

**The Critical Reception
of Beethoven's Compositions
by His German Contemporaries,
Op. 101 to Op. 111**

Translated and edited by Robin Wallace

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ISBN 978-1-7348948-2-0

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CONTENTS

	Foreword	6
Op. 101. Piano Sonata in A Major		
101.1	“Review.” <i>Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung mit besonderer Rücksicht auf den österreichischen Kaiserstaat</i> 1 (27 February 1817): 65–66.	8
101.2	“Reviews (Museum for Keyboard Music, Volume 1).” <i>Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung</i> 19 (1 October 1817): col. 686–89.	10
101.3	“Music. Overview of New Publications. L. in January and February 1818.” <i>Journal für Literatur, Kunst, Luxus und Mode</i> 33 (February 1818): 95–96.	16
Op. 102. Two Sonatas for Piano and Violoncello, C major, D Major		
102.1	“Review.” <i>Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung</i> 20 (11 November 1818): col. 792–94.	18
102.2	v.d.O... “Reviews.” <i>Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung</i> 1 (1 December 1824): 409–10.	20

109.2	N. G. “Reviews.” <i>Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung</i> 1 (4 February 1824): 37–38.	43
109.3	“Review.” <i>Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung</i> 26 (1 April 1824): col. 213–25.	46
 Op. 110. Piano Sonata in A-flat Major		
110.1	“Music. Overview of New Publications. L. in October 1822.” <i>Journal für Literatur, Kunst, Luxus und Mode</i> 37 (October 1822): 605–6.	55
110.2	Adolf Bernhard Marx. “Review.” <i>Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung</i> 1 (10 March 1824): 87–90.	56
 Op. 111. Piano Sonata in C Minor		
111.1	“Music Literature.” <i>Zeitung für Theater, Musik und bildende Künste</i> 3 (14 June 1823): 93–94.	63
111.2	Janus a Costa (Christian Wilhelm Schmidt) <i>Journal für Literature, Kunst, Luxus und Mode</i> 38 (September 1823): 706–8.	65
111.3	“As a Review of the Sonata Op. 111. Letter from a Critic to the Editor.” <i>Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung</i> 1 (17 March 1824): 95–99.	68

FOREWORD

This installment completes the originally planned third volume of *The Critical Reception of Beethoven's Compositions by His German Contemporaries* with reviews of works that mark the beginning of Beethoven's late period. These include his two final sonatas for cello and piano, Op. 102, and the last five piano sonatas, with the exception of the "Hammerklavier," Op. 106, for which there are no contemporary reviews; we can only assume that the nearly complete absence of comments on this work in the musical press is a reflection of its enormous length and technical difficulty, which must have baffled those who first encountered it.

It will perhaps come as a surprise that the work with the largest number of reviews in this installment is the Twenty-Five Scottish Songs, Op. 108. Modern writers have widely regarded Beethoven's folksong settings as minor and insignificant works. By contrast, a critic writing in the *Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (*BamZ*) in 1824 said that these songs "will shine eternally in [Beethoven's] diadem for as long as the song retains its modest position with feeling souls" (108.2), while a critic writing four years later in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (*AmZ*) said that "whoever wishes to become acquainted with Beethoven's inner essence precisely and from all sides must not overlook these songs" (108.6). Even Adolf Bernhard Marx, one of Beethoven's most progressive admirers, called them "works toward which the public needs to grow to maturity" (108.5).

The most negative comments, on the other hand, were elicited by the cello sonatas, Op. 102. The reviewers in the *AmZ* and the *BamZ* carefully hedged their comments about works that they clearly did not much like (102.1 and 102.2). The author of the *AmZ* review of the last three piano sonatas, Opp. 109, 110, and 111 (109.3), was more blunt, saying that despite approaching the cello sonatas with an open mind, "we have nevertheless not been able to acquire a taste for the sonatas, Op. 102."

The sonatas for piano solo, including the three just mentioned above, as well as the sonata in A major, Op. 101, were received much more enthusiastically. The author of the review of Op. 109 in the *BamZ* (109.2) acknowledged that "a great portion of Beethoven's admirers now certainly occupy themselves with his most recent works for keyboard and voice

only in utter privacy.” However, he says, some will always say that “though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.” The allusion here is biblical, with Beethoven cast as Christ and his fickle admirers as the apostle Peter. The fact that by 1824 (the year of the premiere of the 9th symphony) Beethoven could be spoken of in these terms attests to the way his genius had already been exalted and mythologized. In this regard, it is significant that the *AmZ* reviewer of the last three piano sonatas faults the last movement of Op. 111 for not living up to the expectations set by Beethoven’s “lofty genius” (109.3).

The last review in this installment (111.3) neatly summarizes the aesthetic tensions that surrounded the reception of challenging new music in the 1820s. It is cast as a letter from a perplexed reviewer to the editor of the *Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, excusing his inability to review Beethoven’s new piano sonata, Op. 111. Much of the letter, though, is given over to the views of a young musician named Edward, whose passionate embrace of this music contrasts with the reviewer’s bafflement. At issue is the question of whether a work like Op. 111 is bound by the traditional criteria of musical aesthetics—in which case the final movement can only be heard as a “chaos of sounds”—or whether it can communicate ideas and move people in ways that are disturbing and even painful. Edward suggests that the final movement of Op. 111 describes Beethoven’s death, even though the composer was still alive at the time the review was written. The tension between Edward’s provocative flights of imagination and the reviewer’s bemused bafflement encapsulates the conflicting reactions of Beethoven’s contemporaries to the challenges of his late music, as well as anticipating some of the central controversies of musical aesthetics over the next two centuries.

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 from the original sources. Readers will notice that while the translations are newly typeset, the music examples are reproduced exactly as they first appeared. 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 Dorf Müller, 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 summer sabbatical from Baylor University.

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Op. 101. Piano Sonata in A Major

101.1.

“Review.”

*Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung mit besonderer Rücksicht
auf den österreichischen Kaiserstaat* 1
(27 February 1817): 65–66.¹

It was probably not possible to open the museum in a more appropriate manner than with this once again so completely original composition by our *Proteus—Beethoven*. This sonata again contains so many unique characteristics, such an interesting, artistic arrangement and working out of completely new ideas, that we can unconditionally recommend it to all those who want not merely to nibble, but to enjoy with all the senses, to those who crave not merely a confection, but a nourishing, healthy meal. The first movement, *A major 6/8 Allegretto ma non troppo* (the composer, who is genuinely German-minded, not *dressed up* that way, has also set down markings in the mother tongue for each of the tempos, as well as for the instrument itself),² this first movement proves that one can accomplish much with little expense, can say much with few words, an art that has become truly rare in our luxurious times, which

¹The piano sonata Op. 101, which is widely considered Beethoven’s first solo keyboard work in his third-period, or “late,” style, was begun perhaps as early as 1813 and completed in 1816. The first edition was published by Steiner in Vienna in February 1817, almost simultaneously with this review in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung mit besonderer Rücksicht auf den österreichischen Kaiserstaat*, which Steiner also published. This work was announced as the first volume of a series titled “Museum für Klaviermusik,” which was advertised as containing “only musical products of acknowledged worth, compositions distinguished by an aesthetically pure style, artistically, gracefully, and clearly worked-out,” that would serve as the foundation of a repertory of lasting value.

²Seeking for a German term to describe the larger pianos that were being built in the 1810s, Beethoven designated both Op. 101 and Op. 106 as being written for the “Hammer-Klavier,” and the term appeared on the title page of both sonatas. It is currently used to designate only Op. 106, which is much larger in scope than the present work, and must have baffled Beethoven’s contemporaries, judging from the lack of reviews or references to it in the contemporary press. Unlike the three sonatas that preceded it, however, Op. 106, however, does not have German tempo markings. In Op. 81a, Beethoven provided German equivalents to the Italian markings, and in Op. 90 he used only German. In Op. 101 the German designations come first, with Italian markings underneath. The movements are designated “Etwas lebhaft und mit der innigsten Empfindung,” “Lebhaft. Marschmäßig,” “Langsam und sehnsuchtvoll,” and, after a brief “Zeitmaß des ersten Stücks” and Italian “stringendo” and “presto” designations, “Geschwinde, doch nicht zu sehr, und mit Entschlossenheit.” Since the German markings are sometimes longer than the Italian ones (in Italian, the last movement is designated simply “Allegro”), it is clear that the latter are secondary, not vice versa, even though the Italian designations appear in somewhat larger type in the first edition.

Bach fundamentally understood, and which here as well draws us irresistibly. The *Vivace, alla Marcia, F major 4/4* that follows has a completely strange character, modulates unusually and surprisingly, and belongs in the category of those children who can by no means deny their father. In the alternate section, in *B-flat major*, after which the march follows *da capo*, the scholar comes across his true heart's delight in a strict two-voice *canon* at the *octave*. An *Adagio non troppo con affetto*, A minor 3/4 makes the entryway to the *Finale*, in which, according to the composer's directions, only one string should be used at the beginning, and only gradually the full instrument.³ After a rhapsodic repetition of several measures from the first movement, *A major 6/8*, the concluding *Allegro* in 2/4 begins, about which one can say with complete justification: "*The work praises its master,*" for only an *accomplished master* can write *thus* or *comparably*. Here everything breathes life; here everything pushes and drives on irresistibly. Here upper, lower, and middle voices chase each other in narrowly entwined imitations; here the all-surpassing flight of imagination unites with old, classical purity, and offers its hand in brotherly concord, recognizing what alone is true and beautiful. In the second part, after a *salto mortale*⁴ into C major, the bass begins the principal theme *pianissimo*, extends it further, and the other voices gradually answer it alternately at the tenth, at the fourth, and at the octave.⁵ Now it appears divided, now in inversion, now in combination with related countersubjects; in a word: this piece of music contains a true treasure, an inexhaustible wealth, which will disclose itself to the diligent miner who submits himself to the lucrative effort of investigating the vein of gold in this shaft, and will be for him a spring of the purest pleasure that never dries up. For the delivery of this work one frankly does not have to be a technical wizard, but sensibility and feeling, head and heart, are indispensable conditions. An honorable handshake to the great master, in thanks for this magnificent gift!

³Using the same combination of German and Italian described in the previous note, Beethoven indicated that the opening of this movement should be played "Mit einer Saite" and "Sul una corda," meaning that the pianist should hold down the una corda pedal (the so-called soft pedal), shifting the hammers so that they strike only one string on each note. At the very end of the short slow movement, he indicated "Nach und nach mehrere Saiten," meaning that the pianist should gradually release the pedal to return the hammers to their normal position. The effect of this change was much more pronounced on the pianofortes of Beethoven's time than it is today, since the una corda pedal literally reduced the instrument to one string per note, producing an almost harp-like sonority that notably contrasted with that of the full instrument. The beginning of the brief quote from the first movement that follows is then marked "Alle Saiten" and "tutto il Cembalo, ma piano."

⁴Italian: "Death leap."

⁵Mm. 121 ff.

IOI.2.

“Reviews (Museum for Keyboard Music, Volume 1)”
Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 19
(1 October 1817): col. 686–89.¹

This newest product with which *Beethoven* presents us provides continuous proofs of his inexhaustible versatility, his deep practical knowledge of art, his lively imagination, his universal originality. Truly, here in his 101st work, admiration and renewed esteem take hold of us when we wander with the great soul-painter on strange, never trodden paths, as though on Ariadne’s thread through labyrinthine twists, where now a cool brook whispers to us, now a rough rock stares; here an unknown, sweetly fragrant flower draws us, there a thorny path is ready to frighten us away. One must restrain oneself from describing further these and other pictures which force themselves upon a person, if one is to follow this wonderful genius as well in this his creation, for surely such effusions become no one less than a reviewer. Thus, there may follow, in place of anything further, only a short analysis of this work of art, which is certainly small in size, but grand, truly grand in content, and whose sometimes unpretentious exterior hides many precious jewels.

The first piece (*Allegretto, ma non troppo*, or as the composer also indicated in the German tongue: *Somewhat lively, and with the most heartfelt emotion*, A major 6/8), has a simple, childishly tender character; contains few notes, which, however, say a great deal; and demands an intelligent, sensitive delivery, truly felt with the heart. This movement, consisting of 102 measures, proceeds from the following unassuming theme:



FIGURE 1. *Op. 101, 1st movement, mm. 1–6*

¹This review, like the previous one, is based on the Steiner edition of February 1817.

With the greatest possible clarity, completely without ornament and show, this sweet melody glides uninterruptedly forward, remaining ever constant, only in different arrangements; joins with another, completely strange one;² and then appears as the lower voice, treated in this manner:



FIGURE 2. *Op. 101, 1st movement, mm. 29–40*

Just as interesting is the harmonic progression by which the composer leads to the conclusion:



FIGURE 3. *Op. 101, 1st movement, mm. 81–95*

The second movement, *Vivace alla Marcia* (*Lively, marchlike*), F major, **C** time, deviates totally from the previous one. It remains in dotted figures throughout, modulates unusually, and is not exactly easy to perform. The *trio*, B-flat major, after which the march proper is repeated once again, is built on the lovely motive that follows, and composed of the most beautiful imitations:

²Mm. 16ff.



FIGURE 4. *Op. 101, 2nd movement, mm. 55–69*³

The following passage may find a place here as well:



FIGURE 5. *Op. 101, 1st movement, mm. 77–90*

The connoisseur will be grateful to us for these excerpts, and will not fail to recognize the skillful contrapuntist in them.

The *Adagio non troppo, con affetto* (*Slow and longingly*), A minor 2/4 time, consists of only twenty measures in which a single figure predominates. In it, that mutation of the

³The autograph manuscript has a repeat sign after m. 64, which does not appear in the first edition.

instrument is used by means of which the hammers touch only one string.⁴ After a cadenza leading into the major mode, wherein more and more strings gradually enter, the composer lets fragments from the beginning of the first movement be heard again in the tempo of that piece, quickly turning, however, to the last movement, *Allegro* (*Fast, but not too much, and with resolution*), A major 2/4 time, which immediately announces itself as a peculiar guest:



FIGURE 6. *Op. 101, 3rd movement, mm. 29–36*

In order to develop all the beauties of this admirable piece, one would have to copy it in its entirety. It emerges, so to speak, from one integrated whole, neither too much nor too little; it consists of only a pair of principal ideas, but these are used completely exhaustively, decked out with all the arts of counterpoint that stand at the command of the genuine master, and thoroughly and strictly worked out with a certainty that vouches for study of the old classicists. Our readers will certainly pardon us if we cannot resist the temptation to cite at least several examples as proof of our assertion. See how the composer arranges his second part:



FIGURE 7. *Op. 101, 4th movement, mm. 120–47*

⁴See 101.1, n3.

Later comes this magnificent passage:



FIGURE 8. *Op. 101, 4th movement, mm. 198–212*

Then the beautiful treatment of the theme at the return to the *maggiore*:



FIGURE 9. *Op. 101, 4th movement, mm. 238 (with upbeat)–53*

Finally this cajoling transitional passage:



FIGURE 10. *Op. 101, 4th movement, mm. 270–79*

The composer succeeds just as originally with the conclusion, letting his motive be heard once again now by itself, now in two voices, while the bass gently murmurs along with the heavy pedal notes.⁵ If we have succeeded well, with these notices, in preparing the friends

⁵Mm. 349ff.

of true keyboard playing, for whom *Bach's* school remains forever valued and beloved, for the elevated, truly rare enjoyment that awaits them, then our purpose is fulfilled, and we rejoice in a new opportunity to be able to pay to the great composer in a similar manner the tribute of our heartfelt esteem that is due to him.

101.3.

“Music. Overview of New Publications. L. in January and February 1818.”
Journal für Literatur, Kunst, Luxus und Mode 33
(February 1818): 95–96.¹

The deserving Nägeli in Zürich formerly earned the thanks of all friends of selected music for the pianoforte with his substantial *Repertoire des Clavecinistes*, and acknowledged masters like v. Beethoven decorated this beautiful collection. Now a similar idea has been undertaken in Vienna by Steiner and Comp. in a manner that deserves no less applause and arouses agreeable expectations for its continuation. We mean, namely, the *Musée musical des clavecinistes*. Museum for Keyboard Music. First Volume. Vienna, Steiner and Comp. “Only musical products (one reads in the enclosed announcement) of acknowledged worth, compositions that are particularly distinguished by an aesthetically pure style, artistically, gracefully, and clearly worked out, will be admitted to this museum. Therefore we have claimed as our property the most recent works by the best-known composers of our time in their original form, alternating amicably with substantial works from earlier times that are distinguished by originality of invention as well as by precision, fire, and life in their working out.”

Now this first volume contains, under the special title Sonata (*for the pianoforte*, or for the Hammer-Klavier) of the Museum for Keyboard Music, first installment, composed Ludw. v. Beethoven, 101st work, property of the publisher, Vienna at the firm of Steiner and Comp., (Price ...) 19 S.² The movements of this splendid sonata are as follows. The first, an *Allegretto ma non troppo*, in A major and 6/8 time, it distinguished no less by its tender expression, lovely melodic turns, and its refined harmony, than by the equally beautifully characteristic working out of the whole. There follows a *Vivace alla marcia* in F major, in 4/4 time, with a trio in B-flat major, which is formed very originally out of canonic imitations, just as the march itself joins much surprisingly beautiful expression with this contrapuntal art. A shorter *Adagio ma non troppo, con affetto* (slow and full of longing)³ leads beautifully

¹As the text makes clear, this review is also based on the first edition of Op. 101 by Steiner.

²These words, with the exception of the price designation, appear on the title page, along with a dedication to Baroness Dorothea Ertmann. On the use of the term “Hammer-Klavier,” see 101.1, n2.

³The German “langsam und sehnsuchtsvoll” was indicated by Beethoven himself; see 101.1, n3.

back to the opening theme of the sonata, which, however, connects immediately to the concluding movement, an Allegro (A major, 2/4 time). Here the master has combined fugal or canonic treatment, in a predominantly four-voice texture, with flights of imagination and entertaining moods in a very interesting way. One will be sufficiently rewarded for the many difficulties that the strict style requires the player to conquer with manifold enjoyment of original beauties.

Op. 102. Two Sonatas for Piano and Violoncello, C major, D major

102.I.

“Review.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 20
(11 November 1818): col. 792–94.¹

Both of these sonatas certainly belong among the most unusual and peculiar that have been written for the pianoforte in quite a while, not just in this form, but in general.² Everything here is different, completely different from what one has received elsewhere, even from this master. May he not take offense, though, if we add that not a little also seems, as it stands here, and as it is put together, published and distributed, to be formed *so as* to come out completely unusual, completely peculiar. If we wanted to give those who do not yet know them an approximate concept of the manner and taste with which these sonatas were invented, and, at least in their principal sections, worked out, we would say: remember the so-called keyboard symphonies and similar works of Sebastian Bach;³ think further of what was the general taste at that time in regard to instrumental music generally; think moreover of what the taste of the present time is in that regard (but in both, *high taste*); and, in place of what is simple and comprehensible, deck out what remains (given all the inner variety of the old great master) with the fantastic variety, together with all the inner unity, of the new one; then perhaps you will have such a concept. As little clear and incomplete as that concept still is, it will not be wrong to form it as far as possible, for it will lead closer to the proper view of these compositions and to the evaluation they deserve. Otherwise, they would scarcely receive their due, deviating thoroughly and in every regard from that which one now is accustomed to declaiming and enjoying; indeed, they would probably be set aside by most keyboard players, at least among the dilettantes, as repugnant and unpalatable. As soon as this concept takes shape from out of the work's most characteristic features, then these features can indeed be discussed again on the basis of it. As regards its technical and artistic structure, for example: that

¹The two sonatas of Op. 102 were written in 1815, with the second possibly completed early the next year. This review is based on the first edition, published in 1817 by Simrock in Bonn.

²In other words, they are unusual as piano works, not just as works for piano and cello. The reviewer's perspective is typical of this time in regarding the piano as the main instrument and the cello as the accompanying one.

³This probably refers to Bach's *sinfonias*, also known as the three-part inventions.

the voice of the violoncello and each hand of the pianoforte is worked out not merely as what is now called obbligato, but as what was further called real;⁴ that everything merely brilliant, as even more so everything provocative, noisy, and ear-filling is disdained; that for the most part only gradually does the sense, indeed in part even the technical context, become clear to the player or listener; that the melody is not infrequently coarse, the harmony now and again hard, and so forth. Whether the last and second to last of these were necessary to the master's purpose *in this degree*; whether many other peculiarities, for example the occupation of the keyboard player in many passages at once and exclusively with the lowest and highest notes and so forth, were necessary; whether something else would have been better, if also not as striking: this we would like to leave undecided, as is appropriate with all works of such an artist that are intentionally written in this way. Everyone is free to make his own judgment, but it is not always well to make his own free judgment public, particularly where for many it will lose the appearance of an individual one and obtain that of a general one.

The first of these sonatas begins with a cantabile Andante in C major, which soon runs into an Allegro vivace in A minor. A short Adagio, again in C major, follows and leads back to the first tempo, and an Allegro vivace, which is attached to it, concludes. The second of these sonatas consists of an Allegro con brio in D major, an Adagio⁵ in D minor (with such a magnificent melody and harmony in the principal idea!), and an Allegro in D major, which is fugued throughout (in part most strangely). The violoncellist must be completely secure in intonation, meter, etc., and also a very good singer on his instrument, if his performance is to succeed. For the keyboard player only the last movement of the second sonata is very difficult to perform, even if he is quite accustomed to regular fugue playing; all the others, at least apart from the finale of the first sonata, are not exactly difficult, at least as regards the mechanical aspect of performance. As concerns the sense and expression, and also particularly the most precise agreement of both players *in* sense and expression, which is necessary throughout, everything offered here can bear casual performance as little as casual listening. The performance would be much more difficult for both players, however, if the artistically knowledgeable publisher had not let the violoncello part be set throughout for the pianoforte in small notes on a separate line, by means of which understanding and that agreement are greatly facilitated. In general, everything external to the work deserves much praise.⁶

⁴In other words, the cello part and each hand of the piano are not merely essential, but each contain an independent contrapuntal voice.

⁵Actually Adagio con molto sentimento d'affetto.

⁶Unlike those of Beethoven's previous works for piano and other instruments, the piano part of the first edition of Op. 102 included the cello part, as is standard practice for the piano parts of such works today.

102.2.

v.d.O...

“Reviews.”

Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 1
(1 December 1824): 409–10.¹

(With piano sonata in A-flat Major, Op. 110)

A work of our great master’s most recent muse. It does not need to be said that, like all his works, it distinguishes itself strikingly through originality not only from all remaining products of other composers, but also from his own compositions. The inexhaustible fountain of his great and shining genius streams forth each time fresh and bright, from a new effusion of his emotion, and with each new gift one must confess to oneself, after playing it through frequently and repeatedly, not only that it is beautiful, but that it also has not been heard until now, neither from him nor, naturally, from another.

No. 1.² The first Allegro (D major) begins boldly and firmly and is only interrupted by one gentle cantilena of the cello, which would like to seek sweet conciliation:

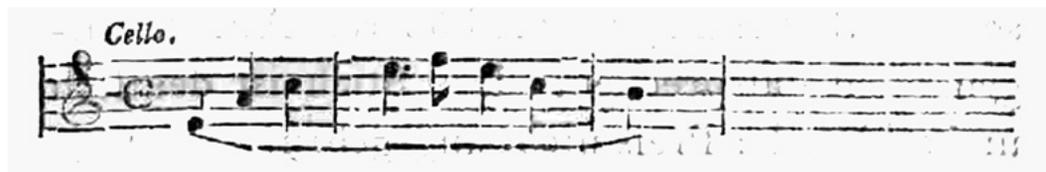


FIGURE 11. *Op. 102, no. 2, 1st movement, mm. 29–31. The key signature of two sharps is missing.*

but cannot achieve it. The aroused passion of a somewhat powerful emotion predominates until the end of the movement, whose conclusion appears extremely new and interesting.

The second, which is more extensively worked out, is an Adagio con molto sentimento d’affetto, which remains in a dismal, almost exhausted and sick emotion. This is beneficently interrupted by the secondary passage in D major, which, however, is not as consoling as it

¹Kunze attributes this review to Adolf Bernhard Marx. It refers to the edition issued by Artaria in Vienna in January 1819.

²The work discussed here is actually Op. 102 No. 2, in D major. No. 1, in C major, is discussed next, and is called No. 2.

appears at the beginning. The theme returns in D minor, is spun out in this key with restless figurations, appears once again *sempre pp* like an unlucky, horribly hovering shadow, and leads into the following third and last movement. This Adagio, strangely, moves for four pages only through D minor and major. Can this be the reason why the reviewer, in spite of the fact that he finds individual passages infinitely beautiful, has not become enamored of the whole to the degree that tends to be the case with other movements of his celebrated and revered favorite composer?

There now follows an artfully worked out fugue six pages long, to which the reviewer at least concedes originality. As a rule, fugues tend to abound in commonplaces and shop-worn figurations because they customarily owe their development to the so-called Greek or church modes, with their well-known progressions and harmonic sequences, which are heard to the point of boredom, so that one fugue of this old cut is as similar to the other as one egg to another. One cannot say that about this fugue, or about any by Beethoven, and therefore criticism must be cautious. The opinion of an individual about the aesthetic content of this work cannot be given much consideration here, for everything new always astounds. If the reviewer may confess his opinion candidly, after playing it through most diligently he cannot call this fugue beautiful, despite the fact that it is artfully worked out and highly original. Perhaps he will like it better after knowing it for years. It is different with the fugue in the A-flat major sonata, Op. 110.³ This one is also original and artistically worked out, but at the same time sung so sweetly and naturally in every voice that one carries it with one always. This is a very special thing with fugue compositions. Beautiful fugues—by which we understand those that 1) are thoroughly original, with no commonplaces heard to the point of boredom, 2) with all outward, technical artistry, nevertheless 3) have beautiful, natural melody in all voices and are true to an emotion once grasped, and for just that reason also 4) make clear and establish the necessity of their form, which in itself is somewhat compulsory—thus belong among the white sparrows in *arte musices*. The fugal form unfolded magnificently for Händel, and his fugal works in the eternally beautiful *Messiah* fill the connoisseur and nonconnoisseur with the deepest admiration. A fugue like this present one, however, will scarcely be able to please everyone, neither the connoisseur nor, even less, the nonconnoisseur. First, it does not sound good, and second, it awakes no definite emotion. The theme is too merry for such a serious working out, and for that reason also contrasts too harshly with the two previous movements. How much would we rather have heard another movement in place of this fugue: a Beethoven finale! It is thus to be wished that Beethoven not take up the fugue so deliberately, for his great genius is certainly exalted over every form. Everyone would have believed that he can produce fugues, even if he had never written one, for to produce a finale like that in the *Sinfonia eroica* in E-flat is an entirely different work of art and masterpiece than a fugue. Incidentally, to speak bluntly, the double fugue in the *Requiem*, “*Kyrie eleison*,”

³A footnote in the original review reads: “Ztg. No. 10, p. 87.” See the review of Op. 110 in *BamZ*, no. 110.2.

awakens an emotion that is just as untrue as it is unlovely.⁴ Such a theme, with such an intricate secondary subject, chanted firmly and powerfully in an Allegro, is no Kyrie eleison, and would be better suited to a “confutatis.”⁵

The reviewer, and certainly everyone who, with unprejudiced feelings, does not adhere to great names, greatly regrets that the immortal Mozart made such a gross blunder in this, his otherwise so magnificent and radiant work, which, in the breast of every devout listener, thoroughly obliterates the grand impression of the introduction and damages the piece so painfully yet again at the conclusion.⁶ This is not devotion, and it never will be. How differently would a restful, pleading, simple Palestrina-like chord progression with pleading figures have suited these moving, holy words.

No. 2⁷ pleased the reviewer decisively better than the first. This sonata consists of an introductory Andante, C major, which has a sweet, lovely melody for its theme. It is just as simple and moving as it is heartfelt, breathing a pleading emotion of feminine beauty. A short Allegro⁸ (A minor) in sonata form begins harshly and coarsely, with masculine anger, truly and beautifully invented, raging with great unity through to the end.

An Adagio in C major gently improvises, as though upon a lute, on the first introductory phrase, which moves in a childlike manner into a cheerful, light-hearted Allegro vivace in C major. This finale is completely worthy of the great genius. Beautifully rocking, bright discant triplets alternate in feminine tenderness with the powerful bass passages, which can be compared to masculine footsteps. Here, as in other highly imaginative works of a Beethoven, a great many beautiful emotions and ideas, which are the stamp of the genuine work of art, crowd upon the performer. Such a movement is worth more than a great many ever so artistic fugues, which do not answer to more elevated demands. The engraving is clear and beautiful, the price not stated.

⁴The reviewer is evidently referring to the *Kyrie eleison* from Mozart's Requiem, K. 626. The double fugue actually sets both the “Kyrie eleison” and “Christe eleison” texts.

⁵The “confutatis” is the section of the *Dies Irae*, often set as a self-contained piece of music, that contrasts the damnation of evildoers with the hope of the individual for salvation.

⁶Because Mozart did not live to finish the Requiem, it was completed by his pupil Franz Süssmayr, who reset the “Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison” chorus to the concluding words, “Cum sanctis tui in aeternam.”

⁷That is, No. 1 in C major.

⁸Actually Allegro vivace.

Op. 107. Ten Themes with Variations for Piano with Optional Flute or Violin Accompaniment

107.I.

“Review.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 23
(15 August 1821): col. 567–69.¹

One is already accustomed to receiving something entirely unexpected from this original spirit, who goes entirely his own way. At first glance, however, one can scarcely, on the basis of any of his works, have felt so puzzled and astonished as here, with this one. Keyboard variations, by Beethoven: we will not attempt to describe what one may probably first expect at this announcement, after this master’s earlier works of this kind, and after the course of his spirit in his works overall. Let everyone develop this according to his own point of view. Whatever this leads him to expect, however: what he finds here, particularly on first paging through it, is certainly not included. For what appears to him here? Upon the ten small, quite strange themes, a succession of variations, which nearly all look like those that one sets before students who have only just mastered elementary exercises: variations for the most part in only two voices, nearly always with the most customary exterior cut. Excursions, alternation of forms, and so forth are nearly absent; nowhere is there harmonic fullness, or anything remotely virtuosic in the figurations and passagework. Here and there are even variations that are simpler than the theme itself, progressing with a single voice in octaves or reduced to bare chords, and so forth. With such a great artist, does this not amount to playing games, or even playing with the public?

Let one now consider the thing more closely, however. Play through the great abundance of small pieces, only very carefully and precisely. Do not be disturbed if this music, particularly at first, refuses to taste right—indeed, at times, even to sound right. And what will one find? Certainly still just what we have specified, but with what spirit, with what sensibility,

¹These variations, along with the six sets of variations of Op. 105, were written in 1818–1819. The first edition of Op. 105, which also included parts of Op. 107, was issued by Preston in London and Thomson in Edinburgh in May 1819. The first complete edition, on which this review is based, was published by Simrock in Bonn in August/September 1820. These works, based on national melodies, had originally been requested by Thomson in connection with the folksong arrangements Beethoven had been writing for that publisher (see Op. 108, and cf. the reviewer’s own note, below). Thomson had specifically asked that they be “in an agreeable style, and not too difficult” (Thayer-Forbes, 716).

to what purpose it is written! Above all, one finds such an abundant sum of inventions, all new, all individual, inventions that are thus like the clever first sketches of a master, not in the least dressed up with decoration or even with coloration, not in the least set off by that which technique and experience have to teach about artistic effect, but rather set up so the thing is merely expressed in its essential nature, and simple to the point of bareness, at times even to the point of dryness. Thus, trustingly and without consideration, it is given over to those who have the outward and inward sensibility for something of this kind, at the same time, however, having the ability and delight in thinking, perseverance in seeking where something will not show itself very well on its own, and, even after such a process, the good nature to indicate quietly, without blame or praise, just what pleases them, with the assumption that this could depend just as much on them as on the artist.

That is how we dealt with it, at least, and this is what we found on this path. (We also found much that did not please us at all, particularly in the first numbers.) In confessing this candidly here, we have at the same time described the strange work itself as far as may be necessary in order to indicate the class of artists and amateurs for whom it chiefly appears to be intended, to prevent misunderstandings and misinterpretations, and to secure the right kind of access to it. And that may be all that is incumbent upon us here. Let two superfluous things still be touched on briefly, however.

First. Amateurs, who are still entirely unaccustomed to dealing with more recent pieces of music, as we have stated, and who still want to assimilate these works of the master, will do well if they begin with the numbers that at the same time offer the most to the emotions and do not completely depart from the current manner of writing variations. These are the numbers: book 2, no. 3, on a cheerful Russian theme; book 3, no. 6, on a gentle Scottish theme; book 4, no. 7, on a (well-known) melancholic Russian theme; and book 5, no. 9, on a pleasant Scottish theme. These are thus the ones that we hold to be the most beautiful overall.²

Second. It cannot fail to be the case, as this work particularly indicates, that Beethoven possesses, among his papers, a great many sketches, studies, and preliminary efforts, perhaps from his earlier years, that he has for the most part given up on working out, and is no longer interested in. We believe, then, that we are requesting, not just for ourselves, but also in the name of many respectable friends of music, that just as clever painters tend to offer experts similar sketches and things of this kind, which are easily erased, he too should not let these be lost, but should gradually make them known. We hardly need to add that, as is also the case in painting, much joy is secured for the connoisseur and the thoughtful amateur through communications of this kind, if they truly come from so preeminent a master. They are also a salutary influence on young artists, since they can enrich their imagination through them, learning to reflect and to direct their thoughts to what is most essential and necessary. Due to the nature of youth, the susceptibility of the senses, and the urge to please, they are otherwise

²The publication was originally divided into five “livres,” each containing two variations. The individual variations, however, were numbered successively.

rarely inclined to do this, and this would be all the more useful an influence for them. May the admirable master thus not let our request be in vain!³

The accompanying part for flute or violin is called optional on the title page, but it is not always easy to do without, and in several passages it is almost necessary.⁴

³This is probably the earliest published reference to Beethoven's sketches, although it is not clear whether the author knows of their existence and extent or is merely speculating.

⁴A footnote in the original text reads: "These variations were originally written at the invitation of a friend of music in Edinburgh and also first appeared in print there."

Op. 108. Twenty-Five Scottish Songs

108.1.

“Music. Overview of New Publications. L. in October 1822.”

Journal für Literatur, Kunst, Luxus und Mode 37

(October 1822): 606–8.¹

The first two volumes each contain eight, the third contains nine songs. They are naive, sentimental, dedicated to love, to wine, and to romantic fantasies and emotions, and at times have something of a folksy quality. The original is quite faithfully and often happily replicated in the German; only occasionally does one encounter harsh or unprosodic passages, which also damage the declamation in the composition. B. probably wrote his music originally to the English text, and the German has not always been happily underlaid, as, for example, in no. 1, where music is accented in a way that contradicts our pronunciation, but later, at the passage “love, wine, music must be true, genuine, like” is accented correctly.² In these variously beautiful and interesting songs, the distinctive construction of the simple and characteristic melodies, the progression of the harmonies, and the predominantly simple, always appropriate nature of the accompaniment, reveal the original master, who also can allow many idiosyncrasies and knows how to compensate for many errors of declamation (for

¹The project of arranging traditional Scottish songs for the purpose of their preservation and dissemination, which produced Beethoven’s Op. 108, along with a large number of his songs without opus numbers, was initiated by George Thomson (1757–1851) of Edinburgh, who commissioned similar work from several other important composers, including Haydn, Ignaz Pleyel (1757–1831), and Leopold Koželuch (1747–1818). Thomson’s correspondence with Beethoven had begun as early as 1803. The first edition of Op. 108, written from 1810 to 1818, was published by Preston in London in June 1818, appearing together with works by Haydn and by Henry R. Bishop (1786–1855), remembered today as the composer of “Home, Sweet Home.” The original text was in English and consisted of verses written to the traditional melodies by a variety of poets, including Robert Burns, Walter Scott, and Lord Byron. Beethoven, however, simply set the melodies without reference to the texts, with which he was not familiar; this fact, of which early reviewers were evidently unaware, should be borne in mind when one is considering this and other writers’ comments on the appropriateness of many of the musical settings to the texts. The first German edition, which was the subject of this review and of 108.2–108.7, was issued by Schlesinger in Berlin in July 1822, with texts in both German and English.

²The first song is titled “Music, love and wine” in English and “Musik, Liebe und Wein” in German. The reviewer misquotes the text that concludes the chorus, which reads “Liebe, Wein, Musik muss sein, wahr, ächt, rein!” (Love, wine, music must be, true, genuine, pure!) In German the word “Musik,” unlike its English cognate “music,” is pronounced with the accent on the second syllable, a fact the author of the German text of this song largely ignores.

example, in no. 3 and no. 5 of volume 1)³ by means of uncommon beauties. It would be hard to characterize these songs, or to single out individual ones above the others. I note among others the very soulful eighth song in the first volume: The lovely lass of Inverness, the beautiful duet in E-flat major, in which the flowery time of year is celebrated in song, at the beginning of the second volume.⁴ The second song, Sympathy,⁵ also has its unique beauties. No. 5, a drinking song, in 9/8 time,⁶ is interesting, although the declamation is not successful. The eighth is of the joking variety.⁷ — The third volume has its own unique value. No. 1, “O Mary, at thy window be,” for example, is so outstandingly lovely and naive; no. 3, “O swiftly glides the bonny boat,”⁸ and no. 4, “When will you come again,”⁹ are no less successful. No. 5, “By William late offended,”¹⁰ in an old-fashioned warlike manner; no. 6, “The Highland watch” (march tempo, in G minor with choir); The shepherd’s song, no. 7, charming and tender; and the ninth, “Sally in our alley,” has a touch of the comical.¹¹ The supplemental violin and violoncello accompaniment must no doubt particularly enliven the whole.¹²

³“Oh! sweet were the hours” and “The maid of Isla.” These are the titles that originally appeared in English. The German versions were titled “O köstliche Zeit” and “Das Islamägdlein.”

⁴The duet is “Behold my love how green the groves.” The German titles are “Die holde Maid von Inverness” and “Schau her, mein lieb, der Wälder Grün.”

⁵“Sympathie” in German.

⁶“Come fill, fill my good fellow.” (“Trinklied” in German.)

⁷“Could this ill world have been contriv’d.” (“Wenn doch die arge böse Welt” in German.)

⁸Here and elsewhere, the titles of the songs are given as they originally appeared in English. The German titles are “Mariechen, komm an’s Fensterlein” and “Wie gleitet schnell das leichte Boot.”

⁹The song is actually titled “Faithfu’ Johnie” (“Der treue Johnie” in German).

¹⁰The song is actually titled “Jeanie’s distress” (“Jeanie’s Trübsal” in German).

¹¹The German titles of these songs are “Die Hochlands-Wache” and “Das Bäfschen in unserm Strässchen.” The shepherd’s song is titled “Des Schäfers Lied” in German.

¹²In the first edition, parts for violin and cello were printed separately; their performance is often considered optional, even though they are designated as “obligat” on the title page.

108.2.

“Musical Review.”

Zeitung für Theater, Musik und bildende Künste, Beilage zum Freymüthigen 2
(2 November 1822): 144 and 148.

With the three volumes of Scottish songs with English and German texts for one singing voice with three-voice choir, accompanied by pianoforte with violin and violoncello, published by the music firm of A. M. Schlesinger, the ingenious L. van Beethoven has made a precious gift to the numerous admirers and friends of his original muse, which is all the more priceless since we possess only a few song compositions by this magnificent national tone poet, full of true romantic spirit. The songs that are before us here were originally composed to English texts, and certainly owe a great part of their strange rhythms and modulations to considerations of Scottish nationality, whose declamatory expression often emerges in a completely characteristic way from the underlaid German translation. But it is exactly this unexpected unfamiliarity that lends these truly newly discovered melodies (which remind us of Joseph Haydn’s splendid Scottish songs) the charm of surprise.¹ These songs were worthy of being dedicated to the prince, who is himself as rich in imagination and inventiveness as he is a refined connoisseur and tasteful judge of art, a true Maecenas for worthy artists both domestic and foreign, and at the same time himself both a creative and performing artistic dilettante of rare purity. We mean his highness, the most venerable Prince Radzivil.² It is, on the whole, easy for the singer to perform these songs by Beethoven in accordance with their character.

The first volume contains: 1) “Music, love, and wine,”³ full of cheerful joviality. 2) “Sunset,” breathing gentle emotion. 3) “Oh! sweet were the hours,” a truly precious song concluding with the happy request: “Wine! Wine! Wine!” etc. 4) “The Maid of Isla,” with an original conclusion. 5) “The sweetest lad was Jamie.” 6) “Dim, dim is my eye,” full of deep feeling. 7) “Bonnie

¹See 108.1, n. 1. The reader is reminded that neither Beethoven nor Haydn actually set English texts; they simply arranged the melodies, for which texts were supplied by poets unfamiliar with the arrangements.

²The translated texts retain the orthography of the originals. The Schlesinger edition was dedicated to Prince Anton Radziwill on the title page, where his name is also spelled “Radzivil.”

³The titles of the songs are given as they originally appeared in English. In the Schlesinger edition, this song was titled “Musik, Liebe und Wein.” The remaining songs cited in this paragraph were titled “Der Abend,” “O köstliche Zeit,” “Das Isla Mägdlein,” “Der schönste Bub’ war Henny,” “Trüb, trüb ist mein Auge,” “Frische Bursche, Hochlands-Bursche,” and “Die holde Maid von Inverness.”

laddie, highland laddie,” a very merry, genuinely nationalistic song of the Scottish highlands. 8) “The lovely lass of Inverness,” full of deep melancholy.

Accompaniment by the pianoforte alone is for the most part sufficient, but the additional nuances of the violin and cello have a completely characteristic effect, and the little choir as well is not easily dispensable, if the intended effect is to be completely brought out.

Engraving and paper are superior. The price of the first volume: Two Thalers.

Next a few things about the content of the two following volumes.

The *second* volume of Beethoven’s Scottish Songs, Op. 108, opens with a lovely duet.⁴ This is followed by: “Sympathy” for one voice, full of expression and characteristic rhythm. No. 3, “Oh! Thou art the lad” and No. 4, “Oh, had my fate,” remain entirely in the spirit of the poems.⁵ No. 5, the genuine highland drinking song (in G minor, 9/8 time) with choir,⁶ stands out as most original in modulation and character. Nos. 6 and 7 are songs full of feeling.⁷ No. 8 shows the humor of the original tone-poet.⁸

As a further characteristic of these songs, we note the interesting (at times rather long) opening and concluding ritornellos, in which the violin and violoncello are often conspicuous.

The third volume begins with the naïve “O Mary, at thy window be.” In no. 2, “Enchantress, farewell,” the correct declamation could not always be incorporated sufficiently into the translation. No. 3, the fishing song “O swiftly glides the bonny boat,” is a very dear, genial song. The accompaniment strikingly paints the movement of the boat on the water. The entry of a second singing voice and then of the choir is uncommonly effective and gives the idyll an almost dramatic bearing, since it represents the participating characters and the scene. No. 4, “Faithfu’ Johnie,” expresses artlessly, simply, and genuinely the feelings of true love. A side-piece to it is no. 5, “Jeanie’s distress.” No. 6, “The highland watch,” with choir, expresses completely the bold, warlike spirit of the Scottish mountaineers in a genuinely Nordic folk melody. No. 7, “The shepherd’s song,” lets the gentle shepherd’s flute resound in a pastoral melody. No. 8, “Again, my lyre,” breathes melancholy and deep feeling. No. 9, “Sally in our alley,” is full of roguish humor and contrasts all the more with the previous song.⁹

Thus concludes the entire abundant collection of songs, which, particularly on account of the original text, deserves to find numerous admirers in Great Britain as well. It is entirely appropriate that the additional verses are printed on separate pages; it would have been better, however (but, admittedly, too spacious and expensive) to set the melody above the words as well.

The price of the second book is one Thaler, twenty Groschen; that of the third is two Thalers, eight Groschen.

⁴“Behold my love how green the groves.”

⁵The German titles of these songs were “Sympathie,” “O Du nur bist mein Herzensbub, Willy,” and “O hätte doch dies goldne Pfand.”

⁶“Come fill, fill, my good fellow.”

⁷“O, how can I be blithe” and “O cruel was my father.”

⁸“Could this ill world have been contriv’d.”

⁹The German titles of the songs cited in this paragraph were “Mariechen, komm’ ans Fensterlein,” “O Zaub’rinn, leb wohl,” “Wie gleitet schnell das leichte Boot,” “Der treue Johnie,” “Jeanie’s Trübsal,” “Die Hochlands Wache,” “Des Schäfers Lied,” “Noch einmal wecken Thränen,” and “Das Bäschen in unsrem Sträßchen.”

108.3.

v.d. O . . . r.

“Review.”

Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 2
(5 May 1824): 159–62.

(Mentioned: Symphony no. 6, Op. 68)

The immortal master presents his admirers with twenty-five Scottish folk songs, which will shine eternally in his diadem for as long as the song retains its modest position with feeling souls, as pearls that, though certainly small, are nevertheless genuine. We have long been accustomed to Beethoven not condescending to that which could win the pleasant nod (to speak with Hoffmann) of the musical masses, showing their sensibility for art; he oppresses them (particularly in his larger works).¹ Here, as well, there are no commonplaces; no turn of melody, however pleasant, is heard to the point of boredom; there are none of the popular cadential formulas that are certainly now fashionable. Furthermore, there is no overdone, sick languishing, no deliberate painting, no untimely joking: such defects as one now so often finds in songs by well-known composers. No! These songs are created purely from the eternal fountain of his original genius; here there is nature and only that pure joy that moves and gladdens the human heart out of love for it. In regard to that noble simplicity that is appropriate to the song, they are worthy of being grouped together with the songs of Schulz, Reichardt, and Zelter,² and draw every unprejudiced, nature-loving soul who is indifferent to

¹This statement echoes the sentiments expressed by E. T. A. Hoffmann in his reviews of the 5th symphony and the piano trios, Op. 70, both contained in the second volume of this series. In both reviews, Hoffmann argued that Beethoven's instrumental music is largely uncongenial to the masses, and that a special Romantic sensibility is necessary to understand it fully. He nevertheless found the piano trios more accessible in this regard than the symphony. As has been noted earlier, Hoffmann's ideas gained wide currency and were widely cited by other reviewers.

²Johann Peter Abraham Schulz (1747–1800) was a German song composer and theoretician. He is appropriately grouped together here with Johann Friedrich Reichardt (1752–1814) and Carl Friedrich Zelter (1758–1832). All three are representatives of the so-called Berlin lieder school, which emphasized simple, often strophic settings with the quality of folk music. It is well known that this school was promoted by Goethe, who was much less sympathetic to the seemingly more advanced style of lied composition pioneered by Schubert. Beethoven, however, seems to have grown more sympathetic to Goethe's *Volksweise* ideal in his later years, experimenting with modified strophic settings in works like *An die ferne Geliebte*, Op. 98. See Joseph Kerman, “An die ferne Geliebte,” in *Beethoven Studies*, ed. Alan Tyson, 123–57 (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974). From this perspective, the extreme simplicity of these late settings could be seen as a culmination of this interest.

fashion irresistibly toward them. Song must be thus. Goethe has taught us this as well. The more one sings these songs, the deeper do they sink down into the soul. Without wanting to, one carries them with one always when walking. One may be looking at the blue sky, rejoicing at people's good fortune, or letting one's moist glance sink upon graves; everywhere the recollection of these songs excites joy or sympathy.

The poems are for the most part extremely beautiful and characteristic, and deserve particular appreciation in regard to their poetic charm and simple diction. They were originally composed by Beethoven in English (as can already be concluded from the title), on account of which the declamation of two songs does not fit the melody as well in the German translation (which, by the way, is splendid and faithful throughout). Specifically, right away in No. 1 in the first volume, in which the word *Musik* is set throughout as though in English.³ No. 2 in the third volume, however: "Enchantress, fare well"⁴ is particularly disturbing sung in German. Most of the others, however, can be performed well in German.

We group them together into:

- 1) tenderly mournful songs,
- 2) soldier's songs,
- 3) drinking songs, and
- 4) cheerful love songs.⁵

1) Among the tenderly mournful ones the reviewer particularly liked "Faithful Johnie" (No. 4, vol. 3). How heartfelt it is, how true! The conclusion:



FIGURE 12. *Op. 108, no. 20, mm. 15–24, underlaid with the German text of the fifth and final verse*

³On the pronunciation of the German text, see 108.1, n. 2.

⁴Here and elsewhere, the author gives titles and quotes from the songs as they appear in the German version. The original English titles and texts have been substituted in the translation.

⁵The German original uses the term *Minne-Lieder*, the term for newly rediscovered courtly love poetry of medieval Germany.

is extremely moving and genuine! The postlude is a farewell greeting from the far distance, which the faithful Johnnie waves to his passionately beloved with tears in his beautiful, sincere eyes.

“Oh! Sweet were the hours” (No. 3, vol. 1) also truly comes from the singer’s heart. An *Andante con moto*⁶ begins a sweet, rustic, and interesting melody in the discant of the pianoforte (it recalls the Pastoral symphony, perhaps deliberately?). The string instruments gently continue this voice with the words “Oh! sweet were the hours, when in mirth’s frolic throng I led up the revels with dance and with song; when brisk from the fountain, and bright as the day, my spirits o’erflow’d, and ran sparkling away!” The bass of the pianoforte accompanies the melody with a triplet figure that breathes rusticity, with which the cello entwines in a brotherly manner in contrary motion. The figure rests on a constant F in the bass. An unnameable sadness lies in the melody. It says: “the gracious past is over!” The oppressed heart seeks relief, and breaks out into the words “Wine! Wine! Wine! Come bring me wine to cheer me, friend of my heart! Come pledge me high! Wine! Till the dreams of youth again are near me, why must they leave me (here a melting *ritardando*) tell me, why?” with an *Allegro ben marcato*, set off by a *pizzicato* in the cello. The theme of the *Allegro* awakens again as a postlude after the *ritardando*, but falls back into that precious time (*Andante*) and concludes with the first two measures of the *Allegro*. Beethoven is a great psychologist and knows how to touch with infinite tenderness upon the innermost strings of the soul!

No. 2, vol. 1, “Sunset,” is an evening at rest, with a quiet accompaniment, which solemnly lowers the romantic Tweed into Scotland’s solemn valleys. The singing voice plaintively breathes out his sorrow.

No. 5, vol. 1, “The sweetest lad was Jamie,” is moving and genuine. So is No. 8, vol. 1, “The lovely lass of Inverness.” No. 8, vol. 3, “Again, my lyre,” is a magnificent poem!

In No. 2, vol. 2,⁷ the words “Why, Julia, say, that pensive mien? I heard the bosom sighing” are most sensibly accompanied by one steady and solemn cello note, from which a second note in the violin detaches itself, to the words: “how quickly on thy cheek is seen the blush, as quickly flying!” Both of these notes make a very beautiful effect. The bright pianoforte sounds in the postlude sound like “a silent tear I know not why, in trem’lous lustre gleaming.” —

No. 7, vol. 2, “O cruel was my father,” made a deep and lasting impression on the reviewer.



FIGURE 13. *Op. 108, no. 15, mm. 5–6. The key signature of one flat is missing, and the last note should be a C.*

⁶Actually *Andante con moto e semplice*.

⁷“Sympathy.”

This melody returns continually; it is truly flexible! One sees the poor castaway, exhausted by it, sink to her knees. The passage: “Hush, hush my lovely Baby and warm thee in my breast!” is gruesome and sounds (unisono) like madness. The conclusion “from this bitter piercing air” awakens the deepest compassion.

2) Soldier’s songs.

No. 7, vol. 1⁸ is of an entirely different type. In lively, nationalistic, and march-like rhythms, the fresh and bold highland boys, with their silver moon, shining waistband, and blue hat, go home from Waterloo. The old Donald Bane, who, in the view of his young fellow Scots, himself becomes young again, receives them with the most genial tune, which has angular and somewhat barbaric intervals, on account of which our polished ear at first also bristles at it. If one has first made oneself familiar with these powerful intervals, though, one feels all the joy of the old, genial Donald Bane. The postlude inquires very characteristically, and its last measures answer: “Waterloo! Waterloo!” —

Even more characteristic is the march-like No. 6 in vol. 3: “The highland watch.” The melody is in fact an old, splendid bardic tune, bold and firm like the crags of Scotland. The little choir is very effective. One sees the Scots moving proudly over their bold heights and hears them singing from the fullness of their hearts. The postlude fades out fancifully enough.

3) Drinking songs.

No. 1, vol. 1, “Music, love and wine,” with choir, mentioned above as needing to be sung in English, is fresh and has an agreeable melody, which is brought in contrapuntally in the second voice of the choir.

No. 5 in vol. 2, “Come fill, fill, my good fellow” (in G minor), pleased the reviewer extremely well. One hears that the drinking party is no longer on the first bottle; already the “heart is flowing” somewhat warmly, and the “fancy brightly gleaming”⁹ in both of the string instruments in the most lively manner. The rapid modulation from G minor to F major gives the song particular life.

4) Cheerful love songs.

Among these No. 3, vol. 2, “Oh! thou art the lad of my heart, Willy” is particularly outstanding. A lovely little song! full of “love, and life, and glee.”¹⁰—Who does not see the

⁸“Bonnie laddie, highland laddie.”

⁹This is a paraphrase of the text, as was the original German—“Funken des Witzes sprühen.” The two texts originally read “Wenn heiss die Köpfe glühen und Witzesfunken sprühen” and “When warm the heart is flowing and bright the fancy glowing.”

¹⁰This is again a paraphrase of the English text, which originally read “Willy, there’s love and life and glee.” The German text, however, was “voll Liebe und Leben und Lust!” both here and in the Schlesinger edition.

gracious virgin, lucky in love, standing before her beloved in the bloom of youth? At the conclusion she says thoughtfully to the lark in the blue sky:

“Come down to thy nest, and tell thy mate,
but tell thy mate alone,
thou hast seen a maid, whose heart of love,
is merry and light as thine own.”

No. 1 in vol. 2 is an idyllic, gentle little duet, “Behold my love how green the groves,” whose conclusion particularly pleased the reviewer: “for nature smiles as sweet I ween to Shepherds as to Kings.”

No. 8, vol. 2¹¹ is also nice, particularly the “crony” and “bonnie.” Likewise “O Mary, at thy window be.” —No. 3, vol. 3,¹² the fisher’s song, paints the waves of Largo Bay in a lovely manner, and the fermata on the words “upon the summer sea” is truly poetic. No. 5, vol. 3¹³ pleased the reviewer less.

No. 7, vol. 3, however, “The shepherd’s song,” is like an idyll by Geßner,¹⁴ as clear and bright as the ether. This song is very much set off by the string instruments. The conclusion is particularly noteworthy:



FIGURE 14. *Op. 108, no. 23, mm. 14–15, underlaid with the German text of the 1st verse*

It sounds so dissatisfied.

Even in the very last notes, the



FIGURE 15. *Op. 108, no. 25, m. 8. The key signature of two sharps is missing.*

¹¹“Could this ill world have been contriv’d.”

¹²“O Swiftly Glides the Bonny Boar.”

¹³“Jeanie’s distress”

¹⁴Solomon Geßner (1730–1788) was an idyllic poet associated with Swiss poets of the eighteenth century and with the Rococo movement.

in our



FIGURE 16. *Op. 108, no. 25, m. 12. The key signature of two sharps is missing, and the second note should be a D.*

is very pretty.¹⁵

The reviewer would never finish if he wanted to go through all the new, previously unheard beauties of these songs. The above sketch may suffice to recommend these three volumes most urgently to the friends of nature and of beautiful songs. He would think that they must have been very welcome in England, since they are really composed to the English text and all more or less bear a Scottish character. However, the general interest that is being shown even in Germany in recent times in Scottish customs and characteristics, brought about particularly by Walter Scott's novels,¹⁶ will already secure a general dissemination for these songs.

The engraving is clear and beautiful. Several printing errors, which, however, one would hardly take for special characteristics (as one sometimes does in Jean Paul), can be easily corrected, and the price for all three volumes (thirty pages), six Thalers, four Groschen, is appropriate. Nevertheless, as a practical edition, it could have been even cheaper if the verses for the compositions had not been printed separately. As soon as verses are not placed directly under the notes, they can absolutely never serve their purpose. For one must learn either the music or the words by heart, which can be inconvenient and demands time. The double text (English and German) certainly makes proper underlay difficult for these songs, but once several more pages were allowed for printing, it would have been better to fill them up with notes, as tends to happen with Maria von Weber's songs.

¹⁵"Bäschen" (little female cousin) in our "Sträschchen" (little street) is a reasonable German translation of the original title of the final song, "Sally in our Alley."

¹⁶Walter Scott (1771–1832) was a Scottish poet and author of *Ivanhoe* (1820) and *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819), which was the basis of Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*. He wrote the texts of "Sunset," "The maid of Isla," and "Enchantress, fare well," Nos. 2, 4, and 18 in this collection.

108.4.

“Review.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 27
(28 December 1825): col. 866–68.

Mr. v. B. or the publisher of this collection should have prefaced it with some information about its origin; as it is, one certainly does not know whether Scottish refers merely to the poems, as everyone means when announcing German songs, Italian canzonettas, and suchlike, and whether the word composed is to be understood in reference to the melodies or merely to the accompaniment and harmonic working out.¹ Neither gentleman wanted to go to this trouble, however, and so everyone must come to the understanding that seems to him most likely. To us, it is most likely that these Scottish songs are like those by Jos. Haydn that were once published in London, in English, in two thick folio volumes, and in Leipzig, more selectively, in English and German, in two small volumes. That is to say, the English publisher took down the songs as they were sung by the people and turned them over to Haydn, so that he could join them, as far as possible without alteration, with our current harmonic practice, and work this out as an obbligato accompaniment. (This took place in Haydn’s last years, and Neukomm,² who lived with him at that time, is thus supposed to have completed most of them). If we are mistaken, and the word composed is truly to be taken literally, then our mistake is not our fault, and it is to be hoped that Mr. v. B. will be all the less offended by it,

¹Like the two previous reviews, this one was based on the Schlesinger edition of July 1822, whose title page reads: “SCHOTTISCHE LIEDER / mit englischem und deutschem Texte. / Für eine Singstimme und kleines Chor / mit Begleitung / des Piano-Forte, Violine und Violoncelle obligat / componirt von / LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN.”

²By this time, hundreds of similar arrangements of British folk songs, most of them also accompanied by violin, cello, and piano, had been published in Haydn’s name. The earliest of these was issued by Napier in London in 1792–1795, and further editions by Thomson began to appear in 1802. It is hard to know which of these editions is referred to here.

Sigismund Neukomm (1778–1858) was an Austrian composer who studied from 1797 to 1804 with Haydn, to whom he was related on his mother’s side. According to *New Grove* 13, 121, his arrangements of works by Haydn were for the most part done with the composer’s blessing; Haydn sanctioned arrangements by Neukomm of *The Creation*, *Il ritorno di Tobia*, *The Seasons*, and *Arianna a Naxos*. He undertook for Haydn the arrangement of forty-three Scottish songs and transcribed Haydn symphonies and oratorios for harmonium and piano.

since it is to his credit; for if he has merely invented these melodies himself in the Scottish manner, he has succeeded admirably and has fooled us completely.

The first book contains eight songs, the second eight also, the third nine. With this considerable number, there is not space to go through them individually, and we must be satisfied with a general report. As regards the melodies, although they are related to one another, like the genuine folk songs of every nation that has them, they are nevertheless a true treasure trove, perhaps not only for composers of variations, potpourris, and suchlike, but for everyone who is capable of making sense out of everything where sense is to be found, even if it is expressed in turns of phrase that deviate so strongly from those that are now customary among us. The last is not so much the case, however, that an unusually manifold taste is necessary for it. The accompaniment, or, as one must rather say here, the harmonic working out, is, like everything that this master writes, full of proofs of his completely individual, thoughtful, deeply feeling nature, which prefers to seize upon the most singular ways of expressing itself. In particular, what he was able to build up in the preludes and postludes from anything the melody had to offer, in order to transport the singer or the listener to the heart of the matter in accordance with its form and expression, or to keep him there more firmly, is often truly admirable. In this regard B. has done far more than Haydn, just as his manner of treatment is far more distinctive, worked out, full of character, and hence far more attractive. What has been said about the melodies can be said about the poems as well. The German translation was done skillfully and diligently, without aiming at literal accuracy. It is too bad, however, that one sometimes encounters passages that lead one to conclude that the translator had only the original text before him, and not the music, or that he was not a musician, at least not a singer. Such a passage occurs right at the beginning of the first (splendid) song, as anyone can see who understands accentuation in music:



FIGURE 17. *Op. 108, no. 1, m. 10, underlaid with the text of the 1st verse*

which, by the way, conveys a different concept than the simple “O let me Musik hear.”³ The exterior of the work is not distinguished. At the bottom of the title page it says that these songs can also “be executed” by a singing voice with pianoforte “alone.”⁴ They can: true enough!

³The German text, “Es schalle die Musik,” means “let music resound.”

⁴The words “allein executirt” stand together in quotes in the original, but they had to be separated to make a grammatically correct translation.

108.5.

“Reviews. Songs.”

Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 4
(28 February 1827): 65.¹

Probably no genre of composition (with the exception of the dance) is so frequently mass-produced as the song. If, in their songs and in keeping with their times, Schulz and, particularly, Reichard strove to attain the simplicity of folk song, preeminently through the plainest melody and a literal and simple declamation, this striving later often degenerated, particularly with Reichard, into an effort to force difficult verse types and constructions into musical form. With Zelter,² it often was allied (particularly in his compositions for bass voice) with the purpose of giving a rich voice opportunity for development. This is true of the great majority of recent Italian song melodies, which are certainly popular, but do not pay any particular attention to the text, indulging in tireless repetition of the same pleasant turn of phrase so that one could probably find hundreds of songs whose essential content, regardless of the text, is based on this mannerism:

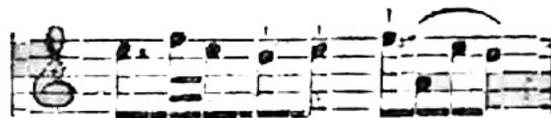


FIGURE 18

like others, whose content is characterized by this or that other turn of phrase. If one considers the uniformity of most song poems, and the narrow limits of song composition, the frequent overlapping of song composers is admittedly adequately explained, but it is all the more to be wished that one could be freed on all sides from the eternally wearying monotony.

¹This is an excerpt from an article on recent contributions to the song (*Lied*) genre. Though the German word *Lied* has come to mean an art song for voice and piano, it simply means “song.”

²Re. Schulz, Reichardt, and Zelter, see 108.3, n2.

In recent times capable men have certainly worked capably toward this, and this precedent allows susceptible friends of art to foresee progress in the genre, an awakening of younger artists and the expenditure of new breath. *Beethoven* must also be named foremost here, and the attention of artists and friends of art cannot be drawn frequently enough to his collection—

Scottish songs, with accompaniment
by *Beethoven*.
Schlesinger in *Berlin*.

a collection that is without peer in richness, depth and sincerity, variety of characters, and charm, and offers the most abundant sources for the student artist, as well as for the elevated enjoyment of the capable friend of art.

108.6.

Adolf Bernhard Marx.

“Review.”

Caecilia 7

(September 1827): 107.

There are works toward which the public needs to grow to maturity. This has often been experienced, but probably no one has been able to maintain that a *collection of songs* stands so high previous to the above named.

The majority of songs, like that of lyrical poems, is a play with the expression of emotions; one distinguishes those over which blows the breath of genuine feeling, in which at least one side rings true. A collection presents itself here that, in extent and variety of content, already surpasses most of its kind, while also taking hold of each of the alluring circumstances to be found in its range with sincerity and depth, filling them with such a noble charm of truthfulness, remaining so pure of every hidden decoration, so free of every disfiguration with empty convention, that among more recent works no richer treasure trove for study and animated enjoyment can be pointed out to disciples and friends of song and of song composition.

Let them be most urgently recommended to them for their best advantage, without any encroaching discussion.

108.7.

“Brief Notices.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 30
(23 April 1828): col. 283–84.¹

A completely characteristic spirit rings throughout these songs by the ingenious composer; one will find nothing conventional, and often many will find something deeply attractive, for all the strangeness of the working out. Whoever wishes to become acquainted with Beethoven's inner essence precisely and from all sides must not overlook these songs. They too testify to the master's ability to create his own world within himself and to bring it to life, free from convention, even from all attachment to any time or to one people. His ideal creativity, which is often completely lacking in practical consideration, must admittedly appear often enough to be sufficiently strange, at times indeed running counter to all regulation, as far as it restricts itself to what is already given. One may not look here for song tunes that conform to the strange old melodies of the Scottish highlands; no sleeping bard is awakened here out of the ruins of the misty past.² It is Beethoven's self-sufficient spirit that wanders here over the hills of slumber into a land that he himself dreamed up, which he calls Scotland, since it is certainly Scottish texts with which his inner world of sound unites itself. The spirits in the mossy oak groves would recognize only a single one related to them, the sixth song in the first volume, due to the remaining intervallic progressions if the appoggiatura of the fourth had been omitted.³ Thus, they are completely characteristic Beethoven songs, a fitting discussion of whose greater or lesser value space does not permit us. With a man like Beethoven, this is also certainly not absolutely necessary. We may certainly leave the judging of details to the taste and insight of each individual. May these collections find many friends, as is to be expected.

¹This notice, like the full-length review in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (no. 108.4) refers to the Schlesinger edition of July 1822. There is no indication as to why it is being reviewed again.

²This is probably a reference to the early Romantic vogue of Ossian, the Scottish epic poet whose works, now long established as inauthentic, were widely considered to be the literary equal of Homer or Shakespeare.

³The song in question in “Dim, dim is my eye,” the melody of which, except for a recurring G to F-sharp appoggiatura in D major, is entirely pentatonic.

Op. 109. Piano Sonata in E Major

109.I.

“Sonata for Pianoforte by L. v. B.”

Zeitung für Theater und Musik zur Unterhaltung gebildeter, unbefangener Leser:

Eine Begleiterin des Freymüthigen 1

(1821): 184.¹

(Mentioned: Piano sonata in B-flat major, Op. 106)

This inspired keyboard composition is a new proof of the inexhaustible imagination and deep harmonic knowledge of the magnificent tone-poet, who in this classical solo permitted fewer digressive ideas and less exotic originality than in the previous grand sonata in B-flat. The principal key of this masterful piece is E major. The first movement is more like a free fantasy; however, the completely new figuration in the Vivace² and the principal idea of the soulful Adagio³ are worked out in a closely connected exchange until a Prestissimo in E minor offers the contrapuntist a broad field for his artistry. The rich and newly varied theme of the songful Andante, which is animated by a magical melodic charm, is still more intimately appealing. The first variation mostly speaks to the feelings. The imitations in the fourth one are splendidly interwoven; the fifth is characterized by strict style. In the sixth variation the skillful player can show off brilliantly, until at last the return of the simple cantabile theme once again calms the excited soul, and the most perfect musical artistry impresses the stamp of genuine mastery.

¹The sonata Op. 109 was written in 1820 and was first published by Schlesinger in Berlin in late September 1821. This review refers to the first edition.

²Actually Vivace ma non troppo.

³Actually Adagio espressivo.

109.2.

N. G.

“Reviews.”

Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 1
(4 February 1824): 37–38.¹

A great portion of Beethoven’s admirers now certainly occupy themselves with his most recent works for keyboard and voice only in utter privacy.² It cannot be denied that he is retreating ever more within himself, thus distancing himself ever more from the exterior world and from that which now occupies and interests other lovers of music. He discloses only his subjectivity, and writes continually in his inspiration, without regard for others. The only object that he embraces lovingly appears to be nature, which is eternal, as his works will be. It can be asked whether these often strange productions of his contemplative leisure are a gain for art. A truly proper one, it seems to us, for who among living composers has the courage to shake off his striving for the approval of the masses, and to write for a small circle? No one who first wishes to become known should, strictly speaking, be so advised; he may not attain his goal very well. We by no means wish hereby to advocate customary and insignificant compositions, but merely maintain that, next to the most valuable originality, a genuine accommodation is at first necessary, for example in form, from which, earlier, even Beethoven did not exempt himself. Now, to be sure, he is known to everyone as an inexhaustible genius; one becomes accustomed to studying him thoroughly, and to making the glittering metal from his excavations into one’s own. Experience teaches, however, that many unfortunately have neither the inner calling nor the patience for this, for: non cuius homini contingit, adire Corinthum.³ It is more comfortable to limit oneself to what is fashionable, to what other people find truly pretty. When, however, stars created by fireworks darken for a short time the stars of the heavens, or even make them unnoticeable, they will nevertheless vaporize, and the

¹This review, which was also based on the Schlesinger edition of 1821, is attributed by Stefan Kunze to Adolf Bernhard Marx.

²At this point, Beethoven’s recent keyboard works would have included the sonata in A, Op. 101, the “Hammerklavier” sonata, Op. 106, the “Diabelli” variations, Op. 120, and the sonatas Opp. 110 and 111, as well as Op. 109, all of which had been published by the time this review appeared. It is hard to know exactly which vocal works the author has in mind.

³Latin: “It is not allotted to everyone to go to Corinth.”

latter will calmly continue shining on their immutable paths, signaling consolation and hope to the friend of ideas. Beethoven is and remains always the same (however many time periods one may admit in his productions). It goes without saying that the current Beethoven, the man, must express other emotions than Beethoven the youth. The blossom becomes fruit, and an orange blossom will never produce a medlar.⁴ Some, if only a few, say nevertheless: Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.⁵

One can also only become acquainted with the present sonata (in E major) after an inward impulse causes one to repeat it frequently. It begins in the manner of a prelude, as one might test a harp to see if it is correctly tuned.⁶ An Adagio with a noble, grievous melody, which nevertheless finds some consolation, interrupts the opening, makes strange (nearly convulsive) twists, and leads back into the first prelude, rather as though its figuration had pleased its inventor. He leads it forward in an interesting manner and takes up the theme of the Adagio again, which, however, moves over again consolingly into the form of the prelude, and concludes with it sentimentally. The reviewer must confess that in this entire first movement he found no leading idea;⁷ it must, then, consist in the sublime singer's wanting to distract himself through playing (in this movement it is a very agreeable keyboard playing), but not completely succeeding. In the entire movement there is in fact a sense of concealment, and in spite of the lovely passages, it is somewhat dissatisfying. Now, however, the proper emotion jumps to the fore. A Prestissimo in E minor pours forth clearly and distinctly a most excited passion. With the last movement, it forms the sonata proper, and is also thrown into sonata form. It is a shame that this magnificent movement is so short! (It does not even amount to five pages.) Before one realizes, it has evaporated, and the reviewer always plays it two or three times. The last movement is an Andante (in an antique, noble style, as it were) with variations. After the bleak middle movement, the theme opens up a heaven of reconciliation, and the first variation dreams onward in undisturbed peace. The second variation remains rhapsodic and free, rich in many beauties. Variation 3 (*Allegro vivace*), powerful and bold, in double counterpoint at the octave throughout. Variation 4 treats the first two measures of the theme with a lovely rocking figure in 9/8 time (*tempo primo*). The beautiful voice leading is very delightful. Variation 5, *Allegro non troppo*, uses the first two notes of the theme in half notes for a fugue-like, strict working-out, and falls back into the simple theme, sung by the alto.⁸

⁴The medlar is a small European tree that produces hard and bitter apple-like fruit.

⁵Matthew 26:33 (RSV). These are the words with which Peter declares his loyalty to Christ after he predicts that all the disciples will be disloyal during Christ's Passion.

⁶In other words, to see whether the harp's pedals are arranged correctly for the key of E major.

⁷This concept, often designated by Marx with the term "Grundidee" (here the author uses "leitende Idee"), is a key concept in his understanding of Beethoven's larger works. As he would later use it (most notably in his biography of Beethoven, published in 1859), it refers not so much to a musical subject as to an extramusical idea that must be comprehensive enough to include all the movements of a multimediment composition. If Marx is the author of this review, this is an early instance of his preoccupation with this concept.

⁸The author is here describing the beginning of the sixth and final variation, in which the theme appears in the second voice from the top in what is initially a four-part setting. Thus the expression "sung by the alto" is meant metaphorically.

After the first four measures, the theme is decked out with abundant, brilliant and not easy figurations. The entire variation is to be regarded as a grand cadenza for the sonata (which can be called a grand sonata in every respect), in which the master documents his great facility in varying a theme. After the figurations in the bass have abated like ocean waves on the shore, the sun of the mild Andante shines once again in parting and casts a restful evening smile over the landscape.

We scarcely need to mention that this sonata will bring much joy to Beethoven's admirers, and it should not fail to be included in a collection of classic keyboard pieces.

The engraving is tasteful, clear, and correct, and the price appropriate.

109.3.

“Review.”

Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 26

(1 April 1824): col. 213–25.¹

(With Op. 110, piano sonata in A-flat major, and Op. 111, piano sonata in C minor)

It has been a little over thirty years since the magnificent phenomenon of Beethoven's genius first enchanted receptive and educated people in the world of music. This genius created a new epoch. Invention, spirit, and feeling in melody, harmony, and rhythm were fulfilled as conditions of a work of musical art in a manner new and unique to him. That opposition to this originality soon arose is just as well known as it is to be expected under such circumstances. The critical efforts, however, had only a slight and fleeting effect. The hero B. triumphed completely. Scarcely had several of his artistic creations appeared in the world than their reputation was established forever.

Today this original spirit still stands unrivaled among his contemporaries. Only very rarely along his long artistic path has he for brief moments strayed from the direction of the magnificent goal toward which he has always striven. Even he, as a human being, must be affected by being human.

One might compare such a rich artistic life to a magnificent landscape garden with splendidly laid out paths, often strangely intertwined, that circle through thickets, meadows, valleys, and rocky ravines. In such a garden, points with the most enchanting views present themselves, often in a surprising manner, that admittedly only the best-equipped eye fully enjoys. Likewise, in such a magnificent garden of musical art as the one that Mr. v. B. created, truly enchanting sections particularly stand out. Here as there, the paths sometimes turn so quickly, and often at precisely the most magical resting points, to an opposing side that, at least in the first moments, one believes oneself to be stepping backward away from the direction in which much beautiful artistic enjoyment was to be expected, of which one is now deprived. Meanwhile, there as here, if one only lets oneself be willingly and devotedly led by the creator of the artwork—for who could be a better leader than this?—one will find, to

¹This review refers to the 1821 Schlesinger edition of Op. 109 and to the editions of Opp. 110 and 111 published by Cappi and Diabelli in Vienna in 1822 and 1823, respectively.

one's joy, that not every turning point is a culmination.² —It may be granted us, before we examine the above sonatas a bit more closely, to point out a pair of such apparent culminations among the keyboard compositions of Mr. v. B, this musical Jean Paul.³ We mean: the trio, Op. 70, particularly due to its Adagio;⁴ the sonatas Op. 90 and Op. 101, between which the two sonatas Opp. 96 and 97⁵ form a kind of connection, since they deviate more and more from the previous ones than does Op. 90. If we were to cite the two sonatas for piano-forte and violoncello (Op. 102) in this regard, while Mr. v. B. might perhaps not agree with us, we can posit that as he created this work he found himself at an alarming summit from which a dangerous fall might have occurred. We, at least, as deeply as we revere Beethoven's muse, as willingly as we usually surrender ourselves to it, and, primarily with the last named work, bear in mind that Beethoven's works of art, in order to be fully grasped and enjoyed, demand the most persistent study in the most various moods—so that, as pertains to a judgment of a work by Beethoven, in particular, this writer always goes to work with the greatest mistrust of his artistic insight and makes a deliberate, committed effort to find only beautiful things in it everywhere—we have nevertheless not been able to acquire a taste for the sonatas, Op. 102. —Meanwhile, this work is perhaps a necessary middle link in the long, rich artistic chain of Beethovenian creations, and we could not have been spared it if we were to arrive where the sure hand of this great spirit has now led us. The above three keyboard sonatas incontestably have no closer relationship with any earlier Beethovenian artistic creations for this instrument than with that which we admire as Op. 101. As in that sonata, imagination and ingenuity have been particularly active here in working out the chosen melodic material, in part less striking here than there, harmonically and rhythmically, and applying to it (here and there perhaps also somewhat affectedly) the greatest mastery in technical twists and turns. These sonatas are by no means full of so-called monstrous difficulties for the player. Nevertheless, they demand many uncomfortable stretches, and especially (particularly in

²A footnote in the original review reads: "An astute head (see *Dianoilogie*, by Professor Boloselsky, London, 1791) represents the spheres of human mental ability as a number of concentric circles. —In the middle of these he places crude inertia: *vim inertiae*; next to it the lowest mental powers: memory and so forth. The broadest sphere he characterizes with: *sagacité, imagination, goût, genie, sphère d'esprit*. The unlimited space beyond this sphere he calls *espaces imaginaires*; the space between two designated spheres, *espaces d'erreurs et de folie*. —For the purpose of making such supernatural things concrete, so far as this is possible at all, while retaining the designations just cited, we would suggest instead the spiral made by an endless line. —It provides a good image of the context of all the mental powers; their restless striving for a constant broadening of their field of activity, and also makes comprehensible in a concrete manner the disappointment that all too easily befalls the one who, without surveying the entire spiral, observes only the temporary curvature of the next line and takes exactly what constitutes striving toward the most magnificent broadening for a return to the narrower sphere."

³A footnote in the original review reads: "Both proven by this designation. German geniuses may take up the association of ideas that we have brought to light here with forbearance, should they not meet with their approbation."

⁴This presumably refers to the second movement of the "Ghost" trio, Op. 70, no. 1, which features some unusual keyboard sonorities. It is actually marked *Largo assai ed espressivo*.

⁵That is, the violin sonata in G major and the "Archduke" trio. It is interesting that while Op. 70, no. 1, is described here as a trio, the "Archduke" is called a sonata, suggesting that the terminology was still in flux when this review was written.

regard to the last sonata), due to their length, unusual physical strength. Most of all, they demand deep penetration into the spirit of the whole if their delivery is to bring forth the full effect through which they are capable of enchanting educated listeners.

In accordance with the purpose of this journal, we by no means may or wish to withhold from the reader any detail about these sonatas, nor to fail to indicate, just as faithfully as unassumingly, where something perhaps strikes us as questionable, particularly harsh moments in the harmony or modulation. Only a very detailed analysis that follows the artistic creator, as it were, step-by-step seems to us to be superfluous, since Mr. v. B.'s style is familiar to all those knowledgeable about art, and the ways in which the above sonatas deviate from earlier works of this master is already indicated above, and anyway the most detailed evaluation of a work of art (with the possible exception of compositions with a text), even with an abundance of examples, for which there is not room here, can only create for the reader a very meager image of the work itself. In the fine arts, the positive alone does not suffice for the creation of a work of art. The application of the most perfect knowledge of all the muscles and parts of the body, of aerial perspective and the mixing of colors, etc., does not make a picture into a work of art, and just as little does a piece of music become one just because it contains all imaginable contrapuntal and technical rarities. Only the positive alone, though, can be talked about in positive terms. Everything else, and precisely what is most important, can only be talked over.⁶ —So just as merely reading the notes cannot grant the full enjoyment of a piece of music to even the most accomplished score reader, even if it were his own work—cannot suffice for an apt final judgment of it—so the written citation of isolated passages through music examples is not enough to win over others, to whom the work is unfamiliar. It absolutely must be heard in its entirety and astutely performed. —We are then perhaps swept away by a certain inexplicable something, so that we ignore or forgive even serious sins against the laws of music; just as, conversely, the greatest correctness and technical artistry, which on reading greatly delights us, loses practically all value when it is heard. We hope that, at this opportunity, what is said here will have been sufficiently demonstrated: that, with works of art, which first act upon our feelings through the sense of hearing—thus primarily of so-called pure, not applied, music—a thoroughness in their evaluation that penetrates to the smallest detail (which is still always aimed only at the understanding) is for the most part a wasted effort.

The first movement of the sonata Op. 109, with the caption *Vivace, ma non troppo, sempre legato*, in the key of E major, 2/4 time, has a quality that is rather touching and, at several points, soothing. It falls into two principal sections. After one and the same broken-chord figuration is extended through eight measures with predictable harmonic progressions, practically until the cadence in the dominant is reached, the diminished seventh chord on B-sharp suddenly enters in the immediately following *Adagio espressivo*, 3/4 time, and carries

⁶These two sentences contrast the verbs *sprechen*, meaning “to speak,” and *besprechen*, meaning “to discuss.” The author says that the positive aspects of a work of art can only be *gesprochen* (past participle of *sprechen*) in positive terms, while everything else can only be *besprechen* (infinitive).

the listener away with it in a completely new direction.⁷ The character of this inserted Adagio section, which returns later with different harmonies, is melancholy, with lighter moments and several—we will let the English word suffice—whims. After six measures filled with notes of the most various values, the tempo primo returns as before on the B major harmony, and is now not so quickly forced off of the path suggested earlier, following its figuration and similar completely natural progressions without interruption.⁸ However, even before the close on the dominant is reached, it must once again allow the Adagio to intervene by means of the sudden intervention of the diminished seventh chord on E-sharp and to take its course through eight measures.⁹ The tempo primo uses a three-measure-long lingering by this Adagio in the main key to assert itself again though, and, having taken up its figuration, abandons it only for a few measures while steering toward port in E major, which it finally reaches after thirty-five measures.¹⁰ The Prestissimo, E minor 6/8 time, which now follows and which, in our opinion, must be played immediately after the previous movement if the effect of the whole is to be complete, is a most outstandingly successful piece. The element of its artistic life is defiance and passionate haste. Shortly before the principal interjection in the dominant minor key, which includes a transfer of the bass into the upper voice that is as fitting to the character of the movement as it is in itself extremely simple,¹¹ a lovely little melody built on the alternation of the F 6/4/2 and C major chords is fleetingly heard.¹² Later, particularly on the last system of page 9, after a fermata on F-sharp, as the dominant of B minor, it is as though the passionate striving, which had been pushed to the point of excess, is exhausted. The eight measures in this passage—they consist of the simplest exchange of the following fundamental chords: E minor, B7 with the fundamental tone omitted, and F-sharp major—surely excite in every listener the feeling of inmost melancholy. How little does a genius need to produce a deep effect!¹³ —Now the theme reemerges with full power in the principal key, the hands are inverted with the most imposing effect on the whole, imitated at the upper fourth, and the entire movement, true to the chosen character and in a manner similar to the first section in regard to inner technique, closes with haste and defiance.¹⁴

The last movement of this sonata is an *Andante molto cantabile ed espressivo* (Songful, with the most deeply felt emotion¹⁵—appears over it in the German language), E major 3/4 time, which the master has varied six times and in a way that is at times outstandingly admirable. The theme, a very simple four-part piece of sixteen measures, is altered in variation 1 through a very songful melody, tender throughout and lovely, in the upper voice, and

⁷Mm. 9–15.

⁸Mm. 16ff.

⁹Mm. 58–65.

¹⁰Mm. 65–99.

¹¹Mm. 57–65.

¹²Mm. 49–55.

¹³Mm. 97–104.

¹⁴Mm. 112ff.

¹⁵On Beethoven's use of German designations in his late sonatas, see 101.1, n. 3. This passage is marked "Gesangvoll mit innigster Empfindung."

in variation 2 through a quite capricious arpeggiation of the theme's fundamental harmonies in sixteenth notes, given to both hands, which is twice happily interrupted by a sort of counterpoint. Variation 3, *Allegro vivace* 2/4 time, cannot be sufficiently praised. While the upper voice seems to single out individual eighth notes from the theme, thereby reaching up to the dominant B above the staff, the bass rolls down in contrary motion in sixteenth notes towards the contra B. The voices immediately change places; the upper voice hurries downward in imitation of the bass, while the bass, as had the upper voice earlier, climbs upward with individual eighth notes separated by eighth-note rests. At the repetition of this clause—the above-mentioned exchange of the voices continues throughout the entire variation—the pauses disappear and all intervals appropriate to the harmony are touched, successively moving upward or downward. The second clause is as similar as possible to the first in the treatment of both voices, and the whole variation is superbly effective. The first clause of the fourth variation, 9/8 meter with the direction to be played slower than the theme,¹⁶ consists of a cajoling figure covering three eighth notes in time,¹⁷ which is imitated more or less strictly in all the voices, while sometimes above it, sometimes below it, lies a little melody six eighth notes long. The second clause of this variation only follows these ideas here and there, often only in passing and without rigor. To give only a passably adequate account of variation 5, *Allegro ma non troppo* C time, one would have to go on at length, since the entire variation cannot be inserted here, for it is indeed full of harmonic and technical beauties. It begins right off with a weighty, fugue-like theme, accompanied by a countersubject, which is followed, beginning with the next measure, by imitations, inversions, exchanges of all the voices, and intensification that extends in part to completely new modulatory turns, in quick succession until the end. Certainly, this little episode, with its serious physiognomy in the so-called galant style, contains, within the narrow boundaries allotted to it, as many demonstrations of the great master's artistic skill as are hardly to be found in many of his strictly worked-out fugues. —Variation 6, 3/4 time, begins with the simple theme of these variations, to which is added a kind of organ point, which lies both above and in the middle voices on the dominant of the harmonies successively touched upon. These dominants, two voices strong, are heard first in quarter notes, then in eighths, then in triplets, in sextuplets of thirty-second notes, as written-out slow trills, and finally as real trills, which are surrounded by the theme in eight-note triplets. With the second clause an eight-measure-long trill on contra B enters as a genuine organ-point, above which the serviceable harmonies of the theme are slung out in thirty-second notes and various arpeggiations, while preserving the theme's melody as closely as possible. At the repetition of this clause the composer places the dominant in the middle voice of the right hand, while the same hand lets isolated eighth notes from the melody of the theme be heard above it, and the left hand completes the underlying counterpoint with running thirty-second notes. After lingering briefly on the third inversion of the minor seventh

¹⁶The fourth variation is marked "Un poco meno Andante cioè un poco più Adagio come il tema" in Italian and "Etwas langsamer als das Thema" in German.

¹⁷The figure actually consists of six sixteenth notes.

chord of B¹⁸ in thirty-second note figures, against which are heard both the tonic E in the lower voice and that trill in the middle voice, the theme of the variations itself closes the movement, stripped of all decoration. The delivery of the last variation is very tiring for both hands, and we doubt whether even players who can perform this variation just as easily as delicately will take a commensurate amount of pleasure in it.

The second of the above-named sonatas (Op. 110), a work in every regard very splendid, extremely melodious, and rich in harmonic beauties throughout, has for its first movement a Moderato cantabile, molto espressivo A-flat major 3/4 time. Right at the beginning, Mr. v. B. has further applied the words *con amabilità* to the delivery of this movement, and in fact, in order to express this, the player needs only to follow the composer faithfully here, for charm, gracefulness, kindness glance out from every trait of this beautiful tone-painting. — Since, as we observed in the introduction to the announcement of these three works, the distinctive beauty of a work of art—the spirit, the soul that animate it—cannot be properly analyzed, at least not in a way that is truly instructive and can persuade others, may the above suggestion suffice, which nevertheless, in our opinion, sufficiently specifies the character of the piece. We will not conceal the few things that disturbed our great enjoyment of this work upon repeated delivery: the ungracious, we almost want to say awkward return (page 6, system 2, measure 2)¹⁹ to A-flat from E major through the minor seventh chord on E-flat; we were likewise unable to acquire a taste for the twice-occurring exchange between a major key and the minor seventh chord on its second degree (page 2, system 2, measure 5, and page 6, system 3, measure 3)²⁰—probably because the minor seventh is thereby left unresolved until the third measure—although the gracefulness of the movement itself is not greatly damaged by it. Would not the whole benefit if, in both places, the diminished chord took the place of the minor seventh chord, which would certainly be more customary? A departure from the customary can certainly sometimes be an aberration from what is right and beautiful.

The second movement, Allegro molto, F minor, 2/4 time, with its middle section in D-flat major, is a truly precious little pearl in the rich garland of Beethovenian keyboard compositions, and thus of the most admirable works for the pianoforte in general. This movement paints with notes, in turn, melancholy, encouragement, being swept away as though by a higher power, hesitation before a decision, complete discouragement once again, finally, after a cry of despair, utter collapse. — Feelings about which, after they have scarcely resounded in the listener's inner being, it is as though an entire horn of plenty full of lovely, cajoling banter is poured out in a completely original melodic figure, never before encountered by us, in the upper voice (to which only isolated notes, mostly on weak beats, that determine the harmony are added by the left hand). The little figure that ends this D-flat major section

¹⁸The text reads “Nach einem kurzen Verweilen auf der dritten Umkehrung des kl. Sext. Accords von H.” “Sext.” is almost certainly a misprint for “Sept.,” indicating the seventh chord.

¹⁹M. 77.

²⁰Mm. 24 and 83.

seems at last to call back the previous F minor section: let that be enough joking around. — The principal section returns unchanged at once, and with it resound anew all the feelings previously excited by it. A short coda, consisting only of the perfect cadential chords of the key of F minor, seems even to reinforce the mood brought about by the entire F minor section. And yet, in the last four measures, F major, *ritardando*, with which the beautiful whole fades out, the sun happily reappears in the sky that until now has been so dismal, satisfying the heart.

The quick and effortless performance of the middle section in D-flat major demands a very good player.

The third principal movement of this beautiful sonata, *Adagio ma non troppo*, initially in B-flat minor, C time, soon barely touching upon E major harmony, A-flat minor, 12/16 time, is a true dramatic scene exciting the deepest sympathy. There can be no more simple, beautiful, and soulful song than that which glides past here with wistful gentleness above a rich stream of harmonies. This song dies out, after a length of two pages, in a short cadential unison *pp* on A-flat, and a magnificent three-voice fugue in A-flat major 6/8 time, full of admirable beauties of the most varied nature, in which the earlier admirably constructed passage (this time in G minor) reappears after a pause on the E-flat major chord and leads back to the above fugue with its theme inverted in G major, worthily concludes this splendid sonata. — We must content ourselves with pointing out only a few particularly effective passages. Page 17, second and third system, where the fugue theme, reinforced with octaves in the bass, reaches down to contra C.²¹ Then the augmentation on the second system of the twentieth page, with the theme in its original melodic progression and the newly added extremely piquant ornamentations of the middle voices,²² out of which, on page 21, a new idea develops, briefly having fun, so to speak,²³ until finally, in a faster tempo and with livelier motion overall, all the elements of the fugue announce themselves again and, after a deft spice of dissonances, the whole closes in the fundamental key of A-flat major by means of an organ point that makes extremely effective use of most chord positions here suitable.²⁴

We come now to the third of the above-named sonatas, which is an extremely noteworthy work of art in two regards. It consists of only two movements: an *Allegro con brio ed appassionato*, C minor, C time, which is preceded by an introduction of sixteen measures, *Maestoso*, in the same key and time signature, and a very slow movement in C major, which, not even taking into account the eight repetitions that it contains, is thirteen customary oblong folio pages long. — The first movement is laid out grandly and broadly and executed in a truly imposing manner. The first movement begins in the bass on the diminished seventh chord of F-sharp, with a few sharply accented notes doubled at the octave, striding, in preparation for

²¹Mm. 101–11.

²²Mm. 153ff.

²³Mm. 168–74.

²⁴Mm. 174ff.

something powerful, to a pause on the dominant, with which the Allegro section begins. The principal idea of this section actually consists of only three notes:



FIGURE 19. *Op. 111, 1st movement, mm. 19–20. The key signature of three flats is missing.*

but what a magnificent, rich, truly grand work of art has the master put together from this simple material! For in fact, what little else he has used to hold together the interior of his artistic edifice is either, strictly speaking, this material itself, or derived from it in a completely natural way. An active life, indeed, one could say a kind of wildness, animates the whole, which is nevertheless interrupted several times by an incomparably melodious idea, which sounds for the first time on the fourth page, last system, measure 2,²⁵ and there, just as at every point where it can be heard, forms the loveliest contrast to the powerful, passionate drive that scarcely stops even momentarily in this entire movement, carrying everything restlessly along with it.

So as not to go even further beyond the boundaries of this notice, we can only single out a few things that are particularly effective. Foremost the splendid construction of the counterpoints that bind together details and their powerful inversions. Then, above all, in the second clause²⁶ the passage where the principal idea at the same time emerges in augmentation as a fugue theme and is thrice imitated, appearing both above and below at its original speed.²⁷ Finally, the completely magnificent passage, page 9, system 2, measure 1, in which that melodious phrase lies in the bass and, precisely there, speaks most intimately to the heart.²⁸ —By far the most noteworthy movement of this sonata is the last, marked *Arietta, Adagio molto, semplice cantabile*, in C major throughout, initially 9/16 time, right after that *l'istesso tempo* 6/16 time, then 12/32 time, then for nine pages before the conclusion, the first meter, 9/16 time. —When we call this movement the most noteworthy in this sonata, we by no means wish thereby to place it above the one discussed previously. On the contrary, we are of the opinion that it stands well below that one. —We call it noteworthy because in striking qualities—it by no means outdoes what we have previously encountered

²⁵Mm. 50ff.

²⁶That is, the second part of the Allegro, consisting of what we would now call the development, recapitulation, and coda.

²⁷Mm. 76–81.

²⁸Mm. 124ff.

in pure pianoforte music in melody, modulation, and so forth. The theme, mostly written in four parts, is in itself as simple and calm in its progress as could be wished for in a theme to be varied or, as here, paraphrased. However, it has pleased the composer—why, we cannot guess—to make use, for the working out of his beautiful material, of such artistic means as we do not find worthy of his lofty genius. In this tone-painting, he resembles a painter who fills up the space for an altarpiece in a single color (monotone) with a miniature pencil. — The entire piece, which lasts nearly a quarter of an hour, abounds in notes with the strangest possible metrical divisions, which often strain against the sense of the beat; the melody is surrounded for pages with the most curious triplet ornamentation; both, though, mostly without what is most important: an effect on the soul. —

Nevertheless, Mr. v. B.'s imagination is a sun that can break through even the thickest fogs of the lower atmosphere. On page 19 it shines again in all its distinctive glory and spreads warmth and life.²⁹ From here on out—even though we could wish the excursus to be shorter—the movement gave us very great joy, particularly because in this conclusion we have received a new assurance: the great master will not tarry long in the “espaces imaginaires et—d’erreurs,”³⁰ but will yet often enchant the admirers of his magnificent artistic garden on paths that quickly turn back toward the beautiful. —We wish this for both him and ourselves.

The engraving of all three sonatas announced here, particularly the last two, is clear and without error down to the smallest detail. The paper is also firm and white.

Before we completely close this announcement, we must further note that we are sorry to be deprived, with these sonatas, of tempo markings by means of a metronome. As little as this mechanical aid suffices and can suffice in teaching delivery itself, if one follows the markings during the performance of a piece of music, it nevertheless certainly prevents it from being completely distorted. —If, then, for example, Mozart had known and used this aid—and he would certainly then have used it—would the overture to *Don Juan* be clipped the way one hears it clipped by many orchestras?! For this reason, we greatly wish that all good composers, particularly the heroes among them, would not disdain the use of this mechanical assistant to indicate the delivery of their works, next to the verbal directions for delivery. The practicing true artist will not allow the bonds of the metronome to restrict his delivery either in terms of freedom or of spirit and feeling. The usual so-called virtuosos, however, will not be properly instructed by either words or metronome. —Consequently, marking the tempo by means of a metronome can at least not corrupt anyone, and could in many cases be very useful.

²⁹The writer is probably referring to the passage marked “espressivo” that begins at m. 120.

³⁰French: “spaces of imagination and—of errors.” See n. 2, above.

Op. 110. Piano Sonata in A-flat Major

110.I.

“Music. Overview of New Publications. L. in October 1822.”

Journal für Literatur, Kunst, Luxus und Mode 37

(October 1822): 605–6.¹

This superb new sonata begins with a grand movement in A-flat major, 3/4 time, marked *Moderato cantabile molto espressivo*, and *con amabilità*. And the melody with which the movement begins in four parts, and whose slow notes are then accompanied with sixteenth notes, surely contains a lovable, intimate expression of tenderness. It is hard to describe how originally the master knows how to maintain and heighten interest; how a light fluttering figure in thirty-second notes, which move up and down, interrupts the melody, only to let it step forth again with new charms; how meaningfully and distinctively the bass is made into the plunging lower voice, extended with trills, and then worked into simultaneously rising and descending figures;² how the modulation turns so beautifully to E major for a short time,³ and all ideas are so distinctively scattered and developed. Hereupon follows a fiery, powerful movement, *Allegro molto* in F minor in 2/4 time, whose main melody in chords makes a ready and deep impression, like a lively chorus. It alternates with a middle section in D-flat major. The *Adagio ma non troppo* that follows, beginning in B-flat minor, 4/4 time, with recitative woven in, turns quickly to A-flat minor, and develops in 12/16 time in plaintive melodies, with a three-part accompaniment, into an extremely expressive composition of the elegiac type, such as only a Beethovenian genius could create. Hereupon follows a three-voice fugue, full of clarity and energy, in A-flat major in 6/8 time, *Allegro ma non troppo*. The previous *Arioso* returns, with its principal features, now in G minor, and fades out in G major, whereupon the fugue returns, but with its theme inverted, and then with a new countersubject in G minor,⁴ until the movement finally modulates back to A-flat major as a *Meno allegro* and closes amid new, artistically rich working out of the fugue theme. The content of this work has led me into greater detail than was perhaps necessary, in order to recommend it to connoisseurs and to warrant repeated thanks to its creator.)

¹The sonata in A-flat major, Op. 110, was written in late 1821 and published in 1822 by Maurice Schlesinger in Paris, Vienna, and Berlin. This review refers to the first edition.

²Mm. 20–30.

³Mm. 69–77.

⁴Mm. 152ff.

110.2.

Adolf Bernhard Marx.

“Review.”

Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 1
(10 March 1824): 87–90.¹

It is an impressive sight when human strength fights against a powerful misfortune and wins. —Beethoven’s genius endures such a fight. Deafness has robbed him of all active communication. Among the hundreds of thousands in the imperial city he lives solitary, alone. For him, the exultant call of joy, the expression of love and respect, are mute. His hand glides over the strings and he does not perceive the chords that charm everyone. What a hard blow for the tone-poet to lose his hearing, to see shut off the sense that was for him the most developed, that gave the richest nourishment to his spirit. What a trial: never to hear what his genius has prompted him to write—and yet to trust! How many vigorous arms would not have sunk at this, how many loud voices would not have fallen mute!

Beethoven had the strength to endure this struggle and has emerged from the fight strengthened and exalted. The more the outer world was shut off to him, the more deeply he turned back into his inner being, the freer he made himself of all bonds that ensnared and dammed off his individual will—whether of habit, of the wishes and abilities of his contemporaries, or who knows what else. The more purely he frees himself from obligations, the richer do his gifts become to the person who understands him, the more inaccessible do his works become to those who can never understand how to grasp his most characteristic essence. All of this will be discussed more thoroughly at the appropriate time.

It is human and necessary that in this seclusion, in this solitude of self-denial, many a melancholy glance should turn back to more fortunate times. If all good fortune, if Beethoven’s whole existence were dissolved into the task that he faces as a tone-poet, the language of music would still have to include the longing for a happier condition that is now past, the private lament over that which he has sacrificed and renounced. —The present sonata seems to be such an outpouring from the innermost heart. One at last stops treating a work of art as a dead product. One only believes oneself to understand it if one has rediscovered and traced one’s own sensibilities in the soul of the creator.

¹This review also refers to the original edition by Schlesinger.

The first Allegro (3/4 A-flat major) is the lament of the lonely one, full of the most delicate expression of sadness, charming in grace and majesty. To me, this Allegro—which in regard to its meaning should be called an Adagio²—was a new proof of my conviction that the rank of a work of art is determined not by melodies and harmonies of a rare order, but by the spirit that permeates the whole. The simplest melody, the simplest accompaniment, the most artless development—are here sufficient means for the deepest expression. Indeed, the meaning of the whole ennobles even familiar figurations, like



FIGURE 20. *Op. 110, 1st movement, m. 12*

(in which only the soaring through all the octaves can be called new) and gives them new charm. More unusual successions of notes, like



FIGURE 21. *Op. 101, 1st movement, m. 22*

and



FIGURE 22. *Op. 101, 1st movement, mm. 23-25*

develop with the most natural facility, which is the surest mark of genius.

²In other words, the expressive weight of this movement, which is actually marked “Moderato cantabile molto espressivo,” is more like that of a slow movement than that of an opening Allegro.

When the song has died out in sighs, when the music of the strings has faded away, there follows a strange, impetuous *Allegro molto* (F minor 2/4), into which is unexpectedly interwoven the melody of a desolate folk song familiar to everyone,³ and which then closes just as unexpectedly with a delicate echo. “All of this”—the artist seems to relate—“the trivial joys, by means of which people elevate and deceive themselves in their time, the desolate pleasure in whose delirium so much of life is lost, have never had power over me. They have blown over me like an empty wind (trio in D-flat major) and (coda) this is how it should and must have been.”

If I could only lead each of my readers, before speaking about the *Adagio*⁴ (B-flat, *C*, later A-flat minor 12/16), before Correggio’s *Magdalene* in the Dresden gallery, let them look into the deep, lonely, silent darkness of the forest in which rests the divinely beautiful, holy woman repenting the weakness of mankind, surrounded by the angelic harmonies resounding from above. Or at least let every reader know and experience Beethoven’s sonata quasi una fantasia in C-sharp minor, that holy lament of unhappy love!⁵

Beethoven, who in earlier years sang so freshly and sweetly of love (*Adelaide*—*Herz mein Herz*—*Liederkreis von Jeitteles*),⁶ looks back here on the golden age that is past and gone. Whoever does not suspect, at the almost disconnected chords of the prelude (the *Adagio* is written in the form of a recitative and *arioso*), which is unable to remain in any key, that Beethoven here seeks to open up his inner heart—and how painfully—whoever does not perceive, in the song of the *arioso*, in the stream of harmonies, which quietly and gently joins with it, like the friendly brook to the neighboring bushes and meadow flowers, in the weeping second voice at the conclusion, the lament of a deeply wounded, orphaned heart: for them Beethoven is forever mute, and they will also never understand me and will never like reading me. —

The finale (fugue, A-flat major, 6/8)⁷ hurries along like the ceaseless progress of time, mysteriously entwining moments and events, often with crushing footsteps. The *arioso* returns once again in G minor, and even more sadly; the fugue begins its round dance again in inversion,⁸ later interwoven with new figurations that recall the spirit of the first movement, and perfectly rounds out the whole.

³The song in question is “Ich bin liederlich, du bist liederlich, wir sind liederliche Leut” (“I am dissolute [or tipsy], you are dissolute, we are dissolute people”), which Beethoven quotes beginning at m. 17.

⁴Actually *Adagio ma non troppo*.

⁵The author is referring to the so-called *Moonlight Sonata*, Op. 27, no. 2. Beethoven called both sonatas of Op. 27 “*Sonata quasi una fantasia*,” although the title “*Moonlight*” is not his own.

⁶The author is referring to *Adelaide*, Op. 46; *Neue Liebe, neues Leben*, Op. 75, no. 2; and *An die ferne Geliebte*, Op. 98. The comparison is somewhat misleading, since the last of these, written in 1815–1816, antedates this sonata by only a half dozen years, and only *Adelaide*, written in 1794–1795, can be ascribed to Beethoven’s youth.

⁷This section is also marked *Allegro ma non troppo*.

⁸A footnote in the original review reads: “Inversion is that configuration of the theme in which every succession of tones that previously rose or fell now falls or rises the same amount. I give the theme of the previous fugue and its inversion.”



FIGURE 23. *Op. 101, 3rd movement, mm. 27–30, followed by an inversion starting at the same pitch*

Whoever is seriously concerned with improving delivery, either of a song or on an instrument, can learn how to vary a melody, how the expression can be strengthened through variation, from the repetition of the arioso. How often do singers and virtuosos use their freedom only to obliterate it! Finally, the fugue should dispel the preconception that this form is studied, affected, lacking in freedom, or interesting only for the intellect, for the trained musician. I will not neglect to express myself more thoroughly on this point. For now let this fugue demonstrate how appropriate, natural, and necessary this form is in general, even in its more unusual constructions of inversion and augmentation.⁹ In particular, the reappearance and continuation of the fugue in inversion gave me the worthiest image of the strophe and antistrophe¹⁰ of Greek drama, and the all-encompassing conclusion seemed to me to be a victorious exode.

ADDENDUM

When one is speaking of Beethoven, how difficult it is to finish! And how completely inadequate must everything that one has said about him ultimately appear! Understanding creeps discreetly along, step by step, with the crutch of language, while surmise flies above the clouds on the wing of notes and hurries from star to star. —I would have to proclaim this even if I had written not a page but a book.

What an abundance of beauties unfolds in the fugue of this sonata alone! How does everything—even things that would be drawbacks and mistakes in the hands of a technician—join together toward a more magnificent unfolding of the ideas! This fugue must be studied along with the richest ones by Sebastian Bach and Händel.

⁹A footnote in the original reads: “Augmentation is the appearance of a phrase in greater note values, for example on p. 19 [mm. 153–68], first in the upper voice and then in the bass:



FIGURE 24. *Op. 101, 3rd movement, mm. 160–68, simplification of the left hand*

Diminution is the appearance in smaller note values.”

¹⁰A footnote in the original review reads: “Following the meter of the poetry and of the music, the chorus in Greek drama turned in solemn round dance first toward the pictures of the gods on the right of the orchestra, then similarly toward the gods placed on the left.”

Let us consider once again the theme, along with the countersubject that is joined to it,¹¹

The image shows a musical score for the third movement of Op. 101. The tempo is marked 'Allegro ma non troppo.' and the dynamics are 'sempre piano.' The score is in G major (one sharp) and 3/8 time. It consists of two systems of music. The first system shows the theme in the upper voice (treble clef) and the countersubject in the lower voice (bass clef). The second system continues the same material. The countersubject is a series of running eighth notes that weaves under and over the theme.

FIGURE 25. *Op. 101, 3rd movement, mm. 27–35*

the latter in a series of running eighth notes, and the former also continuing until the end in notes of the same value. If one mentions that the countersubject is woven under and above all repetitions of the theme, and even during the episodes,¹² one might have reason to fear that the fugue would go at a uniform, dragging pace. And how differently did it turn out, how much is the progress of the fugue enlivened by the most variegated means! After the first and during the second exposition (p. 15),¹³ the distinctive shape of the countersubject suffices to let the more powerful theme and its closing formula stand out. After the second exposition the close of the episode remains in a higher register, and the theme enters again in octaves deep in the bass, with new power and in a meaningful augmentation. Supported by the same rhythm in the middle voice and brought out, in a manner already familiar, by a tie in the upper voice, it enhances the entire fugal movement.¹⁴ The restful third exposition¹⁵ is now welcome. In it, the third voice follows more closely after the second but is soon lost in an episode, giving over

¹¹A footnote in the original review reads: “A countersubject is the name given to a phrase that is set as an accompaniment in opposition to the theme, whether it appears as the subject or as the answer. The fugue theme, as opposed to its similar repetition in another voice, is called the subject, this repetition, the answer.”

¹²A footnote in the original review reads: “According to the rules, a fugue theme is proclaimed by one voice after another, either as subject or as answer, accompanied by the countersubject. Each such run through all the voices is called an exposition. After an exposition, the theme appears either at once or only after a contrasting passage. This is called an episode and is readily woven together with a part of the countersubject, the theme, or both.”

¹³P. 15 of the original edition begins at m. 42.

¹⁴Mm. 73–81; ties in the countersubject to enhance fugal entries had appeared previously at, for example, mm. 45 and 53.

¹⁵Mm. 87 ff.

the closing formula of the theme to the top voice, which repeats it three times, later imitated by the second voice. From here on everything works toward a forceful conclusion. The theme strides brazenly onward in octaves in the lowest register, and then again in the bass with an extended closing formula. At the same time the upper voice drives toward a close in the dominant with an extension of the middle part of the theme. Then the return of that song, that voice of longing, that sad reminiscence of happier days, full of the blessing of peace, of sweet enchantment! Oh how thankless is the effort to find words for the inexpressible! After twelve dull strokes and an echo of the harp, the fugue gradually reawakens. —With its return, the deep context first makes itself understood—the iron fate that moved along at a steady pace, and the voice of the heart, which sighs over so many trampled flowers.

As the fugue advanced in straightforward motion, with the character of inflexible strictness, with the theme beginning in the bass, appearing there again after the first exposition and then twice again in octaves: so does the upper voice begin here with the theme in inversion, with the most eloquent expression of timid, humble resignation. And how does the childlike G major support this expression! In place of the countersubject the theme appears worked through twice in diminution in two voices with an accelerated, ephemeral closing formula that disrupts the character



FIGURE 26. *Op. 101, 3rd movement, mm. 152–58*

against the principal theme proclaimed in the upper voice in orderly motion and in augmentation. Immediately thereafter it is repeated by the bass in octaves with the greatest majesty.¹⁶ Ties then appear simultaneously in all voices,¹⁷ the pulse falters, the motion is arrested, until a gentle play with notes begins with a twice diminished and shortened theme,

FIGURE 27. *Op. 101, 3rd movement, mm. 168–172*

which winds around the principal theme in its original note values in free inversion. Like a rosy morning cloud announcing a magnificent new day, and its reflection on the mirror of the quiet sea, the melodies swim around the principal melody both above and below. The theme resounds again from the depths beneath the sounds of the harp—related in spirit to those of the first Allegro—is led by the powerfully resonant harp up to the most delicate heights—then the conclusion.¹⁸ This is a Beethovenian fugue. Observe here how one must learn art and then let it be forgotten in the free movement of the spirit.

¹⁶Mm. 160–68.

¹⁷Mm. 165–68.

¹⁸Mm. 174ff.

Op. 111. Piano Sonata in C Minor

III.I.

“Music Literature.”

Zeitung für Theater, Musik und bildende Künste 3

(14 June 1823): 93–94.¹

If the appearance of shining stars on the horizon of the artistic sky is extremely rare, while, on the contrary, meteors and shooting stars flash suddenly and just as quickly disappear, each new work of truly creative productivity is all the more to be treasured if it is conceived by a genius such as, after Mozart and Haydn, exists among our contemporaries only in the instrumental compositions of Beethoven alone (who for a long time has not been known and favored by fate sufficiently in accordance with his worth).

The newest sonata for the pianoforte by this composer rich in imagination, dedicated to his imperial highness the Archduke Rudolph, his 111th (that is to say: one hundred eleventh) work, is the third solo in the Original Keyboard Compositions of Beethoven, published by the firm of A. M. Schlesinger. Like the first two, it is distinguished by newness of form, overflowing richness of ideas, particularly by astonishing modulations in the short, but significant, truly majestic introduction to the first Allegro movement, which clearly and energetically works out, without going to exhaustive lengths, a passionate theme in a manner full of masterly unity and connection, with a delicately songful contrasting theme and fugues in strict imitation. The appassionato in C minor, begun with fire, fades out in comforting, luminous major—resounding like the seraphic tones of the Aeolian harp, gently moved by the play of the evening winds.

This sonata contains only two movements (counting the introduction as part of the first). An entire world of notes, however, revolves, according to the laws of eternal harmony, within the free variations on a movingly lovely, simple melody, most strikingly designated as “Arietta, Adagio molto semplice cantabile.” The simplicity of the modulation, which moves only to the dominant of C major and to the related key of A minor, and the distinctive rhythm of the uneven 9/16 meter, give this melodic theme the charm that beautiful nature exerts on

¹The piano sonata in C minor, Op. 111, was written in 1821–22 and published in 1823 by Maurice Schlesinger in Paris, Clementi and Co. in London, and Adolph Martin Schlesinger in Berlin. This review refers to the Berlin Schlesinger edition.

every receptive soul. In the variations that follow, with their rich and original figurations—really more free fantasies that retain the original cantilena—the chosen manner of writing makes it difficult to read the notes, which are truly quite a sight. 3/8 or 3/4 with triplets, sextuplets, etc. would have made less difficulty. Beethoven, however, does not write and think up his notes like other sons of earth. The second variation is written in 6/16, the third in 12/32. That the last takes up twelve pages—and how full of notes they are—seems excessive, and certainly testifies to the composer's overabundance of ideas, but also to his peculiarity, not to say bizarrerie.²

Only persistent players, of accomplished skill in reading and thoughtful, can work their way through this last dozen pages without fatigue. They will, however, be compensated for their effort with many beauties. It cannot be denied, though, that far too many means are used toward the specified purpose, and the great length of the whole movement—taking up sixteen pages in vertical format—for all the originality of the etude-like working out of the principal idea, nevertheless brings forth genuine monotony, which leaves behind no total impression of perfection. One must nevertheless be amazed at such inventive genius! After such long cadenzas, double trills, etc., the composer closes almost too quickly with a three-measure reminiscence of the theme.

The engraving is outstanding, and the price of 1 Thaler, 8 Groschen inexpensive, since these high, broad pages encompass far more notes. The paper could be somewhat whiter. A player skilled in reading scores can probably become accustomed to the popular Parisian high format, although it is less comfortable than oblong format.

²This author is counting the extended coda as part of the last variation.

III.2.

Janus a Costa (Christian Wilhelm Schmidt).
Journal für Literature, Kunst, Luxus und Mode 38
(September 1823): 706–8.¹

If to the author of an interesting new treatise on musical art² (Mr. Gerard, professor at the Royal School of Music in Liège and member of the Society of Emulation there),³ it still appears very questionable whether in a sonata or another instrumental composition a definite feeling can be clearly expressed, recalling the famous “Sonate, que me veux-tu?”⁴ many instrumental compositions, even by many celebrated names, may certainly justify such doubt. It has long since been eliminated, though, by Beethoven’s immortal musical creations, among which there are none into which he has not known how to breathe the richest, most distinctive life of the soul.

The romantic art of tones surely speaks to us through a language of the spirit, which, without using words, awakens feelings for which no words exist, or which at least can only be imperfectly indicated with words. If, then, it also calls up in us familiar types of feeling, the individual soul states of those who experience it are so various, and the imagination, which copies the tone-poet through its own creativity, is of such variegated productivity, that a perfectly equal effect on the various souls can certainly not be assumed; rather, it must necessarily reproduce itself in a variety of refractions and shades of color. The effects of musical art are thus

¹This review also refers to the Berlin Schlesinger edition.

²A footnote in the original review reads: “*Considérations sur la musique en general, et particulièrement sur tout ce qui a rapport à la vocale*,” par M. Gérard, à Paris chez Kleffer et Desoer. See the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* from the current year, nos. 31 and 32.” A review of Gérard’s treatise appears in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 25, cols. 493–97 and 509–19.

³Henri-Philippe Gérard (1760–1848) was a Flemish composer and an important vocal pedagogue. His *Considérations sur la musique en général et particulièrement sur tout ce qui a rapport à la vocale, avec des observations sur les différents genres de musique, et sur la possibilité d’une prosodie partielle dans la langue française entremêlées et suivies de quelques réflexions ou observations morales* was published in 1819.

⁴French: “Sonata, what do you want of me?” This famous phrase from the writings of Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle (1657–1757) is often cited as evidence of the traditional view that music without words is incapable of communicating clearly.

something like a prism, a fact that cannot be ignored here, since it was recently the subject of a sonnet in these pages.⁵

Meanwhile, every work of music that is even somewhat characteristic will always specify the fundamental tone of emotion and define the circle in which it may move. It will lend the imagination the material for its patterns, and these, even in their colorful variety, will resemble the varieties of one and the same species of plant.

In van Beethoven's works, however, a living soul addresses us, a soul that draws us powerfully and grippingly into its depths, now into a night of pain and mourning, now onto the sunny peak of rejoicing and jubilation. The present sonata, which in the above regard is worthy of joining the two previous ones, the works 109 and 110,⁶ gives new proof of this. It consists, like these, of two movements.⁷

The first movement, in C minor, in C time throughout, marked "*Allegro con brio ed appassionato*," and introduced by a *Maestoso* of sixteen measures, is the kind of night piece to which we just pointed. Pain and grief, which proclaim themselves right away in the simple motive, particularly through the diminished interval in the melody, weigh heavily on the benighted soul. It struggles in vain for consolation, for light, for freedom. With all the striving and commotion, it does not emerge from the dismal circle into which the demons have banished it. The theme, treated fugally and otherwise with wondrous artistic skill, makes its ever inconsolable voice of pain known now here, now there. A few glances of light do fall into this darkness, but they pass by in a moment and do not have the cheering effect of daylight, but rather, like lightning, serve only to make the terrible night even darker. And by this artistic means van Beethoven, who has made it so much his own precisely through such customary ingenious application, has already often achieved unbelievable effects. For similar reasons, the conclusion in the major mode is also very effective; the pain is finally exhausted and sinks into slumber.

After all this, the heavenly effect of the second movement can only be felt, not described. An arietta theme in 9/16 time, C major, marked "*Adagio molto semplice cantabile*," enters, as simple, noble, tender and holy and uplifting as the comforting voice of an angel. Hereupon follow variations, the first three of which recall the church style and the works of Händel and Sebastian Bach, with figurations, ties, suspensions, continuous notes, and so forth. The figurations become ever broader and grander. Then follows a very original double variation, namely in the sense that each part of the theme is first suggested through isolated, broken off chords in the dark depths over a tremolo figure in the bass, and then in the uppermost octaves rippling with the tenderest, loveliest triplet figurations, as if the imperfect earthly sounds are

⁵A footnote in the original review reads: "July issue, no. 60, p. 497." The sonnet, written by the author of this review, is titled "Wirkung der Tonkunst" and makes an argument in poetic terms similar to the one advanced here.

⁶The author here uses the German word *Werk*, which means "work," in place of the Latin word *opus*, which means the same thing.

⁷Both Op. 109 and Op. 110 actually contain three movements, with the last movement of Op. 110 further subdivided into slow *Arioso* and fast fugal sections.

now resounding downward from luminous heights and transfiguration. Now begins a *coda*, unfolding with the decoration of magnificent figurations and modulations; then comes yet another variation of the theme in wonderful splendor, breadth, and abundance of notes.⁸ Thus has the quiet, clear source of heavenly consolation gradually grown into a stream of the most general rejoicing and exultation.

We have only descriptively followed the poet's path. The beautiful poetic idea that lies at the base of his composition, though, already speaks for itself in full clarity, just as clear and definite to thought as to inner feeling.

⁸Mm. 130ff. This passage is usually considered part of the coda rather than a variation per se.

III.3.

“As a Review of the Sonata Op. 111. Letter from a Critic to the Editor.”
Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 1
(17 March 1824): 95–99.¹

You will wonder, dear Sir, why, in place of the urgently commissioned review of the 111th sonata by Beethoven (published by Schlesinger), you have received it back. I—cannot review it. Can you feel what this admission costs an old critic? I would not have the strength for it, if hope did not convince me that you will not believe me. And yet—I owe you a closer accounting. I will recount to you what I experienced with the fatal sonata; you may then believe what you can about me and it.

I was placed in an unusually favorable mood when I took up this sonata because it happened to be on precisely the same day fifteen years earlier that I first expressed my opinions about Beethoven. I remembered with the joy of the righteous how carefully I then compared Beethoven’s composition (I believe it was his C minor symphony; unfortunately I do not have the notice) with the rules, with the prevailing system, and with the works of earlier masters. In spite of the deviation that Beethoven already allowed himself at that time, I recognized his talent with encouragement. Indeed, I went so far in this well-meaning mood as to hold up for him the distant ideal of becoming a second Mozart, at least in the symphonies, if he could curb the excesses of his genius, learn to banish from a composition the baroque and the exaggerated, if he would write less affectedly, more clearly and comprehensibly.

Alas! What use are we critics if nobody listens to us? But I will not alarm you, dear Sir, with this question. It is enough that Beethoven did not listen, has gone ever more his own way instead of returning to the old path. And that was my first consideration. “What use is it,” I asked myself, “to repeat these truths yet again? He cannot do otherwise, and young, intelligent composers are sufficiently warned not to become Beethovens. How will it be with the new sonata? Once again a work, like the so-called Sonata quasi una fantasia (C-sharp minor),²

¹This review, which was probably written by *BamZ* editor Adolph Bernhard Marx, is unusual in that it is cast in the form of a letter, much of which consists of a conversation among people with very different views of the merits of the work. See Robin Wallace, *Beethoven’s Critics: Aesthetic Dilemmas and Resolutions during the Composer’s Lifetime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 58.

²The reference is to the “Moonlight” sonata, Op. 27, no. 2.

which begins with the Adagio, since he could not think of a first movement, or like his 54th, where one cannot get over the strange sounds.³ See here, the new one has indeed only two parts, no finale. Nevertheless we will take it as it is.”

But now, sir, what shall I now say about its content! I might not be able to play it, though I have practiced my Kramer and Müller studies ever so valiantly (I mean the most recent caprices).⁴ He does not now write at all correctly for the fingers, and we have learned to tell, from looking at the notes, what must sound good if it could be played. But these strokes in the introductory movement, this desolate, unrestrained storming and raging in the Allegro: is this music, is this, indeed, an aesthetic enjoyment, to be swept away by the storm wind—my God, I am becoming eccentric myself—this striving to the highest height, this rumbling in the depths, is this comprehensible, clear, restful development, is there melody here? Actually—yes. Between the storms and rolls, a little phrase of one or two measures does once come through. But what would one say about a painting where, in the midst of fog and night, here glimmered a star, there flickered a will-o'-the-wisp, flashed a stroke of lightning? Would that be a well-proportioned illustration, would it indeed be feasible? And this melodic phrase—every child sings like this in his innocence; is this artistic invention? I ask you! —

I came to the variations. The theme a suitably pretty folk-like Arietta—Beethoven has observed what makes an impression since Weber’s *Freischütz*.⁵ But for heaven’s sake, what an accompaniment! Two octaves below the melody, in the deepest bass notes, it buzzes and blusters forth with the dominant left lying there like a bell fading away in the distance; and why? Because the first rule of polyphonic composition is not to draw the voices apart from one another, but to keep them together in the middle region like notes that belong together, and because it has pleased Mr. Beethoven to set himself above every rule.

I cast only one more glance at the next three variations. True enough, they are worked out (though I will not mention those by Bach), but where is there here a pleasing, tasteful, brilliant figuration? The voices are forced into and through each other as if frightened, and so things are drawn out endlessly until one is ready to lose one’s breath.

Here a friend, the music director ** interrupted me and led to me a young man, also an artist. After a while, we became his companions, and now began my worst sufferings.

During our conversation, I had already heard from time to time with pleasure how the young man—for good reason I will call him Edward—performed the Beethoven sonata (as soon as he saw it, he seated himself at the piano with it) plainly and precisely, not too stormily and powerfully. At his age, one is not yet modest. Now (he was already deep in the variations),

³The reference is to the sonata in F major, Op. 54.

⁴Johann Baptist Cramer (1771–1858) was one of the most famous pianists of the early 19th century. His *Studio per il pianoforte*, published in two volumes in 1804 and 1810, was probably the most influential set of keyboard studies of its time. According to *New Grove* 5, 20, Beethoven considered them “the best preparation for his own works.” August Eberhard Müller (1767–1817) published four sets of caprices in the first two decades of the 19th century that were at the forefront of contemporary piano technique.

⁵On Beethoven’s “surprised admiration” for Weber’s *Freischütz*, see John Warrack, *Carl Maria von Weber*, 2 ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 229, 235.

a note tormented me with endlessly repetitive strokes like a dagger-point in the ear. We had to stop. At a later point, I know not how many trills jarred into one another, Edward let his hands drop.⁶ How I felt the triumph of my opinion: “Isn’t it true, dear boy, that it is not to be endured?” He was deeply affected, and only at length did he say: “It must be finished.” He played further. How difficult it was for me to wait for the end—and how—yes, I will admit it, how dumbfounded must I have appeared when I finally found that Edward had stopped and called out not from displeasure, but rather that the young man, who was now bathed in tears, pale and disheveled, was that deeply affected by this—this chaos of sounds—but I should not talk this way any more; by this music. But do I know any longer what is music and what is effective, if there is at least one person, and what is more, a professional, who is moved by this music?

I will spare you, dear Sir, the dithyramb into which Edward burst after a long silence, how he sighed that Beethoven was now dead and his gigantic spirit had stepped before human-kind and had spoken: you have not recognized me; look up, this was my powerful life, these sufferings purified me, this ray of hope from Elysium, these sounds from the time of blessed youth strengthened me, refreshed my faint heart—and now I die. “Yes, he is dead,” Edward cried out, and in vain I asked whether the information was reliable enough for your journal.⁷

The devil, sir, I am neither a poet nor a sensitive nature, but a critic, and have only mentioned the foregoing in order to pave the way for the following conversation, which I convey to you faithfully. Perhaps you know a place for it.

I: So, the music has pleased you?

Edward: Pleased! O Heavens! Now you see that I have felt it.

I: However—I do not understand—we are not in complete agreement. Which phrases, then, spoke to you the most? I admit that none appeared to me.

Edward: O, sir, what do I know of individual phrases? I heard no individual phrase, but rather a great stream that fully drew me onward, and you ask me about an individual wave.

I: I understand that you want to keep the unity of the whole before you, apart from individual details. I will enter into this spirit and acknowledge the unity of the first movement. It is a proficient, if also somewhat impetuous, fugato. But after such a movement—an arietta with variations, is that appropriate?

Edward: Sir (if I must already give an account of what I have just felt) just these variations belong among Beethoven’s greatest accomplishments. How far does his genius carry him on never trodden, unexplored paths; how far does he descend into the deepest depths and then boldly fly back up into the heights; how much does he bring together here—and—how measured is the course, how controlled (if I may use the ambiguous expression) the form! Thus must the Greek chorus have wandered about the stage, with measured steps of the utmost seriousness, while it disclosed the poet’s deepest emotions, raised the deepest truths to the spectator’s eye. If I may speak as a composer, my highest goal (for genius, the gift of nature,

⁶Presumably mm. 112ff.

⁷At the time this review was published, Beethoven was still alive and would live another three years.

cannot be wished for and won), my keenest striving, is to make form my own as Beethoven has done; to be as measured as he is in the freest flight of imagination, as free and uninhibited in the strictest fetter.

I: You have brought up a related point. It is true that the greater attention I pay to the sonata, the stricter I find the form to be. You cannot demonstrate this to me with every piece by Beethoven and do so here as well —

Edward: But what do you call a demonstration? Must not whatever is truly there be visible to everyone who can see? But it has already often seemed to me that most of those who speak about Beethoven have not yet placed themselves on that point from which alone his and all works can be perceived. In general, one speaks so much of form and seems to indicate thereby a prototype for all works of the spirit, which exists for all time. Is form then something self-sufficient? Is it anything other than the revelation of the idea, the incarnation of the thought in the work of art? Every mature, sound idea must reveal itself as such, in a measured form. But each is identical to the form, or if hair-splitting reason still wants to make the distinction, and must do so: every idea has created its own form, which must be organized like itself.

I: I still do not see how this applies.

Edward: With a work of art, I meant to say, no demonstration can be more desirable, more necessary, than the idea; for it is only from it outward that the whole can be considered and judged.

I: You said earlier that to you the first movement is like an allegorical indication of Beethoven's life, —

Edward: Well, then; the second movement is the death of the great man.⁸

Do not the harmonies of the theme already swell like the mournful music borne through the night from the funeral procession rolling on in the distance? The bells already toll in the second half. Now the first troop of those who accompany the corpse decked out in crape, the gently lamenting friends; it crowds in more and more, the orange torchlight floats nearer, the bells toll throughout—Memory takes us back to the deathbed. Through the continuous humming of the bells I once again hear the last laboring breaths of the dying one. Confusedly, and then ever more clearly, angel voices sound for him through the night in the delirium of his last hours. Children's songs lull from above, like the trifling of the lark in the highest blue of the ether. The holy triad penetrates through the lightening twilight with a crystal clear call. The whispering sounds and ever more powerfully swelling chords rush down from the angels' harps—he has died, the magnificent one. And the whole earth mourns the misunderstood favorite, and everywhere can be heard the death knell; gentle laments, sad memories, thankful, loving celebrations accompany him to his resting place. Who would not toss the most beautiful flowers upon his coffin; who, in their destitution, would not, through a stream of tears, send the most loving glance upon the failing earth?

⁸There is a paragraph break here in the original text, but it is clearly still Edward who is speaking in what follows.

The music director: Easy, friend Yorick! Don't get carried away! Beethoven is still alive.

Edward: Oh believe me, this often misunderstood man has suffered much. Who comforts the last days of him who never ceases to endow us royally? Though he is still alive, he has nevertheless experienced death; he has emptied the bitter cup. What artist could convey anything other than what he has himself experienced?

The music director: But, my dear boy, you tell us most unusual things. How do you know, and how are we supposed to know, that Beethoven meant all this and not something entirely different? For if you cannot answer to our satisfaction, then the rule by which you say works of art are to be judged may be thoroughly suspect.

I: So it is, my inspired sir. What may not be dreamed—if you will allow the expression—into a piece of music; what nonsense cannot be forced upon a composition, that the composer himself may never have thought of?

Edward: I have already had to hear this objection many times. Meanwhile, to speak just as freely, it is such a hybrid by nature that one can agree with it without prejudice and contradict it without danger. I do not know whether Beethoven has thought reflectively about his creations; it is, in any case, not necessary. For I know with assurance that he did not create through reflection. But what purpose does it serve to ask the composer? If the artwork does not itself speak, if it is necessary for him first to tell us what it is supposed to mean, then it is too bad for his effort and our time. If, however, the work of art is worthy of the name, and if we are really capable of understanding it, I cannot grasp how it is possible to find in it anything other than what lies within it. Is something that a genuine stimulus makes us feel a product of our caprice? Just try to have happy, cheerful emotions with this sonata!

I: Are you denying that different people can understand the same work of art differently? I would have thought that we ourselves provided proof of this.

Edward: Allow me to disagree with that last point, since it seems to me that you have not yet understood the sonata artistically, but only anatomically. But I do agree that the same work of art must to some extent be understood differently by different people. I imagine the effect of a work of art to be a product of its idea and of the characteristics of the observing subject, and find a proof of the godliness of art in the fact that it offers different individuals what is appropriate to them. At the same time, though, I beg you not to lose sight of two things. First, to be specific, there is probably a greater similarity among people than is often assumed. Above all, we are one and the same race, we are the same type (Europeans), and we have in common the most powerful, lasting, general influences manifested by similarities of time, country, language, etc. If moreover, we now strip away from the face of art all that is capricious, conventional, external, as we must do in order to be capable and worthy of a true artistic impression, the differences in understanding will pretty much disappear. Second, one must then also recognize the power that the finished work of art has to lift everyone capable of understanding out of his individuality toward the idea of the work of art.

I: Well then: set forth for us what it is that is accessible to us individually, what in us is accessible to people overall.

Edward: I can do nothing else in this regard but play the sonata for you.

Edward played. I admit, dear sir, just as candidly, that I felt that lugubrious expression of the second movement, though I was not able to make myself agree with Edward's understanding of it. It is true that bells sounded, and in the passage with the trills that I referred to, the strokes of the low B-flat resounded most frighteningly through the other ringing. The music director showed sympathy and impatience at the same time. He left me no time to formulate the question of whether painting along the principles of Eschenburg and Maassen should be sanctioned, and began to dispute whether such a fearsome effect belongs in the realm of the beautiful.

Where, then, asked Edward, do you want to draw the line?

The music director: Let me ask, rather, if you do not want to draw one at all.

Edward: None—unless nature itself commands a standstill.

The music director: How do you demonstrate to me its command, or its silence?

Edward: Art is life, is the world recreated by people. What life offers belongs also to art, and all other things are miscarriages, stillborn, and nothing more. Must we not depart from life, endure the death of thought, the loss of what is most noble and dear? Why should art not express what reality impresses on us with an iron stamp?

The music director: But let art comfort us, not disturb us.

Edward: Comfort is for the weak. Holy art instructs us by showing and allowing us to anticipate what must be borne; it strengthens us by making us aware of the awakening powers in our breast; it elevates us by showing us, as does nature, the rise within the decline, the new life, the eternal in the end of the finite.⁹ —

Enough of this. May you, Mr. Editor, find the point from which criticism and the generally recognized laws of aesthetics can be defended against these innovations, against this attack on the first principles. For if the first understanding of works of art is taken away from reason, if feeling is to be allowed to fix the point of reference from which judgment is to proceed, if works that mock all our rules gain such fiery partisans, I will be silent.

⁹In the final paragraph, the voice returns to that of the author.