;
He hurries there, to escape from ruin.
But alas! his Egmont does not follow him! —In vain
Does he beseechingly embrace his dear friend.
In proud certainty, depending
On sacred right, he wants to stand up boldly to the duke;
He will hear the king's will for himself. —

¹⁰A footnote in the original review reads: "See the previous note. The declamation continued at this point after a small pause without musical interruption."

To him, life is only a merry game;
He is not inclined to be stingy with his highest praise.
No creeping suspicion, no distrust
Can inhibit and poison his free-flowing blood.
He counts to him as dead, who keeps his timorous glance
Fixed upon his own safety.

“When you take life all too seriously,” —
Thus Egmont asks his worried friend,
“What then is left in it? —If the morning
Does not awaken us to new joys, and the evening
leaves us no more pleasure to hope for:
Is it then worth getting dressed and undressed any longer?
Lashed by unseen spirits,
To be carried forward by the frail carriage of our fate;
And nothing is left for us but to stand valiantly firm;
To hold the reins tight; —to the right and left,
To steer the wheels away, here from a stone,
There from a fall; —but where does it go? — . .
Who knows? — . .”

Alas, the course of your carriage, —your friend knows it!
Therefore he urges you away with tears of true love
As he embraces you in parting.
He still wants to turn away from the point of the arrow,
Which already has flown from the dark cloud.
His call fades. He cannot startle the
Secure man! Only Alba can awaken him!

(Larghetto No. 3.)

III.

“Joyful and sorrowful” —
That is the lot of life and of love!
Still joyful, while the evening is already falling,
Love waits in Clärchen’s quiet house,
So near to the sorrow that the morning will bring to her! —

The yearning of young, hot passion
And the sad complaints of an anxious mother
Move us alternately to the depths of our hearts.

The mother complains: “For one person
You forget everything! And Alas! the time comes
When youth, the beauty of love,
And everything, everything comes to an end!”

“Let that time come!” Clärchen exclaims,
“May it come, like death! —To think about it
Is frightening! ——Egmont! To live without you? —No,
It is not possible, —not possible! . . .”

(Song: No. 4 “Freudvoll und leidvoll”)

And Egmont enters! . . . —
For the last time in the earthly sky
An angel comes to him smiling blessedly.
But the feeling that exalts their hearts
Only the heart can render, not the tongue;
And that which speech strives to say in vain,
Notes may dare to express.

(Allegro, No. 5. up to the march.)

Awake, hero! In your fatherland,
Everyone who loves it must now renounce joy.
A foreigner is rattling chains, forging bonds;
Your noble people shall bear the fetters of slavery.
The sword of execution quivers; the torch fire glows;
Now is the time, for the sake of all, to risk your all faithfully!
To win victory, strong in battle, for your people and for righteousness,
And, if this is impossible, to die yet fighting!

Sacrificing your heart’s blood, you shall rise up
from sweet dreams of love to bitter hatred!
The enemy is near! Trembling, your people
await their savior. Can their Egmont delay? —
Fame calls him—duty—for life and death
Out to the battle, to clear the way for freedom.
Within the walls of Brussels, with cold derision,
Dark Alba already leads his horde of lackeys!

(Marcia vivace)

IV.

Snared by the net of the crafty hunter,
Egmont now stands, not suspecting the approaching defeat,
Before Philipp's messengers of death. For the people
He speaks up loudly; of duty and right,
Not only of the ruled, but of the ruler as well, —
He lets his speech burst powerfully forth.
A stone encrusted with ice, though, stands
Against him. Alba only knows the value of slaves.
To him, whoever thinks himself free is ripe for the dungeon.
Upon the eternally free possession of the spirit,
And of faith, he seeks to place narrow fetters;
And Egmont calls, enraged to his innermost being:
"Then demand our heads! Then it will be done
Once and for all! Whether the Netherlander's neck
Shall submit to the yoke or to the axe, to the noble person it is the same thing!
In vain, in vain have I spoken so much! —
Stirred up the air, —gained nothing more!"

And as the noble one now with proud spirit
Turns away from that king of slaves:
His barely controlled fury breaks forth.
Now the hero has run the beautiful course! —
Foreign mercenaries fill the room.
To his eternal fame, —to the eternal shame of the enemy, —
Egmont, the free man overpowered, must place
His most trusty sword at the servant's feet.
"Orange!" he calls out. His friend's warning,
Heedlessly rejected, now becomes a terrifying portent.
The bolt of the dungeon clatters . . .

Oh lighten, gentle strings

The terrible, harsh noise which offends us!
Kind sympathy moistens our eyes,
So that we willingly suffer with the suffering one!
When pain comes to us through the master's
Melting chords, rough words become silent.

(Poco sostenuto, No. 6.)

V.

The oak collapses in a flash of lightning;
Then the little plant whose tendrils grew green around the trunk
Also sinks to its death in the flames.
Oh Clärchen! Loyal heart! How can you live,
When bloody executioners condemn your friend? —
She still looks for help; —tries to lift up her voice
With the strength of a man! The tender one wants to dare
To carry on the standard of the uprising herself!

In vain her hot entreaties! A numb terror
Lames the arms and hearts of the citizens.
The painful cry of despair can awaken only regret;
And the walls of the dungeon are insurmountable.
Now morning will only reveal the stage
Where Egmont's murderers are already lurking at the block!
Her heart becomes quiet and breaks from weariness of life.
The time is over! ———She seeks eternal peace.

(Larghetto, No. 7.)

(Melodrama during the last notes of the larghetto.)

Sweet flower! Quickly perishing,
Do not wither at the bosom of joy!
Your wounds bleed alone.
Tired, tired
Glimmers the little light.¹¹ —Now it is still!
Peace, peace
Be with the spirit, with the body!

(Short pause.)

Away from this deathlike darkness strives
The frightened glance, and seeks comfort and light.
Alas! will it find light and comfort in the dungeon
Where Clärchen's friend awaits his final hour?

¹¹A footnote in the original text reads: "These words fall at the point where, in the larghetto, the putting out of the lamp is indicated. Otherwise, the distribution of the text is left up to the declaimer's preference."

The judgment is spoken: "When tomorrow
The sky grows red, his noble blood
Shall redden the soil of his fatherland."

But behold the hero in the night of death!
Whoever is afraid there must strengthen himself to firm courage.
Is this cheek pale? This eye rigid?
Has despair gripped this heart?
Does cold sweat cover this high forehead? —

Whoever has lived properly, he also knows how to die properly.
He contemplates unbowed the way
That fate's stern hand has led him,
Until out of the night there dawns a golden morning.
He thinks of his friends; also of his last friend,
Whom an amazing fate has given him
In Alba's son! The youth cannot, to be sure,
Rescue the great man who shines as a model for him,
But he can dedicate himself to him forever,
And then take from him the last wish of his heart.

It is fulfilled! —Life's account
Is pleasantly closed. A manly, firm hope,
That he is not now shedding his blood in vain,
Opens to him the gates of paradise.
A sweet dream of happy consolation arises
From his final sleep. Earthly desire
Is surpassed by heaven in the notes,
Which crown him the victor with an eternal laurel.

And Clärchen extends the wreath! Having arrived first,
Free from the fetters of earth, the loyal one
May glitter radiantly in freedom's stellar garments.
That the union may now be renewed eternally
The angel's ardent entreaty signals to him.
Death becomes sweet, for the consecration was blessed! —
He Himself hears how the victory was won!
Sees how the hero has risen up into the light!

(Melodrama, No. 8.)

Egmont

Sweet sleep! You come like pure good fortune, most voluntarily, unbidden and unurged. You loose the bonds of harsh thought, mingling all the images of joy and pain. Unhindered flows the circle of inner harmonies, and, enveloped in pleasant madness, we sink down and cease to be.

(Music; Egmont's dream.)¹²

(Egmont awakens.)

The wreath has disappeared! You beautiful image; the light of day has banished you! Yes, it was them; they were united, the two sweetest joys of my heart. Divine freedom took on the form of my beloved; the charming maiden dressed herself in my girlfriend's heavenly garments. In one earnest moment they appear to be united, more earnest than lovely. With the soles of her shoes stained with blood she appeared before me, the billowing folds of her hem stained with blood. It was my blood and the blood of many noble people. No, it was not shed in vain! Across! Good people! The goddess of victory leads you! And as the sea breaks through your dikes, so is the fortress of tyranny breaking, struggling desperately, and sweeps them, drowning, from the foundation which it claims for itself.

(Drums.)

Hear, hear! How often has this sound called me to stride freely upon the field of combat and of victory. How happily did those I led tread upon the dangerous, glorious path! I too stride out of this prison to meet an honorable death; I die for freedom, for which I lived and fought, and to which, suffering, I now sacrifice myself.

(Drums, nearer.)

Yes, just bring them together! Close your ranks, you do not terrify me! I am accustomed to standing where spears go against spears, and, surrounded by the threat of death, to feel valiant life now at double strength.

(Drums.)

The enemy closes in on you from all sides! —Swords glitter; —Friends, take courage! Behind you are parents, wives, children! — —Protect your possessions! And to protect what you love most, fall gladly, according to my example.

(Symphony of victory begins quickly.)

¹²A footnote in the original text reads: "Author's note: A scene could be acted out in mime during the performance of Beethoven's music."

84.II.

J. B. Rousseau.

“Concert in Aachen.”

Rheinische Flora, no. 35 (Supplement)

(2 March 1826).

(Mentioned: *Christus am Ölberge*, op. 85)

Our choral society, dedicating its heartfelt interest to the appearance of the master,¹ delighted us with the performance of Romberg’s *Glocke*² under the former’s direction, and a dilettante offered a beautiful intermezzo with his performance of the grand aria from *Christus am Ölberge* by Beethoven, whose overture to *Egmont*, which hastens forth from the dark cavity of the earth to the brilliant aurora of jubilation, sweeping away the trembling heart in blissful inspiration, had made the introduction to the celebration of an evening truly dedicated to art in a worthy and solid performance.

¹This may refer to Ferdinand Ries, who had directed the Lower Rhine Music Festival in Aachen the previous year.

²Andreas Jakob Romberg (1767–1821) wrote a setting of Schiller’s *Das Lied von der Glocke* for soloists, choir, and orchestra that was published in 1809 and widely performed throughout the nineteenth century.

84.12.

Adolf Bernhard Marx.

“Review.”

Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 4

(20 June 1827): 194.

(Arrangements for string quartet and for violin and keyboard by Alexander Brand,¹
with various works)

Of this music, only the overture has until now been more generally disseminated among friends of art, and only a few of the more cultured and wealthier cities have heard the entire composition at its appropriate place at a performance of the tragedy. The useful arrangements named above are a welcome step toward further dissemination of this work. Every player will rejoice in them at beautiful music, while the more thoughtful ones will look for the idea and character of the poem in the composition, and many receptive circles will celebrate this binding together of two arts by two great and heterogenous spirits by a performance of the music together with a reading of the tragedy.

For the observer of the development of art, this composition will be all the more interesting for being the first in which instrumental music was consciously and intentionally used for the self-sufficient representation of an idea and of actions in progress, even though Beethoven has directed his flight even higher and represented his ideas even more perfectly in the Farewell sonata, in the 54th, 111th and 110th; in the E-flat major, C minor, A major, Pastoral, and Choral symphonies; and in other, later works.²

For when we look over all of his works, this is the innovation that he has bequeathed to the world: the conscious and intentional use of instrumental music for the expression and representation of a specific thought. Naturally, those innumerable artists and dilettantes for whom music remains in the ear, and who hear only sounds, have not been able to accompany him in this direction. This is the reason for the broader approval granted to his earlier works, in which his unique idea had not yet worked its way to the fore.

¹Both of these arrangements were published by Schott in Mainz in 1826, at the same time as Brand's trio version of the violin sonata, Op. 23.

²Marx is referring to the sonata Op. 81a, probably to the “Appassionata,” Op. 57, to the last two piano sonatas, Opp. 110 and 111, and to symphonies 3, 5, 7, 6, and 9, respectively. Many of these works were actually written before the *Egmont* music.

Among all artists, however, only Felix Mendelsohn Bartholdy has become his follower on this path (if we may overlook trifles and inadequate attempts): in his sonata in E major, which has been published by Laue in Berlin, and his overture to—or rather, translation of—Shakespeare’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream*.³ If only this work would appear! But not simply in a keyboard reduction and parts, but in full score, so that all musicians may study it. We confidently predict that the publisher of this work will thereby erect a monument of honor to himself. Or do we have no great-spirited publisher in Berlin who knows how to foresee the respect of times yet to come? We hope, too, that the composer is willing to make the work known appropriately in this way, and only in this way.

³Marx and Mendelssohn, who was eighteen at the time this was written, both fell under the influence of Hegelian aesthetics, as did many in Berlin at the time. Mendelssohn, however, rarely sought to incorporate into his works the degree of programmatic specificity that was broadly endorsed by Marx, who ultimately developed his own personal aesthetic system that went well beyond Hegel’s own rudimentary comments on music.

The early E major piano sonata, Op. 6, published in 1826, may be an exception. Although no extramusical content is specified, the work is episodic and cyclical to the point of near incoherence, thus seemingly demanding some sort of programmatic interpretation of the sort that contemporary critics like Marx were only too happy to provide. It contains several references to Beethoven’s piano sonata Op. 101, as well as to the dungeon scene in *Fidelio*, which make it clear that Mendelssohn deliberately sought to make the connection with Beethoven’s later work that Marx underscores here.

The incidental music to *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* was published in 1830.

84.13.

“Music.”

Stadt-Achener-Zeitung, no. 219
(13 September 1828).

Rarely has a composer been so blessed as was the immortal Beethoven, in his ingenious music to Goethe's *Egmont*, with the high poetic meaning that allows him to comprehend the allegorical references in a poem and bring them into view. In the masterful overture, in the ghostly music of the dream vision and in the triumphal march that calls Egmont to the scaffold, the composer has shown us the artistic form of the play, developing and carrying on the action before our eyes, showing us the motives, painting the characters and sentiments that poets can only hint at, or else are compelled to conceal completely, leaving their unraveling to the spectator's heightened consciousness. He has genuinely expressed the unutterable and presented it in musical incarnation. All the more do we deplore the fact that this music is not always executed with fire and precision, and that, specifically, we have been disturbed in our enjoyment of the music that prepares the dream vision by the clearing away of tables, etc., which is frequently accomplished on our stages with conspicuous slowness.

Op. 85. Oratorio *Christus am Ölberge*

85.I.

“News. Vienna. 6 April.”
Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 5
(13 April 1803): 489.¹

Among musical novelties there is (apart from an oratorio by Paer,² which did not greatly please) only the oratorio by Beethoven, *Christus am Oelberg*, which was performed yesterday and received extraordinary applause. It confirmed my long-standing judgment that, with time, Beethoven can bring about just as much of a revolution in music as Mozart. He hurries with great steps toward the goal.

¹This is an excerpt from a correspondence section containing reports from various cities; because it was the Lenten season, quite a few oratorio performances are mentioned.

²Paer's first oratorio, *Il trionfo della chiesa*, was not published until 1804, but it is possible that it had already been written by the time of this report.

85.2.

“News. Vienna, 11 May.”
Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 5
(25 May 1803): 590.

Mr. Beethoven also gave a cantata of his own composition: *Christus am Öhlberg*. The next day nobody could understand why Mr. B. had charged double for the first places, triple for the enclosed seats, and let every box be purchased for 12 ducats (instead of 4 florins). —However, one must not forget that this was Mr. Beethoven’s first attempt of this kind. I sincerely wish that the cash amount is just as productive at the second attempt, but from the point of view of his composition that he have more characterization and a better thought-out plan.

85.3.

“Review.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 14
(1 and 8 January 1812): 3–7, 17–25.¹

The oratorio, its conception, meaning, and purpose, become clearer to us, it seems, when we place it together with the drama, and consider the complementary relationship of each somewhat more closely. Specifically, it stands in the same relation to the drama as does the telling of a story to the event. The poet is to the composer like an orator to an actor. The drama represents an event to us with which we first become familiar in representation, and which must strike us just as if it were taking place before our eyes. The oratorio, however, speaks of an event as something that is already familiar to us, and whose inner motives and accompanying feelings now become visible. It is a more lively recollection of what has already been understood.

If we accept this, the relationship between the poet and the composer follows accordingly. While both want to appear to be relating the drama spontaneously, their emotions guided by and dependent on the course of the action, in the oratorio both show themselves, like the orator, to be prepared beforehand, and both lead the course of the event to specific feelings according to a predetermined plan *with* specific feelings. The oratorio thus tends to excite definite emotions, not by seeking to describe an unfamiliar event, but rather by using a familiar

¹The oratorio *Christus am Ölberge* was written in February and March 1803 and revised between November of that year and August 1804. However, the work was not published until October 1811, by Breitkopf und Härtel in Leipzig—hence the time elapsed between the previous concert reports and this extensive review, which was based on the published edition. It is interesting that two of those reports (no. 85.2 and F-----b-----t, “Public Concerts in Vienna: Vienna, 7 April 1803,” *Zeitung für die elegante Welt* 3 [7 April 1803]: 362) refer to the work as a cantata, even though the present author clearly understands the term *oratorio* in roughly the same historical sense in which we would use it today. This is a reminder of the often indeterminate and shifting meaning of musical terminology; many works from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that we would now call cantatas, for example, were originally called concerti, a term that we now reserve for instrumental works alone. The word *cantata*, though, literally means a piece to be sung, and thus is appropriate to this piece. On the confusion about the time during which *Christus* was composed, see Theodore Albrecht, “The Fortnight Fallacy: A Revised Chronology for Beethoven’s *Christ on the Mount of Olives*, Op. 85, and Wielhorsky Sketchbook,” *Journal of Musicological Research* 11 (1991): 1–22.

one as its medium. It tends more to plumb the depths, whereas drama seeks more to portray the event in all the width and breadth that it can represent. Thus the material of an oratorio must be simpler and must show not an individual event in a broad, detailed context, but rather an isolated moment that is weighty and instructive and that evokes deep feelings. It should be arranged concentrically, while the drama, on the other hand, should develop eccentrically and sequentially from an adequate basis and starting point and extend to the periphery of understanding.

We can see, therefore, that the artist's sphere of activity is far more restricted here than in the drama, and consequently than in the opera as well. Neither poetry nor music can be dramatic to the same extent and in the same sense that it is there. The opera represents to us events and the accompanying feelings; the oratorio leads the event toward the principal feeling. It compels the artist to reconcile the variety of the event with the unity of a single feeling. If this makes the task more difficult, it becomes all the more so by virtue of the fact that the oratorio must satisfy in and of itself, since the mimetic arts, and all that could provide external illustration, are not available. Poet and composer have to deal with the public all alone. The poet must first sketch out the plan of the whole in such a way that the composer can easily grasp and develop its unity of feeling. Then he must offer him the opportunity to give this unity novelty, charm, and variation through the appropriate use of variety, highlighting the principal feeling by means of contrast, etc., without letting this variation destroy the unity of the dominant feeling. If he neglects the first element, the composer cannot aim at anything definite, at any kind of whole, at *any work*, and consequently cannot give any definite direction to the listeners' emotions, cannot bring everything together to achieve a secure and lasting total impression. If he lacks the second element (variation, contrast, etc.), then emptiness, dryness, and tedium will arise, as is all too often the case with the customary oratorios and church cantatas. This is the mistake that unfortunately has gradually caused the entire magnificent genre to lose so many of its friends.

This having been established, we now come to the work here offered, and bring the last of our observations to bear upon it first.

As severely as the poet, whose identity is unknown to us, has failed in many other respects, about which we will soon have more to say, we gladly concede that first and foremost he has wisely avoided the second mistake, being probably better versed in music than in poetry.² On the contrary, he has given the composer abundant opportunity to express a variety of lively and deep feelings, so that the whole also contains a rare richness, a great fullness, much variation, and an interest that never wavers, but on the contrary rises ever higher and higher.

A spirit as powerful, as all-encompassing, as serious in its artistry as Beethoven's, a heart so warm, charming, and full of life, could leave none of the poet's suggestions, even the slightest ones, unobserved, and throughout the entire work, we see the composer take up everything of which he has given even the slightest hint and portray it in a lively and genuine manner. It is foremost from this laudable unanimity that the warmth, freshness, power, and fullness arise, which must strike everyone who hears the work worthily performed, and in the midst of which alone can be found the conditions generally necessary for the arts of poetry and of music to

²The poet was Franz Xaver Huber (1755–1814).

move and inspire us. Apart from its relationship to the composition, however, it is undeniable that the poem itself could easily have been improved in many respects pertaining to the ordering of the whole and the working out of the details, especially toward the end, and that with regard to diction, and often even to scansion, it often shows fundamental, deplorable faults. In the plan and conception of the whole as a work of poetry, and in regard to the language, the poet could also have done much better if he had closely followed the treatment of the same scenes by the noble *Klopstock*.³ In what follows we will consider the poem only insofar as is compatible with a closer consideration of the music.

The whole is arranged for a tenor voice, Christ, a soprano voice, a seraph, and incidental choirs of angels, of mercenaries, and of disciples. If the purpose of an overture is to express in concentrated form the principal feeling which chiefly animates the entire remainder of the work, then the present one is a masterwork in precisely this regard. Christ on the Mount of Olives is the content of the work: Christ, therefore, at the moment when the resolution to sacrifice himself stands firm within him, but when his human nature, in the urgency of the decisive moment, struggles against itself, shuddering at death, and at the shameful circumstances of this death in particular. It is the moment when the divine nature reaches the high point of its struggle with the human, and finally triumphs gloriously over it. It is this, along with the dark, sublime, and holy nature of this entire moment in the history of salvation, that the composer unmistakably held before his eyes and within his heart as he wrote this overture, which for all that is not particularly long. With truly solemn seriousness, he banishes all the higher instruments to silence at the beginning, and lets a broken chord be sounded only by the bassoons in their deepest octave, the horns, the tenor and bass trombones, the latter entering only with the last quarter note, all in unison. It is, to be sure, the chord of that key of which *Schubart* (*Characteristics of the Keys*) observed in his energetic language, that if ghosts could speak, they would surely speak in this key, with its coldly gripping, convulsive sounds—namely, E-flat minor:⁴ E-flat, G-flat, B-flat, E-flat⁵ *piano*. The effect of this short passage, of these simplest of notes in performance, is truly wonderful and great; they incontestably summon us to the solemn expectation of something sublime and holy. Now, by means of a four-measure phrase, *Adagio*, with a fermata, the composer points toward the tender submissiveness in the savior's character. The phrase is written in 6/8 time with a tender, singable figure, and its effectiveness is heightened even further by the fact that it follows directly upon the previous *Grave* measures,

³This is presumably a reference to Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock's *Der Messias*, one of the most celebrated works of German literature at the time.

⁴Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart (1739–1791) was a writer, musician, and revolutionary. His *Ideen zu einer Aesthetik der Tonkunst*, to which this reviewer refers, was published in 1806. It contains a detailed description of the characteristics of all twenty-four keys, which had already appeared in the *Vaterländische Chronik* in 1787 and 1789. Of E-flat minor, Schubart says: "Feelings of the anxiety of the soul's deepest distress, of brooding despair, of blackest depression, of the most gloomy condition of the soul. Every fear, every hesitation of the shuddering heart, breathes out of horrible eb minor. If ghosts could speak, their speech would approximate this key." See Rita Steblin, *A History of Key Characteristics in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1983). The translation given here is from p. 123 of Steblin's book.

⁵In the German text of the review a fermata is written over the final E-flat.

and is performed at first only by the four string instruments, tentatively, in slurred notes, and with mutes. At the third measure the wind instruments enter and accompany the phrase to the fermata on the dominant. However, the composer shows stirringly and beautifully, by means of powerful and then diminishing horn strokes, through sharply punctuated notes in unison on the tonic, how within the soul of the suffering one his limited human nature must rise powerfully against the resolution of self-sacrifice that has now been quietly conceived. This is covered only by the string instruments, without contrabass, in 8th notes that follow the strong beats powerfully and emphatically proclaimed by the piercing horn. It thus seems to give the signal for the struggle between the two natures, since, as though upon this signal, the instruments become restless, and there follows (*Crescendo nel forte*) a swelling, ever more forceful harmony, which, it is true, is already broken off with the first note of the fourth measure, but only so that the rests within this measure can be all the more fearsomely filled out by six isolated, dull strokes of the timpani, whereupon the string instruments reenter, mournfully and melodiously. If the tension has been high up to this point, it is raised still higher by the soundless rests of the third measure,⁶ which are also filled out by six dull strokes of the timpani. Now, however, it must be resolved, so as not to border on the painful. It is resolved, and in a way that is certainly surprising. A fearsome shuddering (*tremolo*) of the string instruments in 64th notes surges upward *fortissimo* through the middle octaves, and is interrupted by the loud and emphatic, mournful accents of the wind instruments. The conflict is continued by means of effective contrasts, and is particularly overpowering when, against the genuine shuddering of the string instruments, the wind instruments take up indescribably tender melodies in alternating solo phrases, continuing them sometimes in isolation, sometimes in combination with each other. Thus, the whole will be equally great and admirable whether one considers it as a soul painting or as a self-contained work of art. The overture finally fades weakly away in the concluding notes, which at the same time provide the downbeat of the first recitative.

The poet would doubtless have done better if he had let the oratorio begin with a lamenting chorus of angels; a recitative always remains a prosaic opening. He clings to the customary church picture: Christ alone in prayer, the descending angel, the disciples sleeping in the background. It would have been much more significant and effective to let the angels speak at the beginning in secretive sorrow of the great work of redemption, whereupon Christ would enter with the disciples, they (in an ensemble) pledging him their loyalty, he imploring their wakefulness, etc., just as the scene is simply, nobly, and grippingly narrated by St. Matthew.⁷ Even the savior's threefold prayer and return to the disciples would not only have allowed the scene on the Mount of Olives to be properly portrayed, but would at the same time have allowed an abundance of powerful and contrasting motives to be developed for the inspired composer. This does not happen, however, and the very first word which the poet causes the savior to address to his heavenly father (Jehovah! not, as it should have been, and is in Matthew as well, my father) is unhappily chosen. One can only assume that Beethoven sensed the inadequacy of

⁶I.e., after the point just mentioned—actually m. 16.

⁷Matthew 26:30ff.

this beginning, and that is why he not only made the overture so significant overall, but gave it such specific characterization, so that it might indeed be seen to compensate and to open the actual scene. In the recitative itself, the composer has nevertheless produced a masterpiece, particularly in regard to instrumentation. The first phrase: “Jehovah, you my father! O send comfort and power and strength to me!” extends through three measures without any accompaniment; then the string instruments enter very quietly and, in 12/8 time, fill the significant pause in the speech with appropriate expression. New and original instrumentation gives the following phrase a profound effect: “It now approaches, the hour of my suffering.” The recitative had begun in C minor, but the word “suffering” falls on the notes *G-flat*, *G-flat*, and along with them seven separate strokes of the timpani can be heard very quietly, making up a minor third. Only on the seventh 8th note is the *G-flat* taken up by the string instruments, with mutes removed, and the contrabass emphatically states its *C-flat* in repeated 8th notes, and with the concluding B-flat introduces the following *Allegro*, where the recitative takes a quicker path to E-flat major at the words: “Already chosen by me before ever the world burst forth from chaos at your behest.” There follows a dramatic instrumental passage that is splendid in a sense of the word that is appropriate in this context, and which in the first four measures (*Allegro, crescendo nel forte*) indicates what has already been said while in what follows it uses intensified notes played by all the instruments (*maestoso, fortissimo*) to prepare for what is to come: “I hear the thundering voice of your seraph! It demands to know who will take the place of mankind before your judgment.” This speech is followed by the same shuddering instrumental movements heard earlier. Now, accompanied by half and whole notes in the string instruments: “Father! I appear at this call! I will be the mediator—I will atone—I alone—(to indicate the significance of the words ‘I alone,’ an *Allegro* begins with three powerfully shortened quarter notes) for the sins of mankind.” The following words are beautifully and very meaningfully accompanied in an *Adagio* with a 32nd note *tremolo* in the violins and violas: “How could this race, formed from dust, bear a judgment that oppresses me—(*crescendo*) me, your son, (♩) to the utmost?” During this tremolo the first flute, the first oboe, and the first bassoon in unison with the bass announce a distinctive melody in detached, staccato figurations, proceeding in half-steps and expressing compassion, and which is all the more effective for being interrupted by rests. An *Adagio agitato* of five measures, for the string instruments alone, in off-beat 8th notes, to the downbeats of the bass, strikingly illustrates the words: “Ah see, how dread, how mortal fear powerfully grip my heart.” Just as truly conceived and as deeply felt is the phrase set to the words: “I suffer greatly, my father! Oh see, I suffer greatly! Have mercy on me!” (*Adagio molto, a tempo*). The violins have weakly asserted quarter notes⁸ in the first half of every measure, which in every other half rest on a half note, which then each time is strengthened by oboes, violas, and violoncello, while the basses play only the first strong beat in every measure. This figuration asserts itself through the entire phrase, and is only given greater prominence in the last half by the entry of the flutes and bassoons and the *fortissimo* marking.

⁸It is actually the violas that play as described.

Now begins the aria: *Meine Seele ist erschüttert*, surely one of the most expressive of all arias of this character and content. A ritornello of eight measures shows the distress very grippingly. We call attention specifically here to the upper ninth and its effect. The first violins tremolo throughout the entire ritornello on a double stop consisting of the lowest G and the octave above it, while the second violins, violas, and bass jump up in 8th notes to A-flat, with a prominent rest in place of the downbeat. It is a shame that in this splendid passage we must censure several stylistic errors! In the first five measures, sustained notes in the winds instruments, particularly the horns, are sufficiently protected from the upper ninth, but already in the fourth measure flute, oboe, and bassoon leave their position of rest and begin to climb.⁹ Still this signifies nothing, for the second violins and violas climb upward only in the lowest octave, but in the sixth measure, where they have completely left their initial position and, in the middle octave, truly rise above the first violins, while the horns, however, between rests, play only on the strong beats,¹⁰ the overall effect is somewhat empty, bare, and broken, which calls attention to the emotional content in a very disagreeable way. The passage immediately following the words: “The fear of the looming grave grips me like the shivering of a fever” has an imposing effect. Clarinets and bassoons begin a very mournful melody in 8th notes, which is then continued by the string instruments alone, supported by the horns with the doubled tonic in the form of an organ point. Here fall the words “And from my countenance blood drips in place of sweat (!)” An organ-like, very lyrical phrase, given to the wind instruments alone, comes right after this, preparing for what immediately follows, where it is arranged for the string instruments and the voice. It beautifully and expressively signifies the words: “Father, deeply bowed and wretched, your son beseeches you.” What can have suggested to the poet the most unbecoming adjective “wretched”? Certainly not the one that is rhymed with it, “possible”? That would be the most wretched possibility or the greatest possible wretchedness!¹¹ By the way, when the composer gave this phrase, which is very beautiful in itself, to the wind instruments, he slighted it by his manner of writing.¹² Why did he not give it as purely and correctly here as he did at the entry of the voice and the string instruments immediately afterward?

After this aria the seraph appears. Amid a four-measure thunder of timpani on the tonic, this appearance is unexpectedly and, one might say, picturesquely announced by a quick, unprepared change of key into friendly A major. Immediately afterward, the violins signify the angel's descent, and now he begins in recitative: “*Erzittre Erde*” etc., whereupon a beautiful, very lyrical aria in C major—“*Preist des Erlösers Güte*”—follows with a meaningful interplay of the instruments. It then goes into a lively *Allegro* on: “Oh hail to you, you redeemed”—the passage is treated magnificently and solemnly—“if you are true in love, in faith, and in hope.”

⁹The reviewer is counting measures here from the entrance of the wind instruments in the second measure of the *Allegro*. “The upper ninth” refers to a high A-flat, which does indeed appear in the second violins in the passage about to be described, producing a wrenching dissonance of which the reviewer clearly disapproved.

¹⁰The text reads “nur die guten Takttheile anschlagen,” although the horns clearly play on the weak beats at this point.

¹¹The German word *kläglich* (“wretched”) makes a half-rhyme with the word *möglich* (possible).

¹²Presumably this refers to the more elaborate part writing here, as compared to the vocal setting that follows.

Right after this aria the same text is repeated by the angels' choir with a pleasant melody and a lovely interplay of the instruments; the voice of the seraph concertizes throughout. The second part of the chorus—"But woe to those who insolently dishonor"—is deeply gripping, with the first two words first performed by alternating voices, with all then uniting in the decree: "Damnation is their fate!" This last passage, on pp. 47ff. [mm. 172ff.], can truly be called frightening and shattering. The composer hereupon permits the soul the necessary recovery, letting the string instruments alone form an echo, in whole notes, supported by a few wind instruments [mm. 263–64]. Then the seraph once again takes up the blessed words: "But hail to you, etc.," in which the choir joins in gently and comfortingly. Thus the chorus closes with gentle reassurance. A recitative *a due* and a duet between Christ and the seraph carry the scene further. This announces the will of the eternal father: "Thus speaks Jehovah: as long as the holy mystery of atonement is not fulfilled, so long (!) does the human race remain cast off and deprived of eternal life!," whereupon the recitative closes. The treatment of these words is completely original, and the music would have to be called truly mystical; it can hardly be heard without a kind of secret shudder. The violins and the violas are silent throughout these seven measures [mm. 6-12];¹³ violoncellos doubled by contrabasses enter in their place, so that the singing voice is uncommonly emphasized. With this silence, the effect of the accompaniment of the decree itself by oboes, clarinets, bassoons, and trombones, first in whole notes, then in rising half notes, while the voice goes on in 8th notes, but in entire measures of monotone, always following a half beat behind the rising oboes, is all the more amazing. The duet that follows is a worthy painting of the Redeemer's resignation to his father's will and, in well-considered contrast, the astonishment of the seraph at this greatness of soul. In this interplay of emotions the accompaniment of the string instruments to the seraph's words: "I tremble, and am myself surrounded by the horror of the grave which he feels" particularly stands out.

After a short recitative, accompanied by string instruments alone, the choir of soldiers draws near to Christ, who is perfectly submissive, prepared for his death. It is announced by a twenty-measure march (C major), which first sounds weakly in the distance. The creeping and uncertain looking about of the soldiers and their companions is strikingly depicted. The voices, tenors and basses, now enter quietly:

We have seen him
 Go toward this mountain
 He cannot escape
 Judgment awaits him.¹⁴

The marchlike accompaniment continues uninterruptedly, in order to bring this scene more directly before the eye, and the figure even continues in the beginning of the accompaniment to the following recitative, where Christ observes to those who approach: "Those who

¹³The recitative actually ends in m. 13, where the string instruments reenter.

¹⁴Cf. the (possibly ironic) recollection of this same text by the correspondent in F-----b-----t, "Public Concerts in Vienna" (see n1 above).

have set out to arrest me draw near!” The final prayer: “My father, oh let the hours of suffering pass me in rapid flight,” etc., is a beautiful passage. The melody has stability, but the accompaniment contradicts it with 16th note tremolos, as did shuddering human nature to the divine resolution. The words: “Let not my will, no, but your will be done” are treated (*Adagio*) lyrically and melodically, with an accompaniment that is now nobly resigned. This prayer has scarcely concluded when one hears again the march and the approach of the soldiers. Now they truly appear. Their arrival is portrayed by an impetuous double chorus. (*D major, Allegro molto*.) Up to this point the composer has not yet used any trumpets; but here, where the previous holy solitude is interrupted by the arrival of raw power, they suddenly and appropriately appear, along with horns, clarinets, flutes, and oboes, effectively sustaining the dominant chord. The soldiers’ first outcry—“Here he is!”—with a fermata right on the second note, is shattering.¹⁵ The poet’s treatment of the disciples is thus all the more awkward. In the most commonplace and trivial manner, they ask:

What does the noise mean?
We are done for!
Surrounded by coarse soldiers,
What will happen to us?

One scarcely believes one’s eyes, and is thunderstruck. By the composer too—and how could it be otherwise?—this passage is treated in a commonplace manner. Fortunately, however, the impetuous soldiers’ chorus stands out all the more. Thus does the composer hide, as much as possible, the poet’s weakness. The scene where the hypocritical betrayer approaches Christ was passed over by the poet; Peter’s outburst, on the other hand—which, as far as the story goes in this oratorio, is inconsequential—is included. However, the composer prudently touches upon it only briefly. A trio, which is *in itself* very successful, is formed by the composer from the sayings of Peter, who still cannot restrain his outburst; Christ, who draws him back to patience; and the seraph, who—strangely enough!—imparts *ad spectatores*:

Take note, oh mankind, and hear:
Only God’s mouth
Proclaims such holy teachings
of brotherly love.

Here the poet obviously forgot, without mentioning anything else, the boundaries of the oratorio, thereby misleading the composer as well into composing this piece too theatrically. The chorus of soldiers and disciples follows without break; the Savior is bound and led away, while the disciples flee, saying to each other, once again in a commonplace enough manner:

¹⁵The original German text reads “Hier ist er!,” with a fermata on “ist.”

We too, on account of him,
Will be hated, persecuted!

This double chorus is interrupted by splendid solo phrases for the Savior:

My agony will soon be over
The work of redemption accomplished

which are placed in the most effective contrast with the soldiers' impetuous cries.

A majestic chorus of angels now closes the entire, noteworthy work. The poet places this song of triumph far too early, as though the work of redemption were already accomplished, now, when the scenes of suffering have only begun. However, he admittedly needed a conclusion of this kind, and the composer particularly needed one, and the latter works it out so splendidly that one will probably be inclined to excuse this encroachment.

After all this, we cannot restrain ourselves from remarking that, in the manner that he has chosen, and that was probably also the most suited to his personal preferences, the composer has produced a splendid, masterly oratorio. It goes without saying that here, as with every truly original work, one would have to enter into the composer's views and intentions in order to do him justice in judging or enjoying it. As musicians we miss in this work, apart from the individual weaknesses mentioned above, which nevertheless are outweighed beyond all compare by the quantity of outstanding beauties, nothing so much as the kind of ingenious, yet at the same time solid, fugue that (we have no doubt) B. could have produced, and which would have been completely appropriate to this work as sacred music. The poet even gave several opportunities for this. Individual fugal passages do appear from time to time; they disappear again immediately, however, and remain un-worked out.

The duration of the entire work can at most be stretched out to three quarters of an hour. In this regard, it is very well suited either to occupy a major section of a grand concert or to be performed as passion music in Protestant churches. For this reason it can also best be recommended to concert or church music directors.

The engraving is very clean and also correct.

85.4.

“News. Munich.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 14

(6 May 1812): 316–18.¹

The second part was taken up by *Jesus am Oelberg*, an oratorio by Beethoven. An oratorio? No, not exactly! Neither in the design nor in the style of the whole was the slightest tendency noticeable that was capable of bringing about religious feelings in the listener’s inner being. Everywhere a furious urgency, a fiery, passionate surging, an artistic rhapsody; the whole a dramatic torso: but certainly a product full of elevated, ingenious traits, inspired by a flowering imagination, for the most part new in invention, and developed with a harmonic power and fullness that disturbs and overwhelms. Intended for the concert hall, not for a church or chapel, if there is some other intention here and it must not all be taken simply as the self-abandonment of a fiery genius that is concerned only with itself. The performance that this work received could truly be called outstanding, and the reception it found was unusually favorable. The taste for the gentle and melodious seems more pronounced among us than anywhere else, and whoever wishes to awaken us from our musical slumber must grasp us powerfully. Mr. v. B. has perfectly succeeded in doing this. The soldiers’ choruses—“We have seen him,” etc.—brought about the most elevated effect. After the concert and for several days afterward nothing else was spoken about. At the words “Here he is! Seize him! Bind him!” many were so deeply moved that, by their own account, they became momentarily concerned for their own safety. Strange! But what if a painter commissioned to describe this scene from the Passion of the Messiah used all the extravagances of his art to place in the foreground the rough figures of these mercenaries, armed with chains and nets, bloodthirstiness in their eyes, with a seraph floating above them in the clouds, while hiding the face of the divine sufferer, half unseen, in the undergrowth in the background? In so doing, would he have performed his task properly? —Our composer’s soul seems to be a true reflection of the spirit of our times, which strives for the gigantic, grasps onto whatever is intoxicating to the senses, but leaves

¹This passage is excerpted from a description of the eighth concert in the series “Die Musikalische Akademie.” The first part of the concert consisted of a Haydn symphony in B-flat major, an aria by Liberati (possibly Antonio Liberati (1617–1692), and an oboe concerto by Le Brun (probably Ludwig August Lebrun (1752–1790).

that which is truly spiritual untouched. The colossus of the Egyptians is more in harmony with it than the beautiful symmetry of the sensible Greeks; it could more easily bring about a *Divina Commedia* than an *Odyssey*. For all of this, however, this writer cannot hide his admiration for this remarkable composer. He looks forward to each of his works with a kind of longing, and listens to every one of his notes with attention and interest. For he is the one who, through his inventiveness, is now bringing new respect to the art of music, which is being enervated and brought low by empty singsong and ding dong, and stimulates further contemplation of it. He always commands our amazement, when he relinquishes himself in order to achieve the noble virtue by which he touches our hearts—for such an outstanding artist as he is can certainly succeed in doing this whenever he wants to. It has struck us no less than it has the aesthetic arbiters of the *musikalische Zeitung* that Mr. v. B. has elevated this work without a fugue, but has displayed only some rather commonplace imitations. The lowly manner in which the song of the disciples creeps along is also hardly to be excused, as has also been observed there.²

²See no. 85.3, above.

85.5.

“Brief Notices.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 14

(17 June 1812): 418.

(Arrangement for keyboard)¹

This important work, distinguished in many regards, was extensively evaluated in nos. 1 and 2 of the present volume of this periodical.² Since we refer back to this evaluation, let us only further observe that this keyboard reduction was made by a man who is evidently very much equal to the task, and many passages bring forth a wonderful, gripping effect at the piano-forte as well. For this reason, this reduction can best be recommended to amateurs, particularly since the vocal parts by themselves are not particularly difficult.

¹This anonymous keyboard reduction was published by Breitkopf und Härtel in Leipzig in October 1811, at the same time as the edition reviewed in no. 85.3.

²See no. 85.3, above.

85.6

“Oratorio”

Wiener allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 1
(30 January 1813): 67–69.¹

Before proceeding to an extensive evaluation of this oratorio, may we be permitted to portray concisely what are, in our view, the characteristics of the genre of composition which bears the name of oratorio, while at the same time casting a glance over what has been heard here in this genre during the last 15 years.² Oratorio, sacred cantata, comprehends within itself the greatest sublimity and worthiness, perfect stylistic unity, with the greatest possible avoidance of all heterogeneous elements. Thus, it involves manly, powerful, strict, and dignified composition with well-considered use of the chamber style and complete exclusion of the style appropriate to the theater.³ To the extent that these boundaries are crossed, with or without the assistance of the text itself, the classification of such a work in the ranks of the oratorio becomes, in our opinion, dubious. According to these basic principles, Handel incontestably

¹This is an excerpt from a lengthy discussion of Louis Spohr's oratorio *Das jüngste Gericht*, written the previous year, which had been performed on 21 January at the Imperial Royal Redoutensaal.

²The reference to “the last 15 years” is significant here because it extends back to the first performance of Haydn's *Creation* in 1798. On the significance of the early reception history of this work, and the reinterpretation of the history of the oratorio that it provoked, see Matthew Head, “Music With ‘No Past?’ Archaeologies of Joseph Haydn and *The Creation*,” *19th-Century Music* 23, no. 3 (2000): 191–217. This author's stylistic concerns anticipate E. T. A. Hoffmann's reservations about the use of theatrical style in sacred music, expressed in his article “Alte und neue Kirchenmusik,” which would appear in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* in 1814. Hoffmann raised similar issues in his review of Beethoven's C major Mass, Op. 86, the previous year. Like Hoffmann, the writer of this essay seems to imply that Beethoven infused the modern style with the appropriate degree of churchly dignity.

³In *The Oratorio in the Classical Era* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 521, Howard Smither writes of Beethoven's work: “If the language is in part modeled on that of *Empfindsamkeit*, . . . the structure is not; this essentially dramatic work is diametrically opposed to the lyric texts of Ramler and the type of oratorio espoused in the article ‘Oratorium’ in Sulzer's *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste*.” It is intriguing to observe that most of the early reviewers of this work recognized this contrast with an earlier and more restrained prototype of the oratorio, and either condemned it, excused it, or both, depending on their point of view. This writer seems to be an exception; having made this observation, he makes no reference later to the often theatrical nature of Beethoven's writing, thus implicitly excusing the composer from the error under discussion.

holds the rank of the great master here. The immortal Joseph Haydn, whom we proudly claim as one of our own, brought Handel's spirit forward into our own time. He showed the way for the style of the modern oratorio through his consummate masterwork *The Creation*. It can also truly be maintained that no work of music has ever received such general, unanimous admiration in all parts of Europe. His later and final work, *The Seasons*, posed a far more difficult challenge due to the inconsistent character of the text; in it, he displayed even further the fullness and power of his imagination, and perhaps stored up for us an even richer treasure trove of musical beauties. The nature of the subject matter, however, already consigns this work to the category of great cantatas; according to the above criteria, it cannot be granted a place among oratorios. Since that time three oratorios have grown from the soil of our fatherland: *Christus am Oehlberg*, by Mr. Ludwig van Beethoven, an artistic creation in which the bold, ingenious, powerful impetus of the composer, that creative spirit which characterizes his works alone, prevails to the highest degree, and whose decided worth has been unanimously recognized both here and abroad; *La passione di Gesù*, by the conductor and court theater director Joseph Weigl,⁴ a product that completely bears within itself that deep emotion, that beautiful aesthetic treatment of the text that we have so often had a chance to admire in Mr. Weigl—whose character, however, is more determined by the language in which it is written; *Die vier letzten Dinge*, by the conductor Eybler,⁵ a work full of profound insight and knowledge, like all earlier works of this so deeply treasured church composer. . . .

⁴*La passione del nostro Signore Gesù Cristo* by Joseph Weigl, an Italian-language oratorio with a text by G. Carpani, appeared in 1804, along with a companion work, *La resurrezione del nostro Signore Gesù Cristo*.

⁵Joseph Leopold Eybler (1765–1846) was an Austrian composer distantly related to Joseph Haydn and friendly with Mozart. His successful oratorio *Die vier letzten Dinge*, with a libretto by Sonnleithner, known for his associations with Beethoven's *Fidelio*, appeared in 1810.

85.7.

“News. Leipzig.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 15

(14 April 1813): 258–59.¹

The 21st concert was dedicated entirely to Beethoven and contained his oratorio *Christus am Oelberge* and the *Sinfonia eroica*. In accordance with its overall layout and style, the first of these works necessarily gave more pleasure this year in concert performance than it did last year in church. An extensive review of it appeared in our pages,² so it will suffice to mention here that the truly sublime overture and the magnificent first recitative pleased most of all. Of the remaining movements the following pleased the most, and as far as can be determined in the following order: Final chorus; Aria: “Meine Seele ist erschüttert”—Duet: “So ruhe denn mit ganzer Schwere”—Finale—if in most parts of the last-mentioned one was willing to overlook who was speaking and what was being spoken about.³ In the vocal and orchestral parts everything was performed joyfully and lovingly and thus came together splendidly.

¹This is an excerpt from a report on the second half of this year’s winter concerts in Leipzig.

²See no. 85.3, above.

³This presumably refers to the trio and chorus beginning “In meinen Adern wühlen,” which precedes the final chorus mentioned above. The reviewer in no. 85.3 also had serious reservations about the dramatic nature of this scene.

85.8.

Carl Maria von Weber.

“First Concert for the Benefit of the Workhouse Inmates.”

Königliche kaiserliche privilegierte Prager Zeitung

(28 April 1816).¹

On 22 and 29 March two performances, organized and directed by the opera director C. M. v. Weber, whose striving always visibly serves to accustom the public to a more serious diet, so that we have received many greater works that are disdained by customary concert-givers because of their mania for charming through variety, were given in the Redoutensaal for the benefit of the fund for the support of the workhouse inmates. In the first of these concerts we heard an entire symphony by Haydn, the performance of which could be called praiseworthy apart from some small blemishes in the Adagio. There followed Beethoven’s oratorio *Christus am Ölberge*, sung by Mr. and Madame Grünbaum,² Mr. Siebert, and the choir personnel of the Suburban Theater.

The ingenious spirit of the composer cannot be denied even here, and often flashes magnificently in individual pieces, although in the whole the reviewer misses consistency and unity of style, as well as that noble simplicity in the same that should exclusively characterize the spirit of the oratorio.

The effective choruses often remind us of the theater and awaken the wish to hear them there, which certainly speaks for their liveliness, but not for the distinctive character of the genre. The reviewer was also reluctant to dispense with the crown of the serious style, the fugue, which one theme certainly indicates enticingly, but which is just as quickly abandoned. If the elevated masters of the art allow themselves these deviations and this cursory treatment of

¹The information in the heading is from Georg Kaiser, *Sämtliche Schriften von Karl Maria von Weber* (Berlin: Schuster und Loeffler, 1908), lxxx.

²Therese Grünbaum (1791–1876) was the daughter of the Austrian composer Wenzel Müller (1767–1835), who wrote the theme of Beethoven’s “Ich bin der Schneider Kakadu” variations, Op. 121a, and was known for her performances of Mozart and Rossini in German. She sang the role of Eglantine at the first performance of Weber’s *Euryanthe* in 1823. Her husband Johann Christoff Grünbaum (1785–1870) was a tenor who made German translations of Italian opera texts, and also translated Berlioz’s treatise on instrumentation. See K. J. Kutsch and Leo Riemens, *Großes Sängerlexikon* (Bern: Francke, 1987), 1174, and Kaiser, *Sämtliche Schriften*, 543–44.

significant things, the example has a bad effect on the study of the deepest secrets of the art, which in any case is becoming ever more superficial.

The performance could be called good and precise on the part of the orchestra, and truly splendid on the part of the choir. The latter must please us even more because a couple of years ago we could not boast of any good choir, and presently we must recognize thankfully that the power and precision of our own have only been brought about by the worthy opera director Mr. Carl Maria v. Weber.³

The public, which was not gathered in great numbers, was indifferent, and showed that it has no great affection for this serious genre of music.

³John Warrack suggests (in *Writings on Music: Carl Maria von Weber* [Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981], 169) that the last part of this sentence was not shameless self-promotion, but an editorial addition to the article, which was published anonymously.

85.9.

“News. Leipzig.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 19

(21 May 1817): 356.¹

Beethoven's oratorio *Christus am Oelberge*, the solo parts performed by Madame Neumann-Sessi and the gentlemen mentioned above.² The work is well known, and, as greatly as we admire several pieces in it, in our opinion it is not one of the great master's more successful works.

¹This is an excerpt from a description of a Palm Sunday concert given on 30 March 1817, which began with a mass by Friedrich Schneider.

²Anna Maria Neumann-Sessi (1790–1864) was an Italian-born singer active in Germany. The gentlemen mentioned above were a Mr. Weidner and Augustin Ferdinand Anacker (1790–1855), also known as a composer and an important advocate of Beethoven's music.

85.10.

“News. Amsterdam, in April.”
Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 21
(12 May 1819): 329–30.

On 16 March, in the local old Lutheran church, the *Eruditio Musica* society gave the *Stabat Mater* of Haydn and *Christus am Oelberge* of Beethoven, under the direction of Mr. Fodor; together, the singers and instrumentalists numbered about 160. *Madame Schirmer* and Messrs. *Grösser* and *Gollmick* sang the solo parts.¹ The first of these distinguished herself preeminently through noble, simple, but powerful delivery. Everything was well performed overall, apart from a few pieces that were taken too quickly, and was received with great applause, particularly Beethoven’s composition, which was found completely splendid and perfectly worthy of the great master. The poet made an offensive mistake in letting the Savior step forward and sing as a dramatic personality. This was offensive to many here as well.² Consequently, when, some time later, *Madame Catalani*³ wanted to give the *Creation* of Haydn in the same church for the benefit of the poor, not just this church, but also another one that is very well suited to the performance of large musical works, were refused to her by their administrators. Not only were a great number of friends of music thus disappointed in their expectations, but the poor lost greatly, for the receipts would undoubtedly have been very significant.

¹According to *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 19 (1817), 524, this singer’s husband was the opera director in Amsterdam. She is described in column 510 of the same volume as having “an agreeable but not strong voice,” while “in regard to method much remains to be desired.” When the Schirmers departed for Hanover in 1823, however, she was said to have “won the public’s favor to the highest degree” (*Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 25 [1823], 333).

Friedrich Karl Gollmick (1774–1852) was a tenor and an outstanding performer of Mozart. He played the flute solos himself when singing the role of Tamino in *The Magic Flute*. He was active in a variety of German cities. See Kutsch and Riemens, *Großes Sängerlexikon*, 1120.

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 29 (1826) indicates that the tenor Grösser had an agreeable voice and was also an accomplished actor.

²This reaction to the performance, given in a Lutheran church, is intriguing in light of the contrast between Catholic and Protestant oratorios described in no. 85.17, below.

³Angelica Catalani (1780–1849) was one of the foremost sopranos of her day. Though born in Italy, she performed widely in England and throughout Germany as well. See Kutsch and Riemens, *Großes Sängerlexikon*, 489–90.

85.II.

“From Paris.”

Zeitung für Theater, Musik und bildende Künste 2

(18 May 1822): 79.

The capable new director Habeneck,¹ an admirer of German music, exercised his influence in a most praiseworthy fashion by giving, in order to impart gradually to the Parisians something of a taste for good music, a *portion* of Beethoven’s *Christus am Oelberge*, which to this purpose was translated into French. As good and praiseworthy as his intentions were, the performance did not live up to expectations, since the whole was taken much too quickly, and the singers of the opera, who took over the solo parts, had no idea of the sacred style, and sang the inspiring arias of this masterwork like opera music, in a declamatory fashion, which was made even more disagreeable by Madame Albert’s constant wavering of pitch.² The French, however, have now made a start with classical music, and since this poor first performance did not give offense, we may indeed soon hope to hear more; perhaps with time it will become better!

¹François Antoine Habeneck (1781–1849) was a French violinist and conductor. His Société des Concerts du Conservatoire presented the first broadly successful performances of Beethoven’s symphonies in Paris, beginning in 1828.

²This probably refers to Louise-Marie-Augustine Albert-Himm (1791–?), who had “a chain of triumphs” at the Paris opera from 1806 to the early 1820s. She participated in the first performance of Spontini’s *Olympia*. See Kutsch and Riemens, *Großes Sängerlexikon*, 26.

85.12.

“News. From This Year’s Swiss Music Festival.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 25

(8 October 1823): 667–68.¹

After a half-hour pause the second part began with the overture to the *Freyschütz*, which was executed very nicely. Whether it belongs in church can be left open for the moment. Now, however, came the crown of this performance, and indeed of the entire festival: *Christus am Oelberge*, by Beethoven. This masterwork, with which many of those who sang and played in it were already closely familiar, was, on the whole, very well performed. It seemed as if the magnificence of this music caused all of the participants to transcend themselves. Mrs. de Seigneux² was particularly distinguished by the power, precision, and noble simplicity of her singing. The role of Christ had been transformed into that of an archangel, and this part was divided between Mr. Hochreutner from Morges and Mr. Hai from Genf. Mrs. de Seigneux sang the seraph. How moving was the duet “Ah qu’elle est grande sa souffrance pour désarmer des droits divins! Plus grande encore plus grande est la puissance de son amour pour les pauvres humains” (“Great are the suffering, the anguish, the fear, etc.”),³ and now the apprehensive chorus of the disciples, followed by the frightful entrance of the chorus of the watchmen, “Voilà l’homme! C’est l’homme” (“Here he is, the banished one, etc.”),⁴ with the horror-provoking figure in the bass accompaniment, and finally the truly heavenly chorus of the angels’ rejoicing, “Donnez gloire au Dieu Sauveur” (“Praise him, you angel choirs, etc.”).⁵ The effect of this

¹This report describes a concert of “so-called sacred music” which took place at the cathedral in Lausanne. The program also included Haydn’s “Drumroll” symphony, no. 103, and vocal music, including excerpts from Rossini’s *Mosè in Egitto*. The minuet of the symphony was omitted, since it was not considered appropriate for church.

²According to *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 27 (1825), 13, Mrs. de Seigneux was the wife of the organizer of the “vereinigte Schweizerische Musikgesellschaft,” founded in Lausanne in 1825. Their daughter also sang at the festival in 1823.

³This is apparently the rather free French translation of the duet “So ruhe denn mit ganzer Schwere.” The words, originally spoken by Christ, were put into the third person and given to an Archangel, perhaps because of the sort of reservations about the dramatic portrayal of Christ described in no. 85.10, above.

⁴I.e., the chorus “Hier ist er, hier ist er.”

⁵Originally “Preiset ihn ihr Engelschöre.”

music on the connoisseurs, and also on the laypeople, was indescribable; there was only one united voice among the 3,000 people who on this day filled the church to its uppermost galleries—that is the triumph of this music festival!

85.13

Jean B. Rousseau.

“The Lower Rhine Music Festival of 1825.”
Rheinische Flora, no. 82 (supplement)
(26 May 1825).¹

The entire event was concluded by Beethoven’s oratorio *Christus am Oelberge*. What Leonardo da Vinci created with his paintbrush, or Dannecker² with his chisel, the image of divine goodness and grace for mankind—that is what Beethoven has conjured up with his notes. In his songs for Jesus the ideal character of the savior is portrayed in a manner that only someone who has surrendered like a child to his teaching of gentleness and humility could render so accurately. Beethoven was not only capable of digging up the dark underworld with his frightening, gripping sounds; he also knew how to open the door of paradise and draw forth a more beautiful dawn, bringing light and peace.

People to whom blame counts for more than thankful acknowledgment have reproached this oratorio with being altogether too dramatic and not sacred enough. This may perhaps be the case at many points, for example at the close of the angels’ chorus (C major, *maestoso*),³ which indeed has something marchlike about it, almost as though soldiers were proceeding to judgment. However, if one wanted to acknowledge this reproach as correct, then it would apply also to the final chorus of Graun’s *Der Tod Jesu*, and yet this oratorio has long been acknowledged as a classic. As for the ornamentation of certain arias, I need only point to Handel, who often includes more roudades there than are to be found in many recent opera arias. Even decorated music remains spiritual music if it does not lack the appropriate dignity, and that, I believe, is the case with Beethoven. He must represent things in a lively manner,

¹This is an excerpt from a commentary on a concert that began with Beethoven’s 9th symphony (see Robin Wallace, *The Critical Reception of Beethoven’s by His German Contemporaries*, Op. 125, Boston: Center for Beethoven Research, Boston University, 2017. <http://www.bu.edu/beethovencenter/files/2017/06/robinwallace-publication.pdf>, 22-29 [nos. 125.3–125.7]), followed by Mozart’s *Davidde penitente*, K. 469. The concert was conducted by Ferdinand Ries, and the choir and orchestra together are described as having four hundred people!

²The sculptor Johann Heinrich Dannecker (1758–1841), though not as well known today as Da Vinci or Beethoven, was highly respected in his time for his representations of mythological and allegorical subjects (*Dictionary of German Biography* 3, 492–93, *Neue deutsche Biographie* 3, 509–10).

³I.e. the *Schluschor*, which nearly all the writers of the previous reviews of *Christus am Ölberge* collected here had actually praised, sometimes despite its lack of dramatic realism.

and for that reason easily becomes dramatic. Besides, the composer cannot do otherwise than as the poet wishes; for Beethoven, it was impossible to compose otherwise than as he did. And why should we not assume that he did so on purpose, and not behave otherwise? The man who the world unanimously agrees spent many years in preparation certainly wanted to break a new path here. His *Christus* establishes a period in which the oratorio transforms itself, takes on a different shape, which the more recent composers are loyally following. I need simply recall Schneider's *Weltgericht* and *Sündfluth* and Abbé Stadler's (in Vienna) *Liberated Jerusalem*.⁴

The beauties of this oratorio are so great that every part would be worthy of a complete analysis. Even in the introduction (e-flat minor) lies the preparation for the sufferings that will strike the Redeemer, for the laments which his faithful ones raise up over him. How classical are all the solo passages, how magnificent the duet and trio! In the angels' chorus, [m. 165] the entry of the diminished 6/5 chord (G), later sung by four voices, several measures before the words "damnation is their fate" has an imposing effect. [mm. 179ff.] The transition from there to G major at "But hail to you" . . . is extremely lovely.⁵

⁴The premiere of Johann Friedrich Schneider's oratorio *Die Sündfluth* had taken place at the Lower Rhine Music Festival the previous year. His earlier work, *Das Weltgericht*, is cited by Friedrich August Kanne ("On the Perceptible Lack of Great Oratorios," *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung mit besonderer Rücksicht auf den österreichischen Kaiserstaat* 7 [1 January 1823: 1-3]) as one of the most significant recent oratorios. *Die Befreyung von Jerusalem* (the correspondent garbles the name, giving it as "des Abts Stadler . . . befreytes Jerusalem"), by Maximilian Johann Karl Dominik Stadler (1748–1833), established that composer's international reputation.

⁵This refers to no. 2, out of the six designated numbers in the score, beginning with the recitative "Erzittre Erde!"

85.14.

“News. From the Lower Rhine.”
Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 27
(29 June 1825): 448.¹

Did Mozart not create anything else better than this? Is he not the creator of the overture to *The Magic Flute*, which followed his *David* and preceded *Christus am Oelberge*? Yes, this is and still remains the overture of all overtures!

Beethoven's oratorio received lively applause, as is only just, particularly the first two men's choruses and the final chorus, with its splendid, majestic introduction.

All the solo parts were performed very well, and at times with outstanding virtuosity.

¹This is an excerpt from a report on the same performance described in the previous entry, hence the disparaging comment with which it begins: a reference to Mozart's *Davidde penitente*, which the correspondent dismisses as a patchwork.

85.15.

Caecilia 4
(1826): 68–69.¹

The overture was followed by *Christus am Oelberge*. Who does not know this magnificent work of our Beethoven, in some parts certainly the most accomplished of his vocal works? Who has not been moved by this powerful description of the contrasting rewards for good and evil? Christ was sung by Mr. Kreitz from Aachen. His sonorous instrument, more tender than powerful, adapted well to these sounds, and the difficult parts were very nicely performed by him, particularly in the ensemble pieces. Miss Reintjes sang the seraph magnificently and consummately, particularly in the tender passages. The salvation that was proclaimed to the redeemed from this mouth brought blessed rest to the souls which had been deeply shaken by the menacing “damnation” of the powerful chorus. The beautiful, extremely pure voice of the seraph, equally rounded through its entire range, won the prize through the triumphant effect of its soaring above the choir, which accompanied consummately. One felt that it was given only to this seraph to bring salvation and blessing, and gladly forgot that Jehovah’s words were to be imparted with thunderous sounds in order to feel more deeply the greatness of the self-sacrificing Redeemer’s love in the following duet.

The men’s choruses were performed in a thoroughly distinguished manner.

In the trio which followed Mr. Köpke from Berlin sang Peter very well.

The choruses which now followed led us worthily to the end. With the “Welten singen”² all expressed their praise, thankfulness, and joy over the completion of the festival, which had been so beautifully successful.

Unbounded jubilation resounded through the entire house as the final chord faded; from it developed the most pleasant acclamation of thanks for Mr. F. Ries,³ who had directed

¹This is part of a description of the same performance at the Lower Rhine Music Festival in Aachen in 1825 that was discussed in the previous two entries.

²These are the opening words of the final chorus.

³Beethoven’s student Ferdinand Ries (1784–1838) directed the Lower Rhine Music Festival repeatedly in the 1820s and 1830s.

everything so admirably. Flowers and wreaths flew down upon him, and beautiful hands brought him the laurel crown, woven in grateful acknowledgment by the Lower Rhine Music Society, whose confirmation of his masterly rank was won for him by his restless striving.

85.16.

“News. The Third Music Festival on the Elbe, Celebrated at Halberstadt
on 3, 4, and 5 June 1828.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 30

(25 June 1828): 448.¹

The choice of the second oratorio could not have been more unfortunate for the sacred objective. It was Beethoven’s *Christus am Oelberge*, whose operatic solos contrasted harshly with the deeply felt, simple melodies of the *Last Things*. The difference in the texts was no less perceptible: this one chosen with deep insight into the most powerful moments in the sacred scriptures, that one admittedly ennobled by the ingenious music, but also containing not one new idea, and in the metrical parts unbearably insipid.

¹This is an excerpt from a description of a performance on the first day of the festival, which included also included Spohr’s *Die letzten dinge*, under the composer’s direction. *Christus* was directed by Friedrich Schneider. This report also includes the information that the orchestra on this occasion consisted of about a hundred players, including thirty-six violins and eight double basses, and that the chorus had over two hundred singers. This is the same concert discussed in the report from the *Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* that follows.

85.17.

“News. Third Music Festival on the Elbe, Celebrated in Halberstadt (conclusion).”

Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 5

(23 June 1828): 239–40.

First and foremost regarding the argument as to which of the two oratorios is the most excellent, we happened to experience a coincidence during the festival which I will recount as appropriate here.

As the crowd slowly made its way out of the church doors on the evening of the first day, there happened to resound in my right ear the same argument, carried on by two foreigners, which had caused some commotion near me when two others were ardently disputing on my left whether Miss N. N. or Mr. N. N. is more beautiful.

Both fights suffered from the very same defect; their subjects had nothing in common. Therefore they were drawn out into the blue and could reach no resolution, for just as womanly beauty and manly beauty are founded on two completely different concepts, so that the beauty of an individual woman cannot be compared with that of an individual man, since the two are lacking, for the *tertium comparationis*,¹ a common fundamental concept from which an idea of beauty of both could be developed, such is also the case with the two oratorios. Certainly the two have the same name, but they are two completely different poetic-musical works, arising from two different fundamental concepts; Beethoven's is a Catholic, Spohr's an Evangelical oratorio.²

The Christian religion is a thing of premonitions, of faith's sublime, transcendent, unworldly proclamations through the Holy Scriptures, which ought to seek and find reflective echoes in our soul.

We Evangelicals acknowledge this and stick with it; Catholicism, on the other hand, prompted by the weakness of human nature, which always wants to grasp everything in its

¹Latin, “the third part of the comparison.”

²Spohr's oratorio *Die letzten Dinge*, with a libretto by Friedrich Rochlitz, was completed in 1826.

The word *Evangelical* (German “*evangelisch*”) in this context designates the church body directly descended from Martin Luther's reforms, which in turn developed into what is known in the English-speaking world as the Lutheran church. It can be understood here as roughly equivalent to *Protestant* in current usage.

hands, tries as far as possible to bring its secrets, its proclamations, down to the worldly level, to transplant them from the domain of soulful reflection into that of sensual perception. Indeed, even the most highly miraculous mystery revealed to Christians, the God incarnate who offered himself and was sacrificed for our salvation, who stands forth to us Evangelicals as a phenomenon too sublime and transcendent for us to be able to grasp, whose sublimity and miraculous purpose we can only discern through faith, and whom we will dishonor by applying an earthly standard, is to Catholicism a fact almost ready to hand, which the priest repeats yet again at every consecration of the Host.

While Evangelical religion thus strives to elevate even the earthly part of the tradition of the holy Scriptures, the historical part, to the level of transcendent, spiritual religion, Catholicism, on the contrary, draws even the purely transcendent part down to earth, to sensual perception and impression.

Thus there arose already in the early Middle Ages, long before the Reformation, the sacred comedies and tragedies which portrayed dramatically some section of the Bible, from the Creation and the Fall through the Redemption, etc., with appropriately costumed actors, for the edification of the spectators. Therein were featured Christians, pagans, and Jews; martyrs, saints, angels, and devils; indeed even the three persons of the Godhead—all, however, fitted out with the very same earthly passions and feelings and expressing them dramatically. During Lent, on the other hand, plays of this kind could not be given, and thus in the 16th century people resorted to using the impetus of contemporary music to impart sacred sensuous spiritual pleasure to the people through dramatic representation of sections of the Biblical story even at that time of the year. Thus people were enticed into attending the Lenten services, since as an extension of these the same kind of sacred dramas were allowed to be recited in the churches and chapels, with instrumental music and declamation substituting for costumes and scenery, and vocal music substituting for acting. To composers this was a no less welcome opportunity to unburden themselves, and thus many of them took it up joyfully, and thus did oratorios arise, named for the Oratorio (chapel) of a cloister in Rome, in which the first one was probably performed. Thus from then until now, the oratorios of Catholic poets and composers have been, according to their innermost nature, musical dramas.³

In more recent times Protestant poets began to write oratorios from which dramatic embellishment was certainly purged as disagreeable, but historical embellishment was allowed

³This description of the historical background to the oratorio is accurate in its broad outlines, but misleading in several details. In characterizing medieval sacred drama, the writer fails to distinguish between the liturgical dramas of the ninth to the thirteenth centuries, which were performed in church with music, and the spoken mystery plays of the later Middle Ages, which were performed outside of churches and were much more likely to involve the kind of dramatic spectacle described here.

The later oratorio has roots in sacred motet cycles of the late Renaissance, and also in works like Emilio de' Cavalieri's *Rappresentazione di Anima et di Corpo*, first performed in 1600. The oratorio in the modern sense, however, is a creation of the seventeenth century, and was made possible by the new dramatic musical styles characteristic of the Baroque era.

to remain, such as, for example, Ramler's *Tod Jesu*.⁴ Meanwhile, Handel conceived another, genuinely Evangelical idea of the oratorio. He combined a succession of pure biblical proclamations, some speaking directly, some symbolically, relating to the Messiah as the focal point of the whole, avoiding everything personal, every formulaic poetic, historical or dramatic contrivance. He did not incorporate the music as a mere surrogate for costumes and speech, and thus a sensuous interpretation, but rather considered true music to be itself a higher proclamation, disdaining the lowly realm of material reality and allowing the eternally transcendent, the soul, to be discerned, a companion, a helper,⁵ by means of which these proclamations could be called forth all the more securely and with all the more of that reflective resonance which I mentioned above.⁶

In accordance with this development, Beethoven's *Christus am Oelberge* appears to be a purely Catholic oratorio, as (in Rousseau's words) "une espèce de drama, divisé en scenes à l'imitation des pieces de theatre qui roule sur des sujets sacrés et qu'on a mis en musique."⁷ Spohr and Rochlitz's *letzte Dinge*, however, is a genuinely Evangelical oratorio in the Handelian sense, the second of this kind after Handel's *Messiah*.

The music of both is fully in accord with this purpose and essence.

Everything in Beethoven's music lives from the dramatic, sensuous perspective, and is caught up in it. We feel Christ's anxiety on the Mount of Olives along with him in the first recitative and aria, which he sings; we believe that we are seeing and hearing the rough yet somewhat frightened soldiers who are supposed to arrest him and the anxious disciples, in the highly dramatic chorus: "We have seen him" and its continuation, "He is here." The voice of the angel which joins in speaks to us. Peter's sword, drawn against Malchus, flashes before us at the words "Not unpunished," and "In my veins stirring" at last the outline of this trio, "O children of mankind," is a Scolion⁸ with a melody that is appropriately interesting in this regard.

All of these pieces of music, however, as has been said, only paint earthly, material circumstances dramatically; nothing in them reminds us of higher things, which would also run counter to the essence of such a drama, which is oriented solely toward the sensuous perspective and sensuous impressions; which personifies Christ and the angel in as human a way as it does the human beings Peter, the soldiers, and the disciples; which must and can portray only the bodily, mental anguish of the man Christ, but not the struggle of the God-man. Only in the music of the two angel-choruses, "O Heil euch ihr Erlös'ten" and "Welten singen Dank und Ehre" does Beethoven also raise himself above the earth, since they to some extent depart from the dramatic and wander over into the domain of the evangelical oratorio, becoming a

⁴It is interesting that a modern writer like Howard Smither also contrasts Beethoven's style in *Christus am Ölberge* with the tradition encouraged by Ramler's texts: see no. 85.6, n2, above.

⁵There is no precise English equivalent of the feminine-gendered words *Gefährtin* and *Gehülfin*.

⁶While this is an accurate characterization of Handel's *Messiah*, it does not apply to most of his other oratorios, which are considerably more dramatic in nature.

⁷A footnote in the original text reads: "A type of drama, divided into scenes in imitation of theater pieces, which treats sacred subjects and which has been set to music."

⁸An ancient Greek banquet song sung by guests in alternation.

prophecy of it. The last, in particular, in the notes of its fugal passages, is one of the most sublime, fiery, and majestic songs of praise of the Godhead that ever flowed from a human soul. It shows what Beethoven would also have accomplished in the realm of the evangelical oratorio he would have been able to compose as a *vates*.⁹

⁹Latin, “a prophet or bard.”

85.18.

“The Great Lower Rhine Music Festival in Düsseldorf. Passover, 1830.”

Caecilia 12
(1830): 307¹.

The conclusion was Beethoven's *Christus am Oelberge*. Apart from the all too daring idea, which is the basis of this work, of expressing that which by its very nature is and remains an eternal mystery, the deepest suffering of the Redeemer's soul, we have never been able to come to terms completely with the almost operatic treatment, specifically in the second half of this composition. On the other hand, with the very admirable performance of the roles of Christ and of the Seraph by outstanding talents, the extent of tender, beautiful, and loving qualities that the master has apportioned to both of them also came magnificently to light this time. The instruments also did as much as was possible. Time does not permit us to go into the details of these accomplishments.

¹The performance described here took place on the second and final day of the festival. It began with Beethoven's 5th symphony and continued with the *Dies irae* from Mozart's Requiem, sung in German; Cherubini's overture to *Faniska*; and the repetition of Ferdinand Ries's overture to Schiller's *Die Braut von Messina*, which had opened the festival the day before.