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Op.135: Beethoven's 'Haydn' quartet

The year 1826 was a year of awful happenings and great achievements.¹

BY THE AUTUMN OF 1826 Beethoven had finished the F major String Quartet op.135. 1826 saw the completion of two of the late string quartets, the C# minor (op.131) and the F major (op.135). The C# minor, written between December 1825 and July 1826, with its slow first movement fugue and seven-movement plan, required intense, detailed work, with more sketches than for almost any other work except the Ninth Symphony.² On 12 August 1826 Beethoven sends Schott the score with the ironic note: 'Zusammengestohlen aus Verschiedenem diesem und jenem' (cobbled together with filched bits of this and that).

Coexisting with the artistic reality of compositional problem-solving and expressive delineation is the reality of physical existence: bouts of ill-health and the ongoing struggle with deafness; duplicitous negotiations with publishers; and circumstances that he tries to manipulate or control, in particular the contentious relationship with his nephew Karl, for whom he was the guardian.³ Virtually coinciding with the completion of op.131, tension between Beethoven and Karl reaches crisis point. After months of violent scenes, with Karl trying to assert his independence from Beethoven's possessiveness, on 29 July Karl pawned his watch and bought two pistols. In a distraught frame of mind, he tries to commit suicide but sustained only slight injury. The effect on Beethoven, though, was traumatic. Later, Karl told the examining magistrate that his uncle 'tormented him too much'.⁴

The tangled, obsessive love for Karl, which may replay motifs of helplessness and aggression against his own father, is part of his attempts to exert control over family members, including his brothers. After Karl's suicide attempt, Beethoven is persuaded to give up the guardianship and let Karl choose his own path as a military cadet.⁵ In the autumn of 1826 Beethoven spends several weeks with Karl as a family reconciliation at his brother Johann's country estate at Gneixendorf. The weather is good, the countryside beautiful, enabling Beethoven to go out for the long walks he loves, and he starts to feel better after the crisis in the late summer.

From Gneixendorf Beethoven writes letters to two publishers, both dated 13 October 1826, in which he says that he has finished the quartet – not specified by key but which is evidently op.135. Writing to Tobias Haslinger in unbuttoned style – 'Best of all Tobiasases' – he says: 'A quartet for Schlesinger is already finished', and asks Haslinger to ensure safe delivery

1. *Thayer's Life of Beethoven*, rev. & ed. Elliot Forbes, 2 vols (Princeton, 1967), vol.2, p.973.

2. Robert Winter: 'Plans for the structure of the String Quartet in C# minor, op.131', in *Beethoven studies* 2, ed. Alan Tyson (London, 1977), pp.106–37, and his *Compositional origins of Beethoven's Opus 131* (Ann Arbor, 1982), especially pp.167–74 & 206–09.

3. These two kinds of reality are discussed with reference to the op.135 quartet as an awkward non-congruence with heroic image-making in KM Knittel: "'Late", last and least: on being Beethoven's Quartet in F Major, op.135', in *Music & Letters* vol.87 no.1 (January 2006), pp.16–51.

4. *Thayer's Life*, vol.2, p.999.

5. Maynard Solomon: 'Beethoven and his nephew: a reappraisal', in *Beethoven essays* (Cambridge, MA, 1988), pp.139–56.

6. Emily Anderson, ed.: *The Letters of Beethoven*, 3 vols (New York, 1961; rev. 1985), no.1536. For Tendler and Manstein as Vienna bookshop and agents for Berlin publisher Adolph Martin Schlesinger, see *Letters to Beethoven and other correspondence*, vol.2, trans. & ed. Theodore Albrecht (Lincoln, NE, 1996), no.283.

7. *Letters to Beethoven and other correspondence*, vol.3, trans. & ed. Theodore Albrecht (Lincoln, NE, 1996), no.439.

8. Beethoven had initially dedicated op.131 to Wolfmayer but changed it, as a gesture of appreciation, to Baron von Stutterheim who had allowed Karl to become a cadet in his regiment.

9. Douglas Peter Johnson, Alan Tyson & Robert Winter: *The Beethoven sketchbooks: history, reconstruction, inventory* (Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1985), p.451.

10. With reference to the many such attempts in op.131 that never made it to the final work, Robert Winter (*Compositional origins*, p.148) observes that '[They] are a healthy reminder that the creative process in Beethoven proceeded in erratic and unpredictable spurts'.

11. William Kinderman: 'Beyond the text: genetic criticism and Beethoven's creative process', in *Acta Musicologica* vol.81 no.1 (2009), pp.99–122, from p.100, author's emphasis.

of the manuscript to Tendler and Manstein, who acted as Vienna agents for the Berlin music publisher Adolph Martin Schlesinger, and to collect his fee.⁶ The other letter is to Schlesinger himself, in which he says: 'The quartet is finished, but not entirely copied out, but will be ready in a few days'.⁷ Schlesinger's son Maurice, based in Paris and who shared inventory with his father, published the F major quartet in September 1827. It was dedicated to the Viennese businessman and friend of Beethoven, Johann Nepomuk von Wolfmayer and first performed by the Schuppanzigh Quartet in March 1828, a year after Beethoven's death.⁸

The sketchbooks reveal more fully the timeline for the two works via their compositional process. In the sketchbook Artaria 205, Bundle 3, in use during the summer of 1826, the first six leaves contain the last pocket sketches for op.131, most likely from late June and July 1826, followed by initial sketches for op.135.⁹ More detailed work on op.135 takes place in the sketchbooks Paris Ms 62 and Ms 66, in use during the autumn of 1826 when he is in Gneixendorf, containing sketches for the last three movements of op.135 as well as the alternative finale of op.130. The op.135 sketchbooks provide insight into Beethoven's working methods, indicating that while working on op.131, he was also thinking ahead, noting down initial ideas for the next quartet. At the same time, detailed work on the C# minor quartet was substantially complete before he turned his attention to sustained work on op.135.

Working stages towards end-products, the sketchbooks are also forays into global possibilities, not all of which are realised.¹⁰ Some are rejected, including many of the thematic scenarios for the finale of op.131, some are developed into problem-solving solutions while others are mnemonics for future reference or long-scale planning. William Kinderman notes: 'It is important to regard Beethoven's manuscripts not as repositories of fixed texts but as partial records of a *process*'.¹¹ While much of the op.131 extensive sketching is concerned with the problematic issue of the fugue answer and how to re-present the fugue subject and answer in transformed but recognisable forms in the finale, the op.135 sketchbooks show a fascinating example of solutions between the two works: how to end the C# minor quartet. Until a very late stage of compositional working, after the first six movements had been written and the seventh near completion, Beethoven had planned to end op.131 with a reflective D \flat major postlude, as tonic major resolution to conflicts in the finale. The D \flat major melody 'Lento assai' for this intended postlude appears in the 'Kullak' sketchbook, headed 'süsser Ruhesang oder Friedensgesang' (sweet song of calm or peace), and its derivation from the first movement's fugue subject may be seen in fig.1.

With the decision to retain the tension between F# minor and C# minor in the finale coda of op.131, the D \flat major melody was subsequently transferred

Fig.1

fol.20v Autograph 9, Bundle 4

The figure displays two systems of musical notation. The first system is in D major (two sharps) and consists of two staves. The second system is in D-flat major (two flats) and also consists of two staves. The second system includes a 'cis or des' annotation above the first staff and a 'y' annotation below the first staff. Brackets labeled 'x' and 'y' are placed under specific notes in both systems. On the right side, a diagram shows a transformation from a D major interval (represented by two notes on a staff) to a D-flat major interval (represented by two notes on a staff). An arrow points from the 'y' annotation in the first system to the top diagram, and another arrow points from the 'y' annotation in the second system to the bottom diagram. A vertical arrow points from the top diagram to the bottom diagram, indicating a transformation between the two systems.

12. Robert Winter (*Compositional origins*, p.208) notes that it was an act of great compositional courage on Beethoven's part to retain that tension rather than opting for a strong tonic major closure. The D \flat major melody is

to op.135 as the theme of the slow movement.¹² Re-positioned from outcome as resolution in op.131 to 'in-come' as inward contemplation in op.135, D \flat

not only a rare example of transference between Beethoven's works in the same genre. The theme also became a model, not just as transference between genres, but of transformation, for a

D \flat major slow movement in a later 19th-century work. It forms the thematic basis of the finale of Mahler's Ninth Symphony, his last completed work. Apart from the alternative finale to

op.130, the op.135 quartet was Beethoven's last completed work. On transformational process in Mahler, see Constantin Floros: *Gustav Mahler and the symphony of the 19th century* (Frankfurt, 2014).

becomes part of the work's two-sided submediants – the diatonic submediant D and the chromatic submediant D \flat .

As key of the slow movement, D \flat is part of the large-scale tonal network in F major; but this is not the only part played by the chromatic submediant or its only role in the work. At the beginning of the quartet, the falling appoggiatura, D \flat -C in the cello, underpins the viola's opening double-dotted motif and first violin's flip aside. The appoggiatura returns more emphatically, with repeated *f* D \flat s to C (first movement, bars 100–02) in the lead-up to the recapitulation, as an upbeat in search of a downbeat and a question in search of an answer.

The play with the D \flat -C appoggiatura at the beginning of op.135 is also a re-play of the same appoggiatura in a strikingly different F context: characterised by dramatic concision, it is one of the two prime motifs in the first movement of the F minor 'Appassionata' Sonata op.57; and, following a fierce, four-octave diminished seventh descending sweep, the goal of its powerful opening section (ex.1).

The 'Appassionata' first movement appoggiatura returns at the recapitulation in reversed form, C-D \flat , with the first subject's terse triadic material superimposed over the bass appoggiatura, which both reprises and destabilises the recapitulation. Whether by design or not, but certainly *as* design, the decisive D \flat -C appoggiatura of the 'Appassionata' returns at the beginning of op.135, where it is re-characterised in three ways: from closing gesture to opening function; from motivic foreground in the sonata to accompaniment at the beginning of the quartet; and from action as confrontation to discourse as play (ex.2).

Ex.1: Beethoven: Piano Sonata no.23 in F minor op.57 ('Appassionata'), first movement, bars 10–15

The musical score for Ex. 1 shows the first movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata no. 23 in F minor, op. 57, first movement, bars 10–15. The score is in F minor and 3/4 time. It features a piano part with a treble and bass clef. The tempo is marked '[Allegro assai]'. The score includes dynamic markings such as *pp*, *poco ritar*, *dan*, *do*, *f*, and *a tempo*. The music shows a descending sweep in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

Ex.2: Beethoven: String Quartet no.16 in F major op.135, first movement, bars 1–4

Allegretto

While the D \flat -C appoggiatura opens the quartet, it is not limited to pitch-specific uses of the motif: the work's structural action is also impacted by the appoggiatura as strategic contour. The appoggiatura is the underlying shape of the first movement's viola prime motif with double dotted motif, and the finale's question 'Muss es sein?' and answer 'Es muss sein!' which are related to the viola motif, as may be seen in fig.2 (overleaf). Appoggiaturas play out across the work through a network of realisations: characterised in each movement, they are rhythmically displaced vertically in the scherzo and lateralised in the slow movement's first violin melody, underscored in the cello by appoggiaturas, D \flat -E \flat and D \flat -C. Contour realisations appear in an array of contexts: on the one hand as upbeat/downbeat and, on the other, as continuity/disjunction, as in the dislocated F-E \flat intrusions in the scherzo. The scherzo's F-E \flat as dislocation is the variant and inverse character of the opening's F-E appoggiatura as play.

The appoggiatura network accordingly interacts with the work's tonal domain, as seen in the cello's D \flat -C appoggiatura, which, as structural marker at the beginning of the exposition, returns with greater emphasis and *forte* dynamics at the recapitulation. In the first movement, D \flat as chromatic submediant in the opening appoggiatura is set against F major, while the diatonic submediant, D, is part of its material. Beethoven had previously used two-sided submediants, G and G \flat , in the B \flat major quartet op.130, where the chromatic submediant G \flat is also set against B \flat but in the character of reflective 'time out', in the second subject of the first movement and in the 'Meno mosso e moderato' section of the 'Grosse Fuge'. In op.135 the double submediants, D and D \flat , play out as action v. 'time out', and as interpolation v. continuity.

Fig.2

FIRST MOVEMENT
Viola

Violin I
bar 10

FINALE
Grave

Allegro

→ CODA
Cello

Tempo I

pizz.

bar 17

SCHERZO

Violin I

pp

f

Cello

FIRST MOVEMENT
Cello

LENTO ASSAI, CANTANTE E TRANQUILLO
Violin I
bar 3

sotto voce p

Cello

PIÙ LENTO

pp

Detailed description of the musical score: The image shows a page of musical notation for Beethoven's 'Haydn' quartet, Op. 135. It is divided into several sections. At the top, the 'FIRST MOVEMENT' features staves for Viola and Violin I, with a specific measure labeled 'bar 10'. Below this is the 'FINALE' section, which begins with a 'Grave' tempo and includes markings for 'Allegro', 'CODA', and 'Cello'. A 'pizz.' (pizzicato) marking is present. A specific measure is labeled 'bar 17'. The 'SCHERZO' section follows, with dynamics of *pp* and *f* for the Violin I and Cello parts. The bottom section is another 'FIRST MOVEMENT' for Cello, with a tempo of 'LENTO ASSAI, CANTANTE E TRANQUILLO' and a dynamic of *sotto voce p*. To its right is a 'PIÙ LENTO' section with a dynamic of *pp*. Arrows and lines connect various parts of the score, indicating relationships or transitions between different sections and instruments.

The F major quartet returns to a four-movement plan after the larger numbers of movements in opp.130, 131 and 132. Its first movement has a more normative sonata design after the 'double textured', juxtaposed material in the first movements of opp.130 and 132, and the slow fugal first movement of op.131. In op.135 the first movement and finale have a matching relationship of key, character and proportion, typical of many classical string quartets, symphonies and sonatas, by contrast with experimental relationships of first movement and finale in two of the preceding quartets: the 'fantasia'-like fugue first movement/defined action finale in op.131, and the extreme end-weighting of the 'Grosse Fuge' finale in op.130. In addition to the normative four movements and matching first movement/finale, precisely contoured style and balanced phrase patterns in op.135 recall Haydn, referencing the F major quartet as redesigned classicism.

Classical paradigms may not be the only kind of looking backwards in order to look forwards. The F major quartet has its internal retrospective time-clock. While linear time traces events forwards from beginning to end, looking at the work from end to beginning may provide a significant clue in decoding its meaning. How we may enter the recreated classical quartet space of op.135 is from the end backwards.

The finale is headed by a cryptic designation: 'Der schwer gefasste Entschluss' (the difficult, hard-won decision). Underneath the heading are two phrases, a question and answer: the question, a weighted, downbeat 'Muss es sein?' in the bass clef, 'Grave', in 3/2 time, without key signature but implying F minor, is followed twice by the definite, upbeat answer in the treble clef, common time, Allegro, in F major, 'Es muss sein!' The finale opening, 'Grave ma non troppo tratto', extends the question motif by a winding quaver figure as commentary in F minor, with three overlapping contrapuntal entries, followed by vertical alignments of questions. Out of the ensuing dynamic descent to *pp* with an Adagio pause, the Allegro answers, *f*, in a sprightly F major, 'Es muss sein!' (ex.3).

Thayer recounts the events about 'Muss es sein? Es muss sein!' from Holz, who was close to Beethoven in his last years and helped with his personal affairs, acting as a go-between with publishers and players. As often, this story had to do with money, in this case money that had not been paid for a performance of the B \flat major String Quartet op.130 in March 1826.

Other performances of the Quartet [op.130] were planned, but it does not appear that any took place. Schuppanzigh was indisposed to venture upon a repetition, but Böhm and Mayseder were eager to play it. The latter with his companions gave quartet parties at the house of Dembscher, an agent of the Austrian War Department, and wanted to produce the Quartet there.

But Dembscher had neglected to subscribe for Schuppanzigh's concert and had said that he would have it played at his house, since it was easy for him to get manuscripts from Beethoven for that purpose. He applied to Beethoven for the Quartet, but the latter

Ex.3: Beethoven: String Quartet no.16 in F major op.135, finale, bars 1-24

Grave ma non troppo tratto

p *p* *p* *cresc.* *p* *cresc.* *p* *cresc.*

f *f* *f* *f* *ff* *dim.*

f *f* *p cresc. f* *p cresc. f* *f ff* *dim.*

f *f* *p cresc. f* *p cresc. f* *f ff* *dim.*

Adagio Allegro

p *pp* *f*

p *pp* *f*

p *pp* *f*

p *pp* *f*

Ex.3 continued

refused to let him have it, and Holz, as he related to Beethoven, told Dembscher in the presence of other persons that Beethoven would not let him have any more music because he had not attended Schuppanzigh's concert.

Dembscher stammered in confusion and begged Holz to find some means to restore him to Beethoven's good graces. Holz said that the first step should be to send Schuppanzigh 50 florins, the price of the subscription. Dembscher laughingly asked, 'Must it be?' (*Muss es sein?*). When Holz related the incident to Beethoven he too laughed and instantly wrote down a canon on the words: 'It must be! Yes, yes, yes, it must be. Out with the purse!' Out of this joke in the late fall of the year grew the finale of the last of the last five quartets, that in F major, Op.135, to which Beethoven gave the superscription: 'The difficult resolution' (*Der schwer gefasste Entschluss*).

When Beethoven heard that Dembscher was coming up with the money, according to Holz, he sat down and wrote the canon on '*Muss es sein? Es muss sein!*'¹³

The finale's question and answer appear beneath – and conceivably as realisation – of the enigmatic designation 'Der schwer gefasste Entschluss'. But what did he mean by 'Der schwer gefasste Entschluss'? Was it a cryptic reminder to himself of an achievement hard-won, like Mozart's inscription to the 'Haydn' quartets 'il frutto di una lunga, e laboriosa fatica' (the fruit of a long and laborious effort)? Or did he mean to tell listeners and players that such an urbane surface is not all that it seems but is 'hard-won'? It depends on how we understand 'Entschluss'. The word is often translated as resolution. Lewis Lockwood proposed a different meaning, as decision in legal contexts for documents, such as the annuity granted to Beethoven by the Archduke Rudolph, Prince Lobkowitz and Prince Kinsky in 1809. This legal meaning may also refer to contracts with publishers and the bitter legal battle with his sister-in-law Johanna, with the court awarding him guardianship of his nephew Karl.¹⁴

Conceivably, there is another meaning to 'Entschluss': not only something that needs to be resolved, but something that needs to be solved.

13. *Thayer's Life*, vol.2, p.976.

14. Lewis Lockwood: *Beethoven: the music and the life* (New York & London, 2003), p.481.

So 'Entschluss' may also be seen as re-solving (solving again) – that is, producing a new solution as well as a decisive answer. The process of solving, that is, of decoding the question, provokes the imperative answer 'Es muss sein!'

There had been other hard-won solutions: most recently, in the first movement fugue of op.131, the quartet that immediately preceded op.135. While the two quartets inhabit distinctive expressive and textural worlds, the problem-solving in op.131, as posing questions in search of answers, may throw light on the 'Entschluss' in op.135. The fugue first movement of op.131 raises issues of solution/resolution in three ways: first, solving the problematic issue of the fugue answer and subsequently deploying aspects of fugal technique, such as augmentation, diminution and stretto, as the means of unfolding the movement; secondly, characterising the fugue by a profound, inward expressivity; and last as long-range solution/resolution, how the slow first movement fugue initiates the entire quartet. The first of these issues proved the most problematic: numerous attempts in the sketches show real and tonal answers tried out and rejected before arriving at the subdominant answer, as 'schwer gefasste Entschluss'. The fugue answer, as well as the next entry after the subject, is literally the answer to the subject as question. But in the op.131 fugue, there is also a metaphorical sense of question and answer: if the question can be seen as the 'Gestalt' of motivic intervals and tonal implications in the fugue subject and answer, then the answer to this conceptual question is their realisations across the movement, and work.

In op.135 'Entschluss' presents the solution to a different problem: not recreating fugal technique as 'fantasia' as in op.131 but recreating classical style itself. Redefining classical style and techniques in the F major quartet, and in particular question/answer, may be seen against solutions in Haydn.

The most firmly established convention of question/answer in classical style is answering pairs of phrases. Characteristically, they open the first movement Allegro, and virtually all other movements. Answering pairs of phrases consist of either 2+2 or 4+4 bars, making a harmonically closed unit, as I-V/ V-I, or variants of this as I-I/V-I or I-V/ii, V-I.¹⁵ Question and answer phrases are so well defined and recognisable that composers of string quartets can play both with and against the convention in one of two ways: in numbers of bars in the phrase patterns; and/or in how to continue after the initial pair of phrases. In the celebrated opening of the 'Bird' Quartet op.33 no.3 in C, Haydn has six bars answered by six. The opening bar is a metrical quaver pulse in violin 2 and viola, then overlaid in bar 2 by a single long G in violin 1. As this G descends, it makes a spatial wedge with the ascending cello, propelling momentum forward in time. The complete phrase then repeats up a tone on D minor, without transition (ex.4).

15. Robert O. Gjerdingen: *A classic turn of phrase: music and the psychology of convention* (Pennsylvania, 1988); Leonard Ratner: *Classic music: expression, form and style* (New York, 1980). For a different perspective, see Robert S. Hatten: *Interpreting musical gestures, topics, and tropes: Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert* (Indiana, 2004).

Ex.4: Haydn: String Quartet no.32 in C major op.33 no.3 ('The bird'), first movement, bars 1–12

Allegro moderato

The musical score is presented in two systems, each containing four staves. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a crescendo leading to a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second system continues the piece with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a crescendo leading to a forte (*f*) dynamic. The dynamics are marked as *p*, *cresc.*, *f*, and *f sf*. The tempo is marked 'Allegro moderato'.

In another C major work with inner-voice quaver pulse, Mozart uses a similar play with numbers of bars in the first movement of the String Quintet in C K. 515. Using a normative harmonic pattern of I-V/V-I for the question and answer phrases, the numbers of bars are five instead of four – as partial retention of the convention/ partial transformation. Each phrase is set out as a dialogue, with an articulated triadic ascent in the cello (three bars) answered by a softly contoured turn figure in violin 1 (two bars) (ex.5).

Modifying this convention while retaining its clearly defined background as reference enabled composers to demonstrate creativity and innovation, especially in the string quartet. Beethoven had recast the question/answer pair of phrases in inventive ways in the opening of his previous F major quartet, op.59 no.1 'Razumovsky'. While retaining the eight-bar unit of 4+4, the spacious thematic material is presented in the cello on the dominant, followed by the answering phrase in violin 1, set over repeated quaver Gs in the cello. The answering phrase becomes in turn the basis of phrase

Ex.5: Mozart: String Quintet no.3 in C major K.515, first movement, bars 1–10

Allegro

dolce

p

p

p

f *p*

f *p*

extension, impelling momentum and expanding dynamics, which together open up the musical space within which much of the movement's action will play out (ex.6).

Answering pairs of phrases appear within every movement of op.135, such as the clearly defined second theme of the first movement's second subject (bars 38–41) and the 'doublet' second subject of the finale (bars 53–60).¹⁶ But questions/answers do not only appear as answering pairs of phrases. On a larger scale, introductions, and other kinds of deflective openings, can be seen as questions, on account of their interrogative, open-ended character, answered in turn by the Allegro, which, in most cases, is

16. The term 'doublet' is used by Joseph Kerman for symmetrical, repeated folk-like sections in the late quartets: Joseph Kerman: *The Beethoven quartets* (New York & London, 1966), p.364.

Ex.6: Beethoven: String Quartet no.7 in F major op.59 no.1 ('Razumovsky'), first movement, bars 1-19

Allegro

p *cresc.*

p *cresc.*

mf e dolce *cresc.*

p

p

p

cresc. *sf* *più f* *ff*

cresc. *f* *ff*

cresc. *f* *ff*

cresc. *f* *ff*

more clearly defined in melodic/motivic contour and rhythmic articulation, as in the opening of the D minor 'Tempest' Sonata op.31 no.2.

In this larger context of question/answer, the opening of op.135 seems to simultaneously define and defy the introduction/Allegro convention. The Allegretto first movement's opening four bars redefine the question: while it is part of the movement, with its interrogative character it is not quite an introduction. This sophisticated play with conventions, conveyed in the character of play, indicates that the classical opening as question is extended beyond phrase-structure patterns into re-interpreting the function of material. As interrogative gesture, the deflective, teasing question is answered by an upbeat dotted figure (upbeat to bar 5 and bar 10, as may be seen in ex.7 below). Only retrospectively, as the music unfolds, can the successive phrase be understood¹⁷ – not as answer to a question phrase but initiating a new question/answer group, characterised by an upbeat figure and dotted rhythm, deftly exchanged between viola, violin 2 and violin 1 over a pizzicato bass. The six-bar group, made up of two bars answered by 2+2 bar extension, makes a closed unit, like the closed unit in the first section of the previous F major quartet, op.59 no.1 'Razumovsky'. But while the opening of the F major 'Razumovsky' expands musical space by dynamics and tessitura, the opening of op.135 contracts time (ex.7).

Questions and answers play out in every section and disposition against the first movement's underlying sonata design, as one of the main techniques of articulating form: from the most straightforward, where the triadic second theme of the second subject outlines a shape as simple as in early Haydn (ex.8) or in the balanced phrases of the exposition's closing theme (ex.9); to the sophisticated, mobile-like rearrangement of material at the beginning of the development (ex.10a), where the answer becomes a question in an open conversation with three distinct lines, a texture revisited at the beginning of the coda (ex.10b).

In considering questions and answers, two kinds of retrospective time can be identified in proposing solutions of style and structure in op.135. One, as we have seen, is in the work itself: the larger level of questions and answers at the beginning of the finale refracts back to the beginning of the work; and the appoggiatura contour inflects such questions and answers, realised in each movement by distinctive textural and expressive characterisation. There is, however, another sense of retrospective time: op.135, as recreated classicism, may be seen as Beethoven's individual response to, and late realisation of, Haydn's 'free composition'. Such comparisons may be seen in classicism as style, in particular, replaying Haydn's wit in deft gestures of unexpectedness, wrong-footing and interpolations in fast movements; and classicism as structure, articulating markers of sections in sonata design, deriving intervallic and rhythmic variants from the prime

17. Retrospective understanding of meaning is discussed by David Lewin: 'Music theory, phenomenology, and modes of perception', in *Music Perception* vol.3 no.4 (Summer 1968), pp.327–92.

Ex.7: Beethoven: String Quartet no.16 in F major op.135, first movement, bars 1–10

Allegretto

pp sf p

p sf p

p

pizz.

p <>

poco cresc. p

poco cresc. p

poco cresc. p

Ex.8: Beethoven: String Quartet no.16 in F major op.135, first movement, bars 38–41 (exposition, second subject)

[Allegretto]

cresc.. p cresc.. sf

cresc.. f p cresc..

cresc.. p cresc..

3 cresc.. 3

3 cresc.. 3

Ex.10b: Beethoven: String Quartet no.16 in F major op.135, first movement, bars 159–76 (coda)

[Allegretto]

p

p

p

p

cresc.

p

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

cresc.

f

f

f

f

motif;¹⁸ and switching the status of material between thematic foreground and accompaniment figure with skillful art, as in the first movement's first and second subjects in Haydn's F major Quartet op.77 no.2 (exx.11a & 11b).

The present discussion considers Beethoven's late F major quartet with and against Haydn's late F major Quartet op.77 no.2 as reprise, redefinition and reconciliation.¹⁹ Together with redefined technique, the expressive character of op.135 is closest to Haydn's urbane surface that conceals the skillful re-interpretation of figures and structural relationships, and is also closest to Haydn's style as play. If op.135 may be described as classicism revisited, it is as a transformative re-play, viewed against the background of Haydn's art of innovation in the string quartet, and in particular in response to Haydn's last string quartet in F major.

18. Jan LaRue: 'Multistage variance: Haydn's legacy to Beethoven', in *The Journal of Musicology* vol.18 no.1 (Spring 2001), pp.344–60.

19. Maynard Solomon: *Late Beethoven: music, thought, imagination* (Berkeley, 2003).

Ex.11a: Haydn: String Quartet no.67 in F major op.77 no.2, first movement, bars 1–4

Allegro moderato

The musical score for Ex.11a shows the first four bars of the first movement of Haydn's String Quartet no.67 in F major, op.77 no.2. The tempo is marked 'Allegro moderato'. The score is in F major and 2/4 time. The first violin part begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a melodic line. The second violin, viola, and first bass parts provide accompaniment, with dynamics shifting from forte (*f*) to piano (*p*) across the four bars.

Ex.11b: Haydn: String Quartet no.67 in F major op.77 no.2, first movement, bars 146–49 (second subject, recapitulation)

[Allegro moderato]

The musical score for Ex.11b shows the second subject, recapitulation, in bars 146–49 of the first movement of Haydn's String Quartet no.67 in F major, op.77 no.2. The tempo is marked '[Allegro moderato]'. The score is in F major and 2/4 time. The first violin part begins with a mezzo voce dynamic and a melodic line. The second violin, viola, and first bass parts provide accompaniment, all marked mezzo voce.

Not for the first time: in op.18, Beethoven's first set of string quartets, he needed to define himself as a major exponent of the 'connoisseur's form', in particular positioning himself against Haydn, his teacher and the most important composer in Europe.²⁰ Beethoven heads the op.18 set with the substantial F major quartet, although it was not the first to be written, in the same key as Haydn's last completed work in the genre. Beyond key, there are distinct similarities of material in the first movement – the incisive downbeat phrasing, the turn figure in the prime material, *sforzandi* (or *sfp*) for emphasis, transition sections as dialogues, and the bar of silence before Haydn's recapitulation which Beethoven uses prior to the *sf* chords in A♭ major which lead to the closing of the exposition. But there were also significant differences of individual features in op.18 no.1: the unique, inward expressive D minor slow movement, Adagio affetuoso ed appassionato, which changed the landscape of expressive characterisation in a quartet slow movement; the scherzo's compressed, one-in-a-bar driving momentum; and the finale's rhythmic impulsion with skirls of semiquaver triplets and knife-edge switches of texture and dynamics.

While it is not known if Beethoven had intentionally used op.77 no.2 as a model for op.18 no.1, some kind of positioning is evidently at issue with Beethoven's first F major quartet: on the one hand, inviting comparison with Haydn for his innovative realisations of string quartet form and style; and, on the other, differentiating himself from Haydn.

Between Haydn's last F major quartet and Beethoven's last F major quartet very different kinds of comparison can be ascertained. Comparing two works for similarity and differentiation may be described in one of two ways: as praxis or construct. Praxis is an intentional model which uses specific features from a work by a different composer for emulation, homage or challenge, as in Beethoven's A major quartet op.18 no.5, which was closely based on Mozart's A major quartet K.464.²¹ Construct, on the other hand, is a theoretical set of criteria, and in this instance Haydn's op.77 no.2 is considered as the probability model for op.135.²² A probability model proposes a background 'stack' of procedures and expectations against which to evaluate concurrence, as fulfilling expectations, in part or whole, in the subsequent work, and unexpectedness, as unpredicted departures, digressions or interpolations.

Some of the most interesting innovations take place at the peripheries of defined areas. One of the most revealing of these is the conclusion of the first defined unit in a sonata exposition to end with full closure. Haydn's solution in the first movement of op.77 no.2 shows how he underlines first subject key and subject definition by downbeat emphasis. Out of the repetition of the initial phrase pair, though, emerges upbeat articulation as transition (bars 20–36). By contrast with the downbeat emphasis of both first and second subjects, upbeat rhythmic character impels the transition, and becomes in turn the basis

20. James Webster: 'The falling-out Between Haydn and Beethoven: the evidence of the sources', in *Beethoven essays: studies in honor of Elliot Forbes* (Cambridge, MA, 1984), pp.3–45.

21. Jeremy Yudkin: 'Beethoven's "Mozart" Quartet', in *Journal of the American Musicological Society* vol.45 no.1 (Spring 1992), pp.30–74.

22. Pierre Simon de LaPlace: *Essai philosophique sur les probabilités* (Paris, 1814), trans. Frederick William Truscott & Frederick Lincoln Emory as *A philosophical essay on probabilities* (New York, 1951; repr. 2017); Andrew Nikolaevich Kolmogorov: *Foundations of the theory of probability*, trans. Nathan Morrison (New York, 1951; repr. New York, 2018).

of development in a movement of the greatest logic and precision. Just as upbeat emphasis becomes the means of transition between subjects in the exposition, so, at the larger level of sections, upbeat articulates the rhythmic character of the development as mobility, opposition and digression, against primary rhythmic downbeat in the exposition and re-presentation in the recapitulation.

Beethoven's first movement is remarkably brief, especially after the extensive proportions of middle-period works from the 'Eroica' Symphony on and in the Ninth Symphony. In a movement where 'less is more', the sonata design is articulated by dexterous shifts of contrapuntal play, not so much by organic process but rather by shuffling small motivic units. At the precise place where Haydn shows his mastery in the art of transition, shifting from downbeat to upbeat to impel momentum, Beethoven, in a deadpan gesture, drops momentum almost entirely, with two pairs of falling sevenths (inverted appoggiaturas, as in fig.2) and descending appoggiaturas, as mini-questions and answers. Out of the second of these pairs emerges, by the most skillful sleight of hand, the triplet figure in violin 1, as extended answer, leading to the dominant key area, C major.

Articulating its sonata design with the simplest of triadic shapes, the movement is full of such improbabilities and magic: in the exposition, the second subject second theme (bars 38–43); in the development, the first play-off of the opening dotted figure is literally left hanging (bars 80/81) (as counterpart to Haydn's static centre in the first movement development, bars 90–95); and in the coda, where again 'less is more', Beethoven deftly wraps up the movement by its most whimsical, minimal figure from bar 2, violin 1, followed by the dotted upbeat figure. The dotted figure, which opens the movement after the initial interrogative question, returns at the end with the answer as closure.

Other, more disconcerting sides to Beethoven's humour appear in the scherzo, which opens *p* and is rudely and repeatedly jostled by an accented, unrelated *E♭, f*. While its intrusive demeanour is part of the scherzo's destabilising character, *E♭* nevertheless has a fascinating 'pre-history' in the first movement which is similarly 'against the current'.²³ In the first movement's exposition and recapitulation, tonal relationships focus mainly on dominant/tonic in a deliberately restricted range of keys. Near the beginning of the development, a series of flat-side passing tonal motions arrives at *E♭* as part of the dominant seventh of the subdominant *B♭* (bars 79–82), as the interim goal of disseminated dialogue. The interesting follow-up to this *E♭* occurs in the coda, where it is effectively deconstructed against the movement's initial viola double-dotted figure; but the most remarkable part of this coda passage is the nonchalant switch from *E♭* to *E♯* (bars 186–87), a move that will be repeatedly reprised in the scherzo with scant concern for propriety (fig.3).

23. Isaiah Berlin: *Against the current: essays in the history of ideas* (London, 1979; repr. Princeton, 2013).

The scherzo shows distinct differences between Haydn's scherzo technique and character, and Beethoven's. Haydn establishes a clear metrical phrase-structure norm in triple time, then undermines it with hemiolas and reestablishes it at the end of the first section of the scherzo. Hemiola against triple metre at the end of the first section, though, is not the end of the story: the tussle between metrical downbeat and rhythmic cross-downbeat plays out throughout the scherzo, only pausing for breath in the middle of the second section. It picks up not only momentum but an inflection of F minor (bars 59–60, violin 1) which in turn leads to a chromaticised approach to the half cadence before the scherzo's closing phrase. This tonic minor inflection, in turn, prepares the ground for the trio in D \flat major, the chromatic submediant, which plays such a strategic role in op.135 as the key of the slow movement.

Against Haydn's skillful play with zigzag time and rhythmic text, Beethoven's scherzo can be seen as double inversion. The metrically destabilised opening is the point of reference, at least in terms of the sectional layout of the movement. Against this opening section, with its unsettling E \flat intrusions in all four instruments, is the trio, although not marked as such in the score. It consists of three strongly downbeat sections with reiterated pulsing groups over grinding harmonic rhythm, the four-quaver figure driving the momentum, in F major, G major and A major. The last of these sections is not only extended to gigantic proportions but becomes virtually manic, with relentless *ff* repetitions and huge leaps in violin 1. The rhythmically obsessive figure finally subsides dynamically into a decrescendo to reintroduce the opening section of metrical dislocation, which sounds almost normal by comparison.

Fig.3

The figure displays musical notation for the first movement of Beethoven's Scherzo, divided into two main sections: the Coda and the Development. The Coda section (bars 182 onwards) features parts for Violin 1, Viola, and Cello. The Violin 1 part shows dynamic markings of *f*, *p*, *f*, *sf*, and *p*. The Viola part shows *f* and *p*. The Cello part shows *f*, *p*, *f*, *f*, and *p*, with a *pizz.* marking. The Development section (bars 73 onwards) features parts for Violin 1 and Cello. The Violin 1 part shows a *cresc.* marking and dynamic markings of *f* and *p*. The Cello part shows *f* and *p*, with a *pizz.* marking. Arrows indicate the flow of the music between these sections.

Not all of op.135 can be seen as recreated classicism. Haydn's skill in establishing, deflecting and reestablishing norms of order are doubly undermined in this scherzo. In previous innovative scherzos Beethoven had played off expectations of regularity against dislocation, as in the initially destabilised then restabilised metrical downbeat at the beginning of the 'Eroica' scherzo, or expectations of change against reiteration, as in the five-part scherzo of the E minor 'Razumovsky' Quartet op.59 no.2. Almost all of Beethoven's scherzos, with their humour in the play of time and material, use a normative rhythmic/metrical figure as reference, departing into surprise routes of scoring, articulation and silence, as in the scherzo of the Seventh Symphony. Almost nowhere else in Beethoven's output is there a movement of similar double inversion, using a dislocated initial point of reference and obsessive central section. What makes it especially unsettling is its framing within a redefined classicism in first movement and finale.

There are other movements in late Beethoven with fierce energy propelled against boundaries – dissonant, disruptive, at times veering towards chaos, such as the fugal finale of the 'Hammerklavier' Sonata op.106 and the 'Grosse Fuge', as flagrant confrontations with fugue, a technique representative of system and order as in Bach's '48'. Beethoven's fierce thrust against boundaries also manifests itself in the fractured, confrontational vision of the F minor quartet, op.95, which stands, in time, between the middle and late works and, in technique, between underlying structure and dislocated surface.

But there is another work in F major from Beethoven's middle period that is a closer parallel to the double inversion of the op.135 scherzo: the F minor 'Storm' movement from the 'Pastoral' Symphony, as rupture in physical nature with violent onslaughts of wind and pelting rain, projected by violently opposed tessituras and rhythmic dissonance. As the storm subsides, structural order is restituted by the return of symmetrical phrases, diatonic language and closure.

The 'Storm', though, is a necessary, even essential part of the 'Pastoral'. It may not be possible to truly value the work's Edenic vision unless the order of the natural, and musical, world is threatened with loss, and then regained. The disruptive threat against paradigms of order in the 'Storm' may in turn help us understand the double intrusion in the op.135 scherzo; because the recreated classicism in op.135 contains the disruptive as an integral part, and can only be regained after the indrawing of the slow movement as contemplation and healing. The recreated classicism of op.135 is accordingly 'hard-won': under threat in the scherzo, withdrawal in the slow movement, it returns in the finale. At the end of the work, 'Der schwer gefasste Entschluss' is not just about questions and answers as ways of redefining structure but about fundamental 'musical speaking', conveyed through the work's layers of meaning and contours of communication. In

response to ‘musical speaking’ as creative imperative, the finale’s question ‘Muss es sein?’ is answered by the emphatic ‘Es muss sein!’

The slow movement is an intrinsic part of this solution. Comparison with Haydn’s D major Andante variation movement enables us to differentiate between classicism and redefined classicism. Haydn’s beautifully balanced theme in violin 1 supported by the cello is symmetrical on two levels: as question/answer phrases, and between the two halves of the theme, the first harmonically I-V, the second ii-V-I, with each section repeated. Before the final cadence, Haydn temporarily suspends momentum by three chords in alternating dynamics, closing the second half with decisive *fortissimo* using a dotted closing figure. Leading from the theme as symmetrical order, Haydn shows his skill in invention: invention in using the rhythm of the theme’s *ff* closing cadence as the basis of extension; and invention in repositioning thematic material in the second violin while evolving a counter-theme in violin 1 (bars 74–100). The Andante, part variant, part variation, creates a sense of increasing momentum by means of rhythmic diminution, from quavers in the theme, to dotted semiquaver figure countersubject then to demisemiquavers in the last variation. As is characteristic in classical variation movements, a pattern Beethoven follows in the variation movement of the Piano Sonata in E major op.109, the theme returns at the end of the movement, either in its prime form or, as here, slightly inflected by the figuration that preceded it.²⁴

In op.135, the slow movement is in the chromatic submediant D \flat , a key beyond the immediate and secondary tonal relationships of F major, and also a key of unusual, profound expressivity in classical and early 19th-century music.²⁵ The slow movement is in ternary form, like an aria (its expressive character is designated ‘cantante e tranquillo’). D \flat major outer sections, as melodic reflection, frame the middle section in the tonic minor, C \sharp minor, which is like a recitative, as in the Cavatina of op.130. In contrast to the framing sections’ serene melodic lyricism, the C \sharp minor recitative is reductive in texture and conflicted in emotional space. In opera, recitative is the means of externalising uncertainty or inner tension, using short, sometimes jagged phrases and abrupt changes of rhythm and articulation in a style closer to speaking than singing. Transferred to the middle of the quartet slow movement, instrumental recitative recreates the broken contours of human dilemmas. The recitatives at the centre of Beethoven’s late quartet slow movements are private in nature and internal within the movement, as distinct from recitative as raucous public clamouring at the beginning of the Ninth Symphony’s finale. Personal expressivity in the C \sharp minor recitative is depicted by verticalised appoggiaturas in all four instruments, at a slower tempo than the framing sections and *pp* dynamics. Conveying inner questioning, it is answered, in turn, and resolved by the second D \flat major section. The return of the opening as theme is extended into a variation,

24. Variation techniques in Haydn and Beethoven are discussed by Elaine R. Sisman: ‘Tradition and transformation in the alternating variations of Haydn and Beethoven’, in *Acta Musicologica* vol.62 nos.2/3 (May–December 1990), pp.152–82. See also her *Haydn and the classical variation* (Cambridge, MA, 1993).

25. Paul M. Ellison: *The key to Beethoven: connecting tonality and meaning in his music* (Hillsdale, 2014).

where the D \flat major theme dissolves into lavishly embroidered semiquaver figures in violins 1 and 2, supported by the opening cello line, which is part of the appoggiatura network, as seen in fig.2. As well as shaping the cello line, appoggiaturas also play into the violins' richly textured figuration. In the variation which transforms and closes the slow movement may be seen a residual trace of the original intention to resolve conflict in the C \sharp minor quartet by a D \flat major postlude.

Between macrostructure and initial 'Gestalt', D \flat plays a leading role, literally as well as metaphorically and, as we have seen, the whole work effectively stems from it. The cello's opening D \flat /C appoggiatura, together with the viola's double-dotted flourish and first violin zip, raises the first question as interrogative gesture: and just to make sure we get the point, firms up the question with the zip in both violins, *sf*. Returning more strongly emphasised by repeated semiquavers and *f* dynamics, the D \flat /C appoggiatura signals the recapitulation.

The opening D \flat /C appoggiatura resolving onto F may also help explain a parallel configuration of D \flat /C in the work's macrostructure. Following the D \flat major slow movement, the finale introduction, 'Muss es sein? Es muss sein!', is a series of questions between lower and upper pairs of instruments, which end on the dominant C, the second pitch of the appoggiatura, which resolves decisively onto the finale in F. In a style of exuberant energy, the finale's first subject group re-presents the introduction's distinctive characters of question and answer in mobile-like combinations of virtuoso play: the introduction's question figures – 'Muss es sein?' as the interrogative dotted figure in viola and cello, and the winding quaver line in the upper instruments; and the answer – 'Es muss sein!' as rhythmically decisive answer. The introduction's answer figure 'Es muss sein!' becomes the question phrase in the Allegro, while the winding quaver figure as part of the introduction's question 'Muss es sein?' becomes the Allegro's answering phrase (upbeat to bars 13–23).

Seen against the background of Haydn's finale as probability model, Haydn's rhythmic energy is impelled by *sforzandi*. These shift between the last half-beat of the previous bar and the second half-beat of the next as extended upbeats, and are played off against *sforzandi* first beats as emphatic downbeats. This wealth of rhythmic ingenuity is diversified and recombined in the development by means of invertible counterpoint, flipping the opening crisp violin 1 figure (bars 1–2); contracted, from top to bottom as virtuosic overlapping entries (bars 60–66); and playing off upbeat against downbeat and contrapuntal writing against vertical alignment, as diverse realisations of action.

One of the strategic techniques in Haydn's finale is how the rhythmic figures are used as both compositional invention as play and as the means

of articulating sonata design as structure. This twofold articulation of the material may be seen as one of the most important aspects of Haydn's 'free composition' as probability model for op.135, and is realised in a rather different way in Beethoven's finale. The winding figure, which played the role of answer in the first subject, is now question, introducing the second subject. Its character is the simple, folk-like symmetrical 'doublet', whose reiterations are then interspersed with the 'Es muss sein!' answer figure. The mobile-like combinations that defined the first movement's invention as play now return in the finale as alternate realisations of invertible counterpoint.

Unlike the first movement, the finale's second subject group is not in the dominant but in A major, returning in the recapitulation in its equivalent relationship of one less sharp, in D major. Many of Beethoven's late works explore keys a third apart, including the first movements of the 'Hammerklavier' Sonata op.106, the E \flat major Quartet op.127 and the B \flat major Quartet op.130. In op.135 A major is also the key of the huge explosive climax in the scherzo, relentlessly repetitive, fixated. If the finale is, in part, the revisiting and resolution of earlier features and relationships, then the reprise of A major may be a reconciliation with the scherzo's excessive energy through the finale's simplest, most accessible material. After a very different kind of complex action as confrontation, this kind of reconciliation, using the simplest perfect cadences, also occurs in the coda of the 'Grosse Fuge'.

Viewed against the background of Haydn's character of play, the finale's sonata form is articulated by precise referencing of material: to the 'Es muss sein!' at the end of the exposition and recapitulation, and the reprise of the introduction 'Grave, ma non troppo tratto' at the beginning of the recapitulation. The most striking and unprecedented sectional delineation, though, is the beginning of the development. Tangentially related to the 'Es muss sein!' figure, it is like nothing else in the movement. While Haydn is the primary reference for op.135, another composer and work may be at the background at this juncture: the opening of the finale development of Mozart's G minor Symphony K.550, whose subversively chromatic writing (ex.12a) occurs at exactly the same place in the movement as Beethoven's (ex.12b).

The development references the main components of the material: the question and answer, the winding figure in invertible counterpoint (bars 88–109) and the second subject 'doublet' in D major. What is of particular interest is that, just prior to the recapitulation with the reprise of the introduction, 'Grave, ma non troppo tratto', are two appearances of the D \flat /C appoggiatura in F minor (violin 1, bars 151–02, and at the octave above, ritardando, both with trills, bars 153–55). This last C can be seen as prolongation through to the end of the section and, comparable to the large-scale resolution of the D \flat /C appoggiatura described earlier, is finally resolved in the coda.

Ex.12a: Mozart: Symphony no.40 in G minor K.550, finale, bars 125–32 (development)

[Allegro assai]

Flutes 1 & 2

Oboes 1 & 2, violins 1 & 2

Violas

Bassoons 1 & 2, cellos, basses

f

3

Ex.12b: Beethoven: String Quartet no.16 in F major op.135, finale, bars 82–86 (development)

[Allegro]

f *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

The pizzicato coda, *pianissimo* until the *ff* of the last four bars, and mostly in the cello's treble register, is Beethoven's last card to play in the finale and the work. Its recombination of material no longer includes questions, only answers: the second subject symmetrical 'doublet', then capped *fortissimo* by the combined affirmation 'Es muss sein!'. The coda can be seen as the answer, not only to all the preceding questions in the work, but more widely within Beethoven's works, as innovation and creativity, and as solutions often hard-won. 'Der schwer gefasste Entschluss' was suggested in the early part of this discussion as providing a clue to problem-solving the meaning of the work by entering the quartet space backwards. But 'Der schwer gefasste Entschluss' may also provide a different kind of clue to engaging with Beethoven's works as questions and answers; and via his own redefined classicism, designate the op.135 quartet as Beethoven's 'Haydn' quartet.