



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS
JOURNALS + DIGITAL PUBLISHING

Beethoven's Political Music, the Handelian Sublime, and the Aesthetics of Prostration

Author(s): Nicholas Mathew

Source: *19th-Century Music*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Fall 2009), pp. 110-150

Published by: [University of California Press](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/ncm.2009.33.2.110>

Accessed: 26/08/2013 09:38

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



University of California Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *19th-Century Music*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

Beethoven's Political Music, the Handelian Sublime, and the Aesthetics of Prostration

NICHOLAS MATHEW

VIENNESE HANDEL AND THE POWER OF MUSIC

Johann Reinhold Schultz, reporting on a dinner in 1823 at which Beethoven had been present, recorded that Beethoven had declared Handel "the greatest composer that ever lived": "I cannot describe to you with what pathos, and I am inclined to say, with what sublimity of language, he spoke of the *Messiah* of this immortal genius," wrote Schultz. "Every one of us was moved when he said, 'I would uncover my head, and kneel down at his tomb!' H. and I tried repeatedly to turn the conversation to Mozart, but without effect. I only heard him say, 'In a monarchy we know who is first'; which might or might not apply to the subject."¹ Throughout his life, Beethoven professed to admire Handel—and, by all accounts, praised

¹Johann Reinhold Schultz, "A Day with Beethoven," *Harmonicon* (Jan. 1824), 11.

Handel's music even as he lay dying: music historians have long cherished the image of Beethoven on his deathbed, leafing through all forty volumes of Handel's works, sent as a gift from London. The beginnings of myth-making are apparent even in the letter of thanks that Johann Baptist Streicher wrote on the dying composer's behalf, in which Streicher claims that Beethoven "pointed with his finger to Handel's works, and said, with feeling and emphasis: 'Das ist das Wahre' [this is the Real Thing!]"²

Beethoven, being in the business of myth-making himself, was given to portentous declarations of this sort. By the 1820s, his endorse-

²Letter of 5 January 1827, *Letters to Beethoven and Other Correspondence*, ed. and trans. Theodore Albrecht, vol. III (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), no. 453; *Ludwig van Beethoven, Briefwechsel, Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Sieghard Brandenburg, vol. VI (Munich: Henle, 1996), no. 2247a [henceforth *Briefwechsel* I–VI].

ments of Handel appear to signal the rise of the sort of Germanizing historiography that would dominate the next century and a half of music scholarship. Yet there has never been a consensus among music historians about exactly what Beethoven admired or sought to emulate in Handel. Beethoven arrived in Vienna too late to feature prominently in the oft-repeated musicological story whereby Mozart encounters Handel, Bach, and other old masters in the home of Baron van Swieten in the 1780s. This tale—appealing to some musicologists partly because it suggests an auspicious transhistorical meeting of German minds—traditionally culminates with Mozart and Haydn enriching the midcentury musical galant with counterpoint, and thus creating the Viennese Classical style.³ In any case, Haydn experienced Handel in an English context only months before Beethoven arrived in Vienna. Haydn's attendance at the 1791 Handel Commemoration in Westminster Abbey, and his subsequent absorption of London's historically aware choral culture—the foremost product of which was the *Creation*—were key moments in the Viennese reception of Handel.⁴

In Beethoven's case, however, the compositions that have tended to elicit the adjective "Handelian" are those that present-day critics have often regarded as marginal or problematic in some way—supposedly atypical choral compositions; works that adopt self-conscious or conventional archaism; "occasional pieces" and celebratory works. Handel's name sometimes crops up in conjunction with later compositions—with the festive counterpoint of *Die Weihe des Hauses* overture and the antique

choral writing of the *Missa solennis*.⁵ But Handel has also been mentioned in connection with Beethoven's most notorious political compositions, particularly those composed toward the end of the Napoleonic Wars and during the Congress of Vienna in 1814 and 1815—among them several choruses in praise of Kaiser Franz and the allied monarchs, such as "Thr weisen Gründer glücklicher Staaten" (You Wise Founders of Happy States); *Wellingtons Sieg*, with its closing *Siegessinfonie* and fugato based on "God Save the King"; and the Congress cantata *Der glorreiche Augenblick* (The Glorious Moment), a collaboration with Beethoven fanatic and ardent patriot Aloys Weissenbach.⁶

Handel was bound to have been among Beethoven's aesthetic models when composing political compositions like these. By the turn of the century, Handel's music, as Haydn witnessed firsthand in the 1790s, had come to define a particular sort of grand state music in England. As Esteban Buch has explored, the English conjunction of Handelian grandeur and the implicitly collectivist ethic of the chorus—a combination also exploited to some extent in contemporary performances of "God Save the King"—provided one of the most influential models for music in modern statecraft; grand choruses eloquently represented an idealized vision of community spirit and collective ac-

⁵See, for example, William Kinderman, *Beethoven* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 252: "Parts of the *Missa solennis*, and especially the Gloria, reflect his professed admiration of Handel in their choral textures and rhetoric, but no other work displays this influence more clearly than *Die Weihe des Hauses*, in its lucid counterpoint, formal breadth, and festive solemnity."

⁶Weissenbach wrote several patriotic verses during the Congress of Vienna and published an account of his experiences at the Congress, including his encounters with Beethoven, as *Meine Reise zum Congress: Wahrheit und Dichtung* (Vienna, 1816). See also Peter Clive, *Beethoven and His World: A Biographical Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 394–95. The most sustained treatments of Beethoven's Congress-era political compositions, including his collaboration with Weissenbach, are Nicholas Cook, "The Other Beethoven: Heroism, the Canon, and the Works of 1813–14," this journal 27 (2003), 3–24; Ingrid Fuchs, "The Glorious Moment: Beethoven and the Congress of Vienna," in *Denmark and the Dancing Congress of Vienna: Playing for Denmark's Future* (Exhibition Catalog: Christiansborg Palace, Copenhagen, 2002), pp. 182–97; and Kinderman, *Beethoven*, chap. 7.

³For examples of this tale, see Ludwig Finscher, "Bach and the Viennese Classics," *Miscellanea Musicologica* 10 (1979), 47–58; and Robert Marshall, "Bach and Mozart's Artistic Maturity," *Bach Perspectives* 3 (1998), 47–79. For a sustained critique of this idea with respect to Haydn, see James Webster, *Haydn's "Farewell" Symphony and the Idea of Classical Style: Through-Composition and Cyclic Integration in His Instrumental Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 335–66.

⁴For references to source material relating to Haydn's experience of Handel in England, see H. C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*, vol. III (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), pp. 83–84.

tion.⁷ Pared down to a small group of odes, oratorios, and grand choral excerpts, particularly those with prominent trumpets and drums, Handel's music in particular—where possible in the beefed-up, modernized arrangements by Mozart—adorned major state occasions in Vienna during the Napoleonic Wars and their aftermath. Musical high points of the Congress of Vienna, for example, included performances of *Samson* and *Messiah* in the hall of the Imperial Riding School, with forces for *Samson* numbering seven hundred.⁸ This version of Handel is nowadays fading from memory, given the renewed interest in his Italian operas and the prevalence of performances informed by an early-eighteenth-century aesthetic. This Handel was a direct Viennese relation of the colossus who had been commemorated regularly in London since 1784—a monumental Handel with all the authority and heft of books and choruses, a Handel of quintessential bigness.⁹ As Kant put it, “we call *sublime* what is *absolutely* [*schlechthin*] *large*”; Handel came to be seen as the very embodiment of this maximalist aesthetic.¹⁰

If Handel's music kept powerful company during the eighteenth century, so had the aesthetic of the sublime. Earlier in the century, conceptions of the sublime, which owed much to the newly fashionable treatise attributed to Longinus, tended to focus on the modes of rhe-

torical persuasion suitable to important themes and grand occasions. After Edmund Burke's midcentury treatise, however, accounts of the sublime increasingly aestheticized power itself, even of the most oppressive sort.¹¹ Burke himself describes how sublime experience can be instigated by the tempestuous forces of nature, the might of the Old Testament God, and even by the domination of what he calls “despotic governments.”¹² Further, and crucially, Burke often ascribes analogous powers to art, as if displacing into the aesthetic realm the power of God, nature, or government. Citing the description of Satan from the second book of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, for example—“He above the rest / In shape and gesture proudly eminent”—Burke concludes that the passage is sublime not only because of its terrifying subject but also owing to “a croud of great and confused images; which affect because they are crouded and confused.”¹³ The Burkean sublime thus begins to collapse medium and message—the mere contiguity of art and power becomes a more complex metaphorical relation in which sublime experience can apparently be induced by art alone. It was just this sort of conceptual equivocation that allowed later thinkers—Kant included—to theorize artworks as if on the model of supernatural forces or natural objects: music was able to instigate sublime experience “through an inner structure that is independent of any emotional expression,” wrote the Kantian Christian Friedrich Michaelis in 1805; “music can objectively be called *sublime*,” he continued, because it acts “like untamed nature, which arouses sublime emotions.”¹⁴

That Handel's music continued to function in Beethoven's Vienna as a “serious style” appropriate to grand state occasions is evidence,

⁷See Esteban Buch, *Beethoven's Ninth: A Political History*, trans. Richard Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), chap. 1.

⁸*Samson* was performed on 16 October 1814; *Messiah* on 19, 20, and 23 April 1815. Information about these events is relayed by records in Vienna's Hof- Haus- und Staats-Archiv (henceforth HHStA), Zeremoniell Protokoll 1814 and 1815; see also the Congress timetable included in the exhibition catalog *Denmark and the Dancing Congress of Vienna*, pp. 298 and 318–20.

⁹For an important discussion of the 1784 Handel commemoration, see William Weber, *The Rise of the Musical Classics in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), chap. 8. See also Timothy Blanning, *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture: Old Regime Europe 1660–1789* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 266–81.

¹⁰Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), p. 103. An important study of Handel's central position in the English discourse of the sublime remains Claudia L. Johnson, “Giant HANDEL and the Musical Sublime,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 19 (1986), 515–33.

¹¹An account of this transformation can be found in Samuel H. Monk, *The Sublime: A Study of Critical Theories in Eighteenth-Century England* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960), pp. 63–83.

¹²Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (2nd [1759] edn.), ed. Adam Phillips (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 54.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 57.

¹⁴Reprinted and translated in *Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, ed. and trans. Peter le Huray and James Day (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 289.

perhaps, that an older, rhetorical conception of this aesthetic persisted in Viennese musical life. This was a version of the sublime best understood as a register proper to elevated subjects and contexts. Handel's music had become one of the generic sounds of power. By the same token, however, the pieces that received most revivals in early-nineteenth-century Vienna, and the gigantism of the performances themselves, indicate an increasing attention to the power of sound—a growing perception that Handel's music was a sublime force in its own right. The Hallelujah Chorus, for example, which was frequently presented as an independent choral movement, performed the exhaustion of representational language in the face of divinely inspired jubilation, as its text resolved into a series of joyful exclamations.¹⁵ The Thunder Chorus from *Alexander's Feast*—that is, the choral interjection in the accompanied recitative that opens its second part—was another favorite; its riotous unison strings, drums, and trumpet take on the sublime power of a tempest in order to rouse Alexander and provoke him to war. "Break his bands of sleep asunder, / Rouse him, like a peal of thunder" urges the text over a brutally elemental ground bass consisting of nothing but the root notes of the tonic, dominant, and subdominant chords. High and low voices eventually alternate with extended noise-making melismas on "rouse him" (see ex. 1).

Alexander's Feast occupied a special place in Viennese musical life. It was one of the Handel compositions that Mozart had reorchestrated for Baron van Swieten in the 1780s. Moreover, performances of the work in Mozart's arrangement in the hall of the Imperial Riding School on 11 and 14 November 1813, directed by Antonio Salieri and reportedly incorporating more than 700 performers,¹⁶ were formative events in the prehistory of what became known as the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde—

the self-appointed guardians of Viennese musical culture, whose 1814 statutes declared a commitment to "alte und classische Musik" (old and classic music).¹⁷ That this composition was a St. Cecilia's Day ode, taking as its subject the entrancing power that the court minstrel Timotheus wielded over Alexander the Great, made it a particularly apt choice. The complete English title of John Dryden's ode was *Alexander's Feast; or, The Power of Music*. In early-nineteenth-century Vienna, the work was generally known as *Timotheus, oder die Macht der Musik* (Timotheus, or the Power of Music). Even in its earliest London contexts, this piece encouraged audiences to equate the power of Handel's music with the power of the subject it portrayed—a conceptual parallel with the confluences of medium and message that occur in accounts of the sublime after Burke.¹⁸ In the dedication of his 1739 word-book, Newburgh Hamilton, who adapted the libretto of *Alexander's Feast* from Dryden's poem, imagined Dryden's amazement had he been alive to hear Handel's music, echoing the words with which Timotheus admits defeat to St. Cecilia: "How wou'd his [Dryden's] Wonder and Transport rise / Whilst fam'd *Timotheus* yields to you the prize."¹⁹ By the later eighteenth century, this Orphic Handel was already hardening into an art-hero and a source of authority, and his works themselves were evidence of the power of music: "The harmony of Handel may always be compared to the antique figure of Hercules," wrote John Mainwaring in his 1760 biography of the composer, "which seems to be nothing but muscles and sinews."²⁰ And Beethoven's Viennese-accented Handel, as Schultz's report implies, not only composed music appropriate to monarchs, but was himself a kind of musical monarch, prompting sub-

¹⁷*Statute der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde des österreichischen Kaiserstaates* (Vienna, 1814), p. 38. (British Library.)

¹⁸See Suzanne Aspden, "'Fam'd Handel Breathing, tho' Transformed to Stone': The Composer as Monument," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 55 (2002), esp. 54–67.

¹⁹See Otto Erich Deutsch, *Handel: A Documentary Biography* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1955), p. 476.

²⁰John Mainwaring, *Memoirs of the Life of the Late George Frederic Handel* (London, 1760), p. 204.

¹⁵For example, concerts on both 22 March 1807 and 8 September 1809 concluded with the Hallelujah Chorus. See the limited number of concerts listed in the appendix of Mary Sue Morrow, *Concert Life in Haydn's Vienna* (Stuyvesant, N.Y.: Pendragon Press, 1989), pp. 341 and 357.

¹⁶See the report in the *Wiener allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 46 (1 Dec. 1813), col. 713.

27

Trb. I, II

Timp.

I

Ob.

II

I

Vn.

II

Vla.

Sop.

Alto

Ten.

Bass

Cont.

Break his bands of sleep a - sun - der, rouze him, like a peal of thun - der, break his bands of sleep a -

Break his bands of sleep a - sun - der, rouze him, like a peal of thun - der, break his bands of sleep a -

Break his bands of sleep a - sun - der, rouze him, like a peal of thun - der, break his bands of sleep a -

Break his bands of sleep a - sun - der, rouze him, like a peal of thun - der, break his bands of sleep a -

74

Example 1: Handel, Thunder Chorus from *Alexander's Feast*, mm. 27–39.

lime language and humble prostration among even his most elevated subjects. "I would uncover my head and kneel down at his tomb!"

The most self-conscious appropriations of what were considered Handelian aesthetics in the Viennese context thus tended to take as their subject the power of music. The Munich Kapellmeister Peter Winter's own version of *Timotheus*, in this instance synonymously subtitled *Die Gewalt der Musik*, featured regularly on Viennese concert programs in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Most of all, of course,

it was Haydn, fresh from his London sojourns, who dominated the early-nineteenth-century Viennese reception of Handel.²¹ As the *Wiener allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* put it in 1813, in the context of an extended discussion of a new piano reduction of *Alexander's Feast*, Haydn "reproduced Handel's spirit in our times"

²¹Among the literature on Handelian Haydn, see Matthew Head, "Music With 'No Past?': Archaeologies of Joseph Haydn and *The Creation*," this journal 23 (2000), 191–217.

30

Trb. I, II

Timp.

Ob. I, II

Vn. I, II

Vla.

Sop.

Alto

Ten.

Bass

Cont.

sun - der, rouze him, like a peal of thun - der, rouze him,

sun - der, rouze him, like a peal of thun - der, rouze him,

sun - der, rouze him, like a peal of thun - der, rouze him,

sun - der, rouze him, like a peal of thun - der, rouze him,

6

Example 1 (*continued*)

(*pflanzte Händels Geist in unsere Zeiten fort*).²² This claim was well founded inasmuch as *The Creation* and *The Seasons*, in addition to one or two other choral works, were then seen to embody Handelian aesthetic virtues more convincingly than Handel's music itself. In Haydn's case, the image of music as a kind of aesthetic power wielded by a musical prince was commonplace. By the 1790s, Haydn was habitually

portrayed as a kind of musical monarch—a "Great Sovereign of the tuneful art," as Charles Burney put it in a poem welcoming Haydn to London.²³ Critical responses to *The Creation* often went further still, implicitly comparing the composer to the divine creator himself. Carl Friedrich Zelter proposed that Haydn had created "a new

²²Wiener allgemeine musikalische Zeitung 5 (30 Jan. 1813), col. 67.

²³Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*, III, 34; pp. 32–35 for the full poem. See my discussion of the "Haydn hero" trope in "Heroic Haydn, the Occasional Work, and 'Modern' Political Music," *Eighteenth-Century Music* 4 (2007), esp. 18–22.

33

Trb. I, II

Timp.

Ob. I

Ob. II

Vn. I

Vn. II

Vla.

Sop.

Alto

Ten.

Bass

Cont.

rouze him, rouze him, break his bands of sleep a - sun - der, rouze

e Bsn.

senza Bsn.

Example 1 (*continued*)

Eden," while Swedish diplomat Samuel Silverstolpe, fresh from the first rehearsal of *The Creation* in the Schwarzenberg Palace, imagined that "light rays darted from the composer's eyes" with his setting of the words "Let there be light!"—the divine utterance in Genesis that aestheticians had, from Longinus onward, regarded as the epitome of the biblical sublime.²⁴

²⁴C. F. Zelter, "Briefe an einen Freund über die Musik in Berlin," *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 17 (21 Jan. 1801), col. 291. Silverstolpe's remark is recorded in H. C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn Chronicle and Works*, vol. IV (Bloomington:

Indiana University Press, 1977), p. 318. On Handel and the "biblical sublime," see Ruth Smith, *Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), chap. 4.

²⁵See Lawrence Kramer's subtle account of this moment in connection with the mechanics of the eighteenth-cen-

ture of the eighteenth-century.

Musical score for Example 1 (continued), measures 36-39. The score includes parts for Trb. I, II; Timp.; Ob. I, II; Vn. I, II; Vla.; Sop.; Alto; Ten.; Bass; and Cont. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The vocal parts have lyrics: "rouze him, rouze him, rouze him, rouze him, rouze him, rouze him, rouze him, rouze him, rouze him, rouze him, rouze him, rouze him." The conductor's part at the bottom shows the tempo "c Bsn." and the measure number "6".

Example 1 (*continued*)

words himself in the Israelites' chorus "O first created beam" in the first part of *Samson*, yet it was Haydn's setting that reverberated most audibly through early-nineteenth-century music—

ture sublime in his "Recalling the Sublime: The Logic of Creation in Haydn's *Creation*," *Eighteenth-Century Music* 6 (2009), esp. 42–43. See also Elaine Sisman, "The Voice of God in Haydn's *Creation*," in *Essays in Honor of László Somjai on His 70th Birthday: Studies in the Sources and the Interpretation of Music*, ed. László Vikárius and Vera Lampert (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2005), esp. p. 161. On the darkness-to-light topos in Haydn's music, see Webster, *Haydn's "Farewell" Symphony*, pp. 230–31.

not least in Beethoven's best-known transitions from metaphorical darkness to light, for example, the shift from C minor to C major that announces the finale of the Fifth Symphony.

The rhetoric of Haydn's *Creation* almost seems to echo in the imagery of Hoffmann's 1814 article "Alte und neue Kirchenmusik" (Old and New Church Music), which prophesizes the rebirth of "authentic" religious music on the model of Handel and Palestrina in the face of its supposed worldly debasement: "the sovereignty of the eternal Power ruling over us will be proclaimed as with the thunder-

ous sound of a thousand trumpets."²⁶ Hoffmann had his doubts about the value of *The Creation* as devotional music, but his polemic nonetheless mirrors the secularizing move in Haydn's oratorio—a move that implicitly recast God's power as music's power, a substitution eloquently compressed into Haydn's astonishing re-creation of musical light. Hoffmann takes up the characteristically Romantic position that all great music is in essence a form of religious worship, intimating the glories of Godhead: "Sound audibly expresses an awareness of the highest and the holiest, of that spiritual power which enkindles the spark of life in the whole of nature, and so music and singing become an expression of the total plenitude of existence—a paean to the Creator!" It is this rhetoric—a key component of the late-eighteenth-century sublime—that allows Hoffmann to displace sacred mystery and divine power into the realm of the aesthetic. He even argues that one is humbled by the power of music, by what he calls the "stirring dignity and power" of Handel's *Messiah*.²⁷ One approaches such music, he intimated, with a particular mental posture—the posture of worship. Aesthetic experience here requires something approaching the "mental attunement" that Kant maintained was externalized in the physical bearing of the God-fearing—an attitude he found distasteful and potentially contrary to reason: "It seems that in religion in general the only fitting behavior in the presence of the deity is prostration, worship with bowed head."²⁸

FANATICISM AND THE AUTHORITARIAN SUBLIME

The sublime was thus itself a kind of sublimation—a displacement of direct forms of power

²⁶E. T. A. Hoffmann, "Old and New Church Music," in *E. T. A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings*, ed. David Charlton, trans. Martyn Clarke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 354. For a detailed account of Hoffmann's politics and its possible influence on his understanding of the sublime, see Keith Chapin, "Sublime Experience and Ironic Action: E. T. A. Hoffmann and the Use of Music for Life," in *Musical Meaning and Human Values*, ed. Keith Chapin and Lawrence Kramer (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), pp. 32–58.

²⁷Hoffmann, "Old and New Church Music," pp. 355, 369.

²⁸Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 122.

into aesthetic experience. The acknowledgment of the power of sound in aesthetics might therefore be understood as the theoretical wing of music's new social role. Indeed, the emergence of the language and values of the sublime in the less rigorous context of critical writings and concert reports attests to the usefulness of this aesthetic concept in accounting for new artistic and social trends. After all, Hoffmann's polemic about church music was published in the wake of the *Befreiungskriege*—the German wars of liberation from Napoleon—and in the year that the Congress of Vienna began: a time when European states were drawing on the power of music more than ever before.²⁹

The music of the French Revolution and after was at the forefront of this change, having been mobilized on an unprecedented scale by the state as an instrument of social cohesion and ideological manipulation.³⁰ French revolutionary music made its way to Vienna primarily via the stage, which was periodically dominated by the operas of Cherubini—the only composer to rival Handel in the number of endorsements he received from Beethoven.³¹ Rather than follow this French thread, however, which, as many other scholars have observed, shaped the exhortative tone of Beethoven's symphonic music and, of course, *Fidelio* (itself a compelling document of Vienna's changing political environment during the early nineteenth century), I want to explore the distinctly Handelian sound of Viennese political life.

Indeed, it was as if the best-known moments of Handel and Handelian Haydn had frozen into symbols of sublimity, symbols that were constantly recycled for explicitly political ends. The most famous example, Haydn's creation of

²⁹This is not to say that the concept of the sublime was the exclusive preserve of large-scale "public" genres—or, indeed, that sublime experience, in the late-eighteenth-century sense, could not theoretically be instigated via artistic means other than monumentality or grandeur; the "Razumovsky" Quartets provide several examples of a sublime register operating within a chamber context. Nevertheless, it is the monumental and "public" sublime that concerns me here.

³⁰See the essays collected in *Music and the French Revolution*, ed. Malcolm Boyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

³¹See John Rice, *Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 565–67.

musical light, was repeated as if in epigrammatic form in Beethoven's music to *König Stephan*—a patriotic drama by August von Kotzebue, premiered alongside *Die Ruinen von Athen* on 10 February 1812 (the Kaiser's birthday) at the opening of the new Imperial Theater in Pest.

The play presents a sequence of scenes from the life of the monarch who supposedly brought Christianity to Hungary. The second number, a male chorus, describes the journey from the darkness of paganism into the Christian light: "On a dark, errant path in shadowy groves / We wandered to the murky source / There we suddenly saw a light appear / It dawned, it became light!"³² The chorus opens with a succession of low, rhythmically square overlapping entries (see ex. 2). With the dawning of light, however, the woodwind breaks into triplets and the chorus rapidly stammers out the text: "Da sahen wir plötzlich ein Licht erscheinen" (There we suddenly saw a light appear). Then, with the words "es wurde hell" (it became light), Beethoven appears to paraphrase Haydn's *Creation*: as C minor becomes C major, a *fortissimo* fanfare of brass and timpani—underpinned by brilliant sixteenth notes in the strings—brings light to Hungary. This prompts one of the play's patriotic choruses, this one in praise of King Stephen's enlightened father: "Heil Deinem Vater! Unserm Retter! Der uns Glauben und Hoffnung gebracht!" (Hail to your father! Our savior! Who brought us faith and hope!)

Throughout this period, the choral works of Handel and Haydn were jumbled up with overtly political works by Beethoven and others in public ceremonies, on concert programs, and even within the same theatrical productions. The chorus "Fall'n is the foe" from the second act of Handel's *Judas Maccabaeus*—the oratorio that Winton Dean memorably described as "not so much a work of art as a victory concert"³³—was twice given a new text as the penultimate number, of a festive Singspiel presented at the Kärntnertheater entitled *Die Ehrenpforten*

(The Triumphal Arches), written by court dramatist Friedrich Treitschke, Beethoven's collaborator on the last version of *Fidelio*.³⁴ Several of Vienna's leading musicians—Johann Nepomuk Hummel, Joseph Weigl, Adalbert Gyrowetz—contributed numbers to the Singspiel, which was presented in two versions: the first, performed in July 1815, celebrated the second capitulation of Paris, the later version the following October marked victory at Waterloo. For each performance, Beethoven provided a closing number, for bass voice and chorus, which followed the Handel chorus.³⁵ These numbers, both strophic songs with codas, share a direct, hymnlike manner; their simple stepwise or triadic melodic tendencies are reminiscent of trumpet voluntaries.

But it was the ever-popular Thunder Chorus from *Alexander's Feast* whose tempestuous power was most often appropriated for political ends. By 1813 it was part of the repertoire of court inventor Johann Mälzel's mechanical curiosity the Panharmonicon—an automatically driven "orchestra" of winds and percussion that could also play the overture from Cherubini's *Lodoïska* and the Allegretto from Haydn's "Military" Symphony. Beethoven's 1813 battle piece *Wellingtons Sieg* had been composed with Mälzel's device in mind, the two men temporarily falling out when Beethoven decided to strike out alone with his orchestral version.³⁶ When the Thunder Chorus was not being coopted by a political machine, it was, like "Fall'n is the foe," furnished with new, topical

³⁴The text of the Singspiel is printed in Willy Hess, "Zwei patriotische Singspiele von Friedrich Treitschke," *Beethoven Jahrbuch* 6 (1969), 269–319. A table detailing the participating composers and the numbers they contributed is in my "Beethoven and His Others: Criticism, Difference, and the Composer's Many Voices," *Beethoven Forum* 13 (2006), 180.

³⁵The chorus for the earlier version of the Singspiel was "Es ist vollbracht" (It is accomplished)—a piece whose Haydnesque and biblical resonances I explore below. In the later version, "Es ist vollbracht" was replaced with Beethoven's chorus "Germania," which had been previously performed as the closing number of another topical Singspiel by Treitschke premiered the previous year entitled *Die gute Nachricht* (The Happy Message).

³⁶See Thayer's account of the quarrels in Alexander Wheelock Thayer, *Thayer's Life of Beethoven*, rev. and ed. Elliot Forbes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967) [henceforth Thayer-Forbes], pp. 567, 569, and 579–80.

³²"Auf dunkelm Irrweg in finstern Hainen / Wandelten wir am trüben Quell, / Da sahen wir plötzlich ein Licht erscheinen— / Es dämmerte, es wurde hell!"

³³Winton Dean, *Handel's Dramatic Oratorios and Masques* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 466.

Allegro con brio

p

pp pizz. *p*

p

Auf dun - kelm

p

Auf dun - kelm

p pizz.

Auf dun - kelm Irr weg in fin - stern Hai - nen wan - del - ten wir am trü - ben Quell - am trü - ben

p

6

pizz. *p* pizz. *p*

p

p

Auf dan - kelm

Irr - weg in fin - stern Hai - nen wan - del - ten wir zm trü - ben Quell, am trü - ben

Irr - weg in fin - stern Hai - nen wan - del - ten wir am trü - ben Quell.

Quell, am trü - ben Quell, am trü - ben Quell, auf dan - kelm

Cb.

Example 2: The chorus of Hungarian converts from *Die Ruinen von Athen*.

10

Irr - weg in fin - stern Hai - nen wan - del - ten wir am trü - ben Quell.

Quell, auf dan - kelm Irr - weg in fin - stern Hai - nen wan - del - ten

am trü - ben Quell. am

Irr - weg in fin - stern Hai - nen wan - del - ten wir am trü - ben Quell. am

Example 2 (*continued*)

texts. On 18 June 1814, two days after Kaiser Franz's victorious return to Vienna (which he had been compelled to abandon during the height of the war) the Kärntnertortheater hosted a grand celebration that included an "allegorisch-dramatische Vorstellung" (allegorical-dramatic performance) with music by Weigl and a text by Ignaz Sonnleithner entitled *Irene, oder die Weihe der Zukunft* (Irene, or the Consecration of the Future). In his highly detailed commemorative volume, *Denkbuch für Fürst und Vaterland*, however, Joseph Rossi suggests that the peak of the celebrations was a performance of the Thunder Chorus with an orchestra of 184 and the choir consisting of men in scarlet uniforms, richly trimmed with silver, and women in white robes.³⁷ Together they

sang a newly written text to the chorus that transformed it into a kind of Ode to Joy—the repeated word "Freude" (joy) in each verse coinciding with Handel's rousing vocal melismas:

Loudly rejoice, since our life's / Fairest hour has descended. / Joy! Joy! / At the goal of lofty aspiration, / We have [our] Father again.

Punishment and reward are rigorously apportioned / Justice will never be vanquished; / Joy! Joy! / All sorrows are forgotten, / And all wounds healed over.

God guarded his footsteps, / Pour forth, ye songs of thanks: / Joy! Joy! / God, you look upon us below! / Franz is in the midst of his children!³⁸

³⁷Joseph Rossi, *Denkbuch für Fürst und Vaterland*, vol. 1 (Vienna, 1815), p. 8. (British Library, London.)

³⁸Jubelt laut, denn unsers Lebens / Schönste Stunde stieg hernieder. / Freude! Freude! / An dem Ziel des hohen Strebens, / Haben wir den Vater wieder. Straf' und Lohn sind streng bemessen / Recht wird nimmer überwunden; /

14

Fl.

Ob.

Bsn.

Hn. in C

I

Vn.

II

Vla.

Ten. I

am trü - ben Quell, am trü - ben Quell,

Ten. II

wir am trü - ben Quell, am trü - ben Quell, am trü - ben Quell,

Bass I

trü - ben, trü - ben Quell, am trü - ben, trü - ben Quell,

Bass II

trü - ben, trü - ben Quell, am trü - ben, trü - ben Quell,

Vc., Cb.

Example 2 (*continued*)

This was probably the text used for the version of the Thunder Chorus that concluded a further concert in the Zeremonien Saal of the Hofburg on 23 December. The first half of this

Freude! Freude! / Alle Leiden sind vergessen, / Und vernarbet alle Wunden. Gott bewachte Seine Schritte / Strömet aus, ihr Dankeslieder: / Freude! Freude! / Gott, du schauest auf uns nieder! / Franz ist in der Kinder Mitte! Rossi reprinted only the first stanza of the new words. The other stanzas are provided in the preface to the word-book of Weigl and Sonnleithner's *Irene* (Vienna, 1814), pp. 3–4. (British Library, London.)

program included a chorus by Salieri and concluded with Haydn's choral work *The Storm*, with a quintessentially sublime theme and dating from his first London trip.³⁹ The second half of the concert also featured a Beethoven cantata—probably all or part of his *Der*

³⁹For more on *The Storm* and its English aesthetic contexts, see James Dack, "Haydn's First English Text: The Madrigal 'Hark, the Wild Uproar of the Winds!' (The Storm)," *Haydn-Studien* 9 (2006), 195–209.

18

Picc.

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in C

Bsn.

Hn. in C

Trb. in C

Timp. in C, G

Alto Ten.

Trb.

Bass

I Vn.

II

Vla.

Ten. I

Ten. II

Bass I

Bass II

Vc., Cb.

da sa-hen wir plötz-lich ein Licht er-schein-en es däm-mer-te, es wur-de hell!

da sa-hen wir plötz-lich ein Licht er-schein-en es däm-mer-te, es wur-de hell!

da sa-hen wir plötz-lich ein Licht er-schein-en es däm-mer-te, es wur-de hell!

da sa-hen wir plötz-lich ein Licht er-schein-en es däm-mer-te, es wur-de hell!

Cb. *ff*

Example 2 (continued)

21

Picc.

Fl. *a 2*

Ob. 2

Cl. in C *a 2*

Bsn. *a 2*

Hn. in C

Trb. in C

Timp. in C, G

Alto Ten.

Trb.

Bass

I Vn.

II Vn.

Vla.

Ten. I

Ten. II

Bass I

Bass II

Vc., Cb.

Und sie - he! es schwan - den die fal - schen

Und sie - he! es schwan - den die fal - schen

Und sie - he! es schwan - den die fal - schen

Und sie - he! es schwan - den die fal - schen

Example 2 (*continued*)

glorreiche Augenblick, which had been premiered in the Großer Redoutensaal the previous November.⁴⁰

To be sure, the public orientation and broadly collectivist aesthetic of the many choral works that greeted the Napoleonic Wars and their aftermath owed a great deal to the French Revolutionary tradition of ceremonial choruses and operatic “oath choruses,” witnessed regularly on the Viennese stage during the first decade of the nineteenth century.⁴¹ But, outside of the theater, composers tended to emphasize the Handelian aspects of the choral sublime. On 21 June 1814 the Kaiser’s return to Vienna was greeted with a short choral cantata with wind instruments entitled *Der große Tag des Vaterlandes* (The Great Day of the Fatherland) by the choirmaster of the Imperial Orphanage Ignaz Sauer—a work that nonetheless announced its Handelian scope and ambition by billing itself as an “oratorio.” The words and gestures of the best-known oratorios rapidly ossified into symbols of aesthetic and political gravitas. Several composers and librettists alluded to the monumental, ultimately fugal, B♭ chorus that concludes the second part of *The Creation*—the completion of the biblical days—“Vollendet ist das große Werk” (Achieved is the glorious work). The eighteenth number of Salieri’s 1805 Habsburg Cantata is an E♭ Andante choral maestoso, which echoes the words of an earlier duet for two bass singers (no. 3): “Das hohe Werk ist nun vollbracht in Welt und Kriegs Gewühl” (The lofty work is now accomplished in the whirl of the world and war). Unfolding political circumstances meant that there was lofty artistic work still to be done—and this prompted further appropriations of the same theme: the cantata, by Louis Spohr and Austrian nationalist poet Caroline Pichler, *Das befreite Deutschland* (Germany Liberated) featured a victorious “Chor der Deutschen Völker” (Chorus of the German Peoples) singing “nun

ist das große Werk vollbracht!” (Now the great work is accomplished!).⁴²

Beethoven and Treitschke’s patriotic closing chorus for *Die Ehrenpforten* “Es ist vollbracht” (It is accomplished) was clearly in the same spirit, though it directly alluded to another cultural and musical topic: *es ist vollbracht* or *consummatum est* was among Christ’s “seven last words” on the cross. The choral version of Haydn’s *Sieben letzte Worte* (Seven Last Words) was well known in Vienna, having been performed several times in the decade preceding the Congress. Beethoven’s *Christus am Ölberg* (Christ on the Mount of Olives) expands Jesus’s words into “meine Qual ist bald verschwunden, der Erlösung Werk vollbracht” (my agony will soon vanish, the work of redemption accomplished) before its culminating chorus of angels. Beethoven had revised his oratorio in 1811, and it was performed frequently in the early nineteenth century, including during the Congress of Vienna in the hall of the “Zum römischen Kaiser” hotel.⁴³

Grand fugal culminations abounded—the mode of high-flown musical rhetoric apparently most appropriate to majestic or sacred subjects.⁴⁴ To celebrate the triumphant return of Carl von Schwarzenberg to Vienna on 24 June 1814, Hummel published a D-major “Patriotische Chor und Canon” (Patriotic Chorus and Canon); its very title announced a mixture of topical sentiment and contrapuntal technique. But it was the combination of fugal writing and multiple choruses that captured most vividly the contemporary aspiration to vastness—their size and complexity interpretable as a kind of Kantian “mathematical sublime,” intimating

⁴⁰HHStA, Zeremoniell Protokoll 1814; see *Denmark and the Dancing Congress of Vienna*, p. 310.

⁴¹On “oath choruses,” see Elizabeth Bartlet, “The New Repertory at the Opéra during the Reign of Terror: Revolutionary Rhetoric and Operatic Consequences,” in *Music and the French Revolution*, pp. 107–56.

⁴²The manuscript source of Salieri’s Habsburg Cantata and the print source of Sauer’s oratorio are in the archive of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Vienna; the manuscript source of Spohr’s cantata in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.
⁴³On 5 March 1815. HHStA, Zeremoniell Protokoll 1815; see *Denmark and the Dancing Congress of Vienna*, p. 316. It is worth noting that Bach’s now-famous setting of these words in the *St. John Passion* would have been relatively obscure in Vienna at this time.

⁴⁴For a sensitive and detailed account of the various sociopolitical connotations of learned counterpoint, particularly in Beethoven’s late music, see Stephen Rumph, *Beethoven After Napoleon: Political Romanticism in the Late Works* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), esp. chaps. 5 and 6.

inconceivable boundlessness.⁴⁵ Even Sauer's pseudo-oratorio concluded with a somewhat contrived "double chorus" that divided his choir into antiphonal groups. Carl Maria von Weber's post-Waterloo cantata *Kampf und Sieg* (Battle and Victory) ended with a D-major Maestoso ma con fuoco representing all victorious nations uniting in a fugue of thanksgiving. And Spohr's *Das befreite Deutschland* likewise combined multiple choruses, each representing a distinct nation, in a concluding C-major fugue: "Only the choruses really pleased the great public, insofar as one could find out its opinion," remarked one reviewer of the first performance.⁴⁶ These fugal double choruses had their best-known and most frequently performed precedent in the last movement of *The Seasons*, whose concluding double chorus and fugue call for God's guidance and envision the eternal glory of heaven. This movement had an aesthetic precedent of its own, perhaps, in Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach's 1776 *Heilig*—among the most vaunted sacred works of its time after its publication in 1779—which contains the only double fugue in his choral music and portrays a choir of angels and the massed peoples of the world in a monumental double chorus.⁴⁷

The impact of these choruses derived, on the one hand, from the way in which they constructed an aesthetic vision of harmonious public participation and, on the other, from the sublime dimensions of the public they sought to represent. Even topical piano pieces, which circulated in abundance in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars, framed and distributed these idealized images of public participation as a kind of picturesque, as if repackaging public space itself for domestic consumption and reimagining the improbable vastness of the pub-

lic on a scale more appropriate to the intangible sphere staked out by the publishing market. One of an avalanche of contemporary *Tongemälde* or tone paintings for piano, Gyrowetz's "charakteristische Fantasie" commemorating the Prater festival on 18 October 1814 (an event that was itself a commemoration of the anniversary of Napoleon's defeat at Leipzig) provided, through music and accompanying text, a blow-by-blow account of every element in the celebrations, with particular emphasis on the crowd's excited reactions. Its frontispiece depicted the multitude itself disappearing to a vanishing point between a frame of luxuriant trees (see plate 1)—almost a miniature tableau of Kant's mathematical sublime.

The cover of Gyrowetz's piano piece, with its cross-section of Habsburg subjects in the foreground, portrays a free civil society. Yet this was a public sphere closely policed by the state. Indeed, Vienna's was a civil society created from the top down, whose principal organs—the press, the arts, public ceremony—had been assiduously managed by the Austrian state during the Napoleonic Wars. Visiting Vienna in 1805, one English traveler complained that "the public mind is dull and torpid" because of the restrictions placed on the Austrian press. With government support, the number of newspapers and journals increased rapidly over the next decade—but not without severe strictures imposed on their content: on 9 March 1809, a shocked French *chargé d'affaires* remarked that "the newspapers contain nothing but tirades directed against France, and advertisements of patriotic works and accounts of the prowess of Austrian heroes."⁴⁸ As for public space itself, state spending on policing rose significantly during the first decade or so of the nineteenth century—not merely on the *Gassenpolizei* or street police, but also on the *Geheimpolizei* or secret police, which relied on a vast network of informants among the general population.⁴⁹ In advance of the Con-

⁴⁵See Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, pp. 107–14. For a discussion of the relationship between music—particularly "learned" contrapuntal music—and the "mathematical" sublime, see Elaine Sisman, *Mozart: The "Jupiter" Symphony No. 41 in C Major, K. 551* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), chap. 2.

⁴⁶"Dem grossen Publicum, so weit man seine Urtheile erfahren könnte, hatten nur die Chöre wirklich gefallen." *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 46 (15 Nov. 1815), col. 769.

⁴⁷See Annette Richards on the *Heilig* in her "An Enduring Monument: C. P. E. Bach and the Musical Sublime," in *C. P. E. Bach Studies*, ed. Annette Richards (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 149–72.

⁴⁸Cited and translated in Walter Langsam, *The Napoleonic Wars and German Nationalism in Austria* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1930), pp. 56, 95.

⁴⁹For a concise account of the policing of Vienna and its relationship to musical life in this period, see Alice M. Hanson, *Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), esp. pp. 34–56.



Plate 1: Adalbert Gyrowetz, *Sieges- und Friedensfest der verbündeten Monarchen*.
“Characteristic Fantasy” depicting the Prater festival on 18 October 1814
on the anniversary of the Battle of Leipzig.

By permission of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Wien. Signatur VII 14937 (Q 13062).

gress of Vienna, surveillance was stepped up further. On 1 July 1814, not long before Europe’s leaders and their entourages were due to arrive in Vienna, Baron Hager, the *Oberste Polizei und Cenzur Hofstelle*, contacted the chief of police to remind him “to take special, more vigorous measures.”⁵⁰ Over subsequent months, hundreds of new informants were recruited across the city—from noblemen and government officials to coachmen, waiters, servants, and prostitutes. From the mass of often inconsequential material that he received, Hager compiled a daily report, which was sent to Metternich and Kaiser Franz himself, who added

⁵⁰Cited and translated in Adam Zamojski, *Rites of Peace: The Fall of Napoleon and the Congress of Vienna* (London: HarperCollins, 2007), p. 251.

their own annotations.⁵¹ Thus, as Walter Langsam has shown, just as a Viennese public sphere was taking shape, both in print and in Vienna’s streets and squares—spheres that were at least notionally independent of constant state direction—so the state was acquiring the more subtle means to control it.⁵²

⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 252.

⁵²Walter Langsam, *The Napoleonic Wars*, passim. Habermas’s influential account of the development of the public sphere defines civil society by its notional independence from state control; see Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), pp. 57–89, esp. 73–79. A more recent study of the rise of the public sphere in the eighteenth century can be found in Blanning, *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture*, part 2. The “consensual” forms of power appropriate to apparently free public

Choral music and the societies founded to promote it were among the instruments of this control. The upper echelons of the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* were barely distinguishable from the lower tiers of government: founder member Raphael Georg Kiesewetter, for example, who became a member of the executive committee of the society in 1818 and its vice-president in 1821, was an official in the war department from 1801, subsequently reporting on public sanitation from 1813. With such politically active personnel, it is not surprising that the 1814 statutes should have made one of the society's goals that of constructing a cohesive *Gemeinschaft* through a kind of aesthetic molding. The society vowed to spread an awareness of "admirable choral compositions" (*die vortrefflichen mehstimmigen Compositionen*) in order to provide an "education of taste" (*Bildung des Geschmacks*).⁵³ The *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* became Vienna's foremost commissioner of new choral works, Spohr's *Das befreite Deutschland* among them. Moreover, during the Napoleonic Wars, their gatherings were in essence political rallies. The 1813 performances of *Alexander's Feast* so important in the society's inception were coupled with what the *Wiener allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* called a "small patriotic cantata" by Salieri, "Der Vorsicht Gunst beschütze, beglücktes Östreich, dich!" (May the Grace of Foresight Protect Thee, Ye Favored Austria)—actually a revised version of the choral conclusion of his 1799 cantata-cum-battle piece *Der Tyroler Landsturm* (The Tyrolean Resistance). The journal reported the occasion in florid terms that soon strayed from the subject of music: "The assembled several thousand listeners testified through their renewed acclamation at every juncture that the wishes of every blessing to our best Kaiser Franz, [which were] expressed in the cantata, [also] glowed in the breast of

spheres—power generally wielded through "culture" rather than the more direct tools of coercion—was theorized as "hegemony" by Antonio Gramsci. Terry Eagleton has argued that Schiller's notion of aesthetic education can be understood as a theory of hegemony. See *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), chap. 4.

⁵³*Statute der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde*, p. 38.

every one of his loyal subjects, and they are pervaded by feelings of happiness, that [they] belong to the country that delights in the protection of the most sublime monarch."⁵⁴ The contiguity of sublime music and sublime monarch continued in the same issue of the journal, which reprinted Michaelis's 1805 essay on the musical sublime. An issue from the next month saw the publication of a piece on "die Macht der Tonkunst" (The Power of Music): "The power of music," it argued, "shows itself in its influence over mankind" (*die Macht der Tonkunst zeigt sich im Einfluß auf den Menschen*).⁵⁵

Given the highly developed culture of covert manipulation and regulation, it is noteworthy that one of the most unusual accounts of Beethoven's triumphant *Akademie* in the Großer Redoutensaal on 29 November 1814—which premiered *Der glorreiche Augenblick* alongside repeat performances of *Wellingtons Sieg* and the Seventh Symphony—survived in the archives of the Austrian secret police. Someone thought it worthwhile to file a report on the audience's reactions: "Factions are truly being formed for and against Beethoven. Razumovsky, Apponyi, and Kraft idolize Beethoven, but they are opposed by a strong majority of connoisseurs who simply will not listen to music composed by Herr Beethoven."⁵⁶ As if the aesthetic and political wrangling of the audience were not enough, Beethoven's cantata mediated and managed the event itself, performing the sublime power of the monarchs assembled at the Congress in the plainest possible way. In the third movement, the soprano personifying Vienna introduces each ruler in

⁵⁴"Die versammelten mehrer Tausend Zuhörer bezeugten durch die bei jeder Stelle erneuerten Acclamationen, daß die in der Cantate ausgesprochenen Wünsche des Heils und Segens für unsern besten Kaiser Franz in der Brust jedes seiner getreuen Untertanen glühen, und sie von dem Gefühle des Glückes durchdrungen sind, dem Lande anzugehören, das sich des Schutzes des erhabensten Monarchen erfreut." *Wiener allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 46 (1 Dec. 1813), col. 714.

⁵⁵*Wiener allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 51 (29 Dec. 1813), col. 808.

⁵⁶August Fournier, *Die Geheimpolizei auf dem Wiener Kongress: Eine Auswahl aus ihren Papieren* (Vienna: F. Tempsky, 1913), p. 289.

(88) poco adagio

Allegro molto

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in B \flat

Bsn.

Hn. in B \flat

Trpt. in C

I Vn.

II Vn.

Vla.

Vienna

Deutsch - lands Pa - ra - die - se!

Vc., Cb.

Example 3: The Kaiser's fanfare, mm. 88–98.

turn, during which each one receives a grand orchestral fanfare: Tsar Alexander, Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia, the kings of Denmark and Bavaria, and lastly—recipient of one of the most lavish fanfares—Kaiser Franz (see ex. 3). The power of each ruler thus acquired a direct musical analog.

In *Der glorreiche Augenblick*, sacred thanksgiving in the manner of a *Te Deum*, with which so many contemporaneous cantatas culminated,⁵⁷ is dispensed with in a single central

section that conflates the worship of God and the worship of monarchy; the fourth movement sees a soprano Prophetess bid the people kneel before their divine savior, represented by the “circle of crown-bearers” (*Kreis der Krönenträger*): “O knieet, Völker, hin und betet zuerst zu dem, der euch gerettet!” (O kneel down, peoples, and pray first to the one who has saved you!). But Beethoven and Weissenbach’s cantata reserves its most extravagant show of deference until the very end, revealing more worldly priorities. The sixth and last movement draws on almost every trope of the early-nineteenth-century Handelian sublime: the voices enter in three groups—a chorus of women, of children, and of men—each section

⁵⁷On the *Te Deum* topic in choral music of the period, see Stefanie Steiner, *Zwischen Kirche, Bühne, und Konzertsaal: Vokalmusik von Haydns “Schöpfung” bis zu Beethovens “Neunter”* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2001), pp. 42–52.

Example 3 (*continued*)

of Viennese society thus paying homage to the assembled monarchs in a bright C major: "The droves of women step forth to behold the glittering choir of princes," it begins (*Es treten hervor die Scharen der Frauen / Den glänzenden Chor der Fürsten zu schauen*). Each section of the chorus having paid its homage, a further strophe sees the choral groups alternate melodic phrases, before their voices ultimately combine, revealing their individual melodies to be complementary elements of a full contrapuntal texture—an idealized vision of social consensus. After this, a sudden *pianissimo* Adagio on the dominant prepares a concluding section in which the chorus praises Vienna itself, addressing it by its Latin name: "Vindobona! Heil und Glück / Welt, dein großer Augenblick!" (*Vindobona! Praise be to you! World, your great moment!*). It is, of course, a monu-

mental fugue that brings this vast performance of genuflection to an end (see ex. 4).

For most Beethoven scholarship, at least since the twentieth century, the sublime of *Der glorreiche Augenblick* is of a debased kind, marking a point at which the sublime becomes bombast—an example of the radical coarsening of register that aestheticians from Burke to Johann Georg Sulzer have always recognized as a danger inherent in attempts to create sublime art.⁵⁸ That Beethoven's sublime in this instance

⁵⁸Sulzer, for example, warns that "we must have a yardstick by which we seek to measure the extent of the sublime, even if unsuccessfully. Where this yardstick is lacking, its grandeur evaporates or degenerates in mere bombast." See the translation of his encyclopedia entry on the sublime, translated in Day and le Huray, *Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, p. 139.

(117) Adagio Presto

Fl.

Ob.
Cl. in C

Bsn.

Hn. in C
I
II

Trpt.
in C

Trb.
I
II

Vn.
I
II

Vla.

Sop.

Alto

Bass

Vc., Cb.

zu le - gen.

zu bin - den.

zu son - nen Vin - do - bo - na, Vin - do - bo - na, Heil un Glück, Heil und Glück,

p *pp* *p* *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff*

Example 4: The Adagio and culminating fugue from *Der glorreiche Augenblick*, mm. 117–33.

124

Bsn. *sf sf*

Trb. II *sf (sf)*

Vla. *(ff)*

Ten. *(ff)*

Bass *sf sf*

Vc., Cb.

129 a 2

Cl. in C *ff*

Bsn.

I *sf*

Trb. II *sf*

Vn. II *ff*

Vla.

Alto *(ff)*

Ten. *sf sf*

Bass

Vc., Cb.

Vin - do - bo - na, Vin - do - bo - na, Heil und Glück, Heil und Glück,
Heil und Glück, Welt, Welt, dein gro - ßer Au - gen -
blick, dein gro - ßer Au - gen blick!

Example 4 (*continued*)

openly serves an authoritarian politics is usually blamed: "words and music in this work have been subordinated to the political adoration of authority," writes William Kinderman.⁵⁹ The aesthetic register that, as Sulzer put it, "works on us with hammer-blows" leaves many critics feeling battered rather than edified.⁶⁰

Granted, there is an influential Kantian tradition informing this judgment. In Kant's view, the "dynamic" sublime—that is, the sublime of overwhelming dominion—cannot come about merely through "the dread of that being of superior might to whose will the terrified person finds himself subjected"; this precludes the esteem that is necessary to generate truly sublime experience. Neither can one's experience be considered sublime if it is founded on the belief that one can fully apprehend the object of one's awe; this, Kant argues, is the basis of fanaticism (*Schwärmerei*)—"the delusion of wanting to SEE something beyond all bounds of sensibility."⁶¹ Instead, authentically sublime experience, for Kant, intimates concepts that can be dimly grasped but never apprehended, and, by thus demonstrating that the human subject can conceive of what lies beyond the realm of the senses, reminds humanity of its unlimited moral freedom: "*Sublime is what even to be able to think proves that the mind has a power surpassing any standard of sense.*" By contrast, fanaticism is the mind's subjection to an image, and is, writes Kant, "least of all compatible with the sublime, because it is ridiculous in a somber [*grüblerisch*] way."⁶²

⁵⁹Kinderman, *Beethoven*, p. 177.

⁶⁰Day and le Huray, *Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, p. 138.

⁶¹Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, pp. 123, 135. *Schwärmerei* is not satisfactorily translatable into English, although "fanaticism"—for which German also has the word *Fanatismus*—is adequate in the contexts quoted here. *Schwärmerei*—which derives from the word "swarm"—connotes something more bodily and even potentially more ridiculous than "fanaticism." Adelung's dictionary defined religious *Schwärmerei* as the "capacity to take [one's] imaginings and feelings for divine actions and truths" (die Fertigkeit, Einbildungen und Empfindungen für göttliche Wirkungen und Wahrheiten anzunehmen). See Johann Christoph Adelung, *Grammatisch-kritisches Wörterbuch der Hochdeutschen Mundart*, vol. 3 (Vienna, 1811), col. 1717. See also Kramer's discussion of *Schwärmerei* in "Recalling the Sublime: The Logic of Creation in Haydn's *Creation*," pp. 44–45.

⁶²Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, pp. 106, 136.

In this scheme of things, the powers represented and embodied in Beethoven's most notoriously overt political music might be considered all too perceptible as objects of veneration; the chorus of women in the last movement of *Der glorreiche Augenblick* step forth "to behold the glittering choir of princes"—an emphasis on visual apprehension that perhaps implies fanatical devotion. No wonder, then, that poetic and musical depictions of prostration before images recur across Beethoven's overtly political music. For example, the climactic moment of *Die Ruinen von Athen* sees the goddess Minerva answer a Sarastro-like prayer from a High Priest—a request for an altar bearing an image of the "guardian spirit" (*Schutzgeist*) of Pest. Beethoven once again provides a sublime moment of musical creation: with a thunderclap, a turn to Presto, a big dominant chord, and a series of runs in the violins and flutes, an altar duly appears, bearing upon it a bust of the Kaiser. The High Priest subsequently launches into a concluding section in C major, joined by the chorus: "Er ist's! Wir sind erhört!" (It is he! We have been heard!): "Alle knien nieder" (everyone kneels down), reads the stage direction. Beethoven coupled the last three numbers from *Die Ruinen von Athen* with Wellington's *Sieg* for an *Akademie* of 2 January 1814. While the Kaiser's image had materialized from a trapdoor in the 1812 production of *Die Ruinen*, Beethoven apparently made do with more basic tools in Vienna's Großer Redoutensaal, concealing a statue of the Kaiser that already stood in the hall with a curtain, which was whipped away at the decisive moment.⁶³ Given the reports of the demonstrative audience behavior in the concerts of the previous year—and in the markedly patriotic concerts of 1809—it seems likely that, at this point, the audience would have joined in with the kneeling.⁶⁴

The irony of the concluding prostration in *Die Ruinen* is that fanaticism is one of the

⁶³See the letters of 27 May 1813 and 1 January 1814: *The Letters of Beethoven*, vol. 1, trans. Emily Anderson (London: Macmillan, 1961), nos. 424 and 456; *Briefwechsel II*, no. 652 and III, no. 688.

⁶⁴For reports of Viennese audience responses in 1809, see Langsam, *German Nationalism in Austria*, pp. 101–02.

25

Hn. in C

Trpt. in C

Alto

Trb.

Bass

I

Vn.

II

Vla.

Ten.

Bass

Vc., Cb.

Du hast in dei - nes Aer - mels

Du hast in dei - nes Aer - mels

Use all available noise-making instruments, like castanets, rattles, etc.

Example 5: The dervish chorus from *Die Ruinen von Athen*.

drama's principal targets. Fanaticism was a common trope of Habsburg anti-Turkish sentiment, and a recurring theme among contemporary Orientalists.⁶⁵ Beethoven and Kotzebue thus depict a chorus of dervishes stamping on the ruins of the European Socratic tradition. Aside from the obvious exoticisms—the imagistic

mumbo-jumbo of the text, pitches wavering onto their chromatic neighbors in the violins, primitivist open fifths, and the clatter of percussion instruments—the chorus is concerned above all with the fanatical urge to harmonic closure.⁶⁶ This is achieved not through conventional cadences but by a swooping descent to the tonic via the fifth degree and its lower chromatic neighbor, a melodic figure that repeatedly shouts its crude harmonic point, ultimately in insistent diminution (see ex. 5). Yet, for all the chorus's exaggerated exoticism, a present-day listener might well be struck by

⁶⁵Fanaticism was commonly discussed as part of the Aristotelian category of "Oriental despotism." Among the vast secondary literature on Western perceptions of Ottoman fanaticism and despotism, see Asli Çirakman, "From Tyranny to Despotism: The Enlightenment's Unenlightened Image of the Turks," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 33 (2001), 49–68. On Oriental despotism more generally, see R. Koebner, "Despot and Despotism: Vicissitudes of a Political Term," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 14 (1951), 275–302; and Franco Venturi, "Oriental Despotism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 24 (1963), 133–42.

⁶⁶Lawrence Kramer discusses the dervish chorus in his article "The Harem Threshold: Turkish Music and Greek Love in Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy,'" this journal 22 (1998), 86–87.

28

Hn. in C

Trpt. in C

Alto

Trb.

Bass

I

Vn.

II

Vla.

Ten.

Bass

Vc., Cb.

Fal - ten, den Mond ge - tra - gen, ihn ge - spal - ten. Ka - a - ba,

Fal - ten, den Mond ge - tra - gen, ihn ge - spal - ten. Ka - a - ba,

Example 5 (*continued*)

what it shares with the concluding chorus of Hungarian loyalty from *Die Ruinen*—a piece that was evidently intended to parallel and “correct” the unenlightened fanaticism that begins the drama: a simple melodic fragment, a descent to the tonic via descending thirds, outlines a repeating tonic–dominant–tonic alternation, as if internalizing through repetition the words “Dankend schwören wir auf’s Neue / Alte ungarische Treue” (Gratefully we pledge anew / our ancient Hungarian loyalty)—an unceasing insistence on closure at least as fanatical as that in the dervish chorus (see ex. 6).

Die Ruinen thus tackles fanaticism with a suspicious lack of compromise. In this respect, it has a forerunner in Beethoven’s early funeral cantata for Joseph II, dating from Beethoven’s years in Bonn. To dramatize Joseph’s enlight-

ened outlook, Beethoven composed an accompanied bass recitative, groaning with diminished chords, describing “ein Ungeheuer, sein Name Fanatismus” (a monster, Fanaticism by name). The bright D-major aria that follows instantly turns darkness into light: “Da kam Joseph, mit Gottes Stärke” (Then came Joseph, with the strength of God), runs Severin Anton Averdonk’s text, “und trat ihm auf’s Haupt” (and trod on its head)—an image of liberally motivated violence in some ways appropriate to a monarch who sought to enforce enlightenment from above. This tone continued in the cantata’s companion piece, the accession cantata for Leopold II, which incorporates the ultimate trope of the authoritarian sublime in the course of a choral D-major Maestoso in praise of Joseph’s successor: “Hail! Prostrate your-

31

Hn. in C

Trpt. in C

Alto

Trb.

Bass

I

Vn.

II

Vla.

Ten.

Bass

Vc., Cb.

Ka - a - ba, Ka - a - ba, Ka - a - ba, Ka - a - ba, Ka - a - ba,

Ka - a - ba, Ka - a - ba, Ka - a - ba, Ka - a - ba, Ka - a - ba,

Example 5 (*continued*)

selves, ye millions, / on the smoking altar! / Gaze up at the Lord of Thrones."⁶⁷

THE CHORUS AND
THE SYMPHONIC SUBLIME

As Nicholas Cook has described, generations of Beethoven-lovers and Beethoven scholars have gone out of their way to show that *Der glorreiche Augenblick* and other manifestations of Beethoven's "authoritarian sublime" are aesthetic aberrations.⁶⁸ By contrast, scholars usually locate Beethoven's "authentic sublime," something like the Kantian sublime of human

freedom,⁶⁹ in his symphonic works—autonomous aesthetic objects that dispense with any potentially fanatical fixation on images, revealing and celebrating through their exclusively musical power the limitless empire of the mind. For example, Mark Evan Bonds's recent book on Beethoven and the philosophy of the symphony takes as its premise "the long-standing association of the sublime with the symphony as a genre"—and one can certainly trace this association from Sulzer's encyclopedia to Hoffmann's canonical Beethoven reviews.⁷⁰ Yet

⁶⁷"Heil! Stürzet nieder, Millionen, / an dem rauchenden Altar! / Blicket auf zum Herrn der Thronen."

⁶⁸Cook, "The Other Beethoven," pp. 3–11.

⁶⁹The most recent and detailed account of this kind of sublime in connection with Beethoven's symphonic compositions before the Congress of Vienna period is in Rumph, *Beethoven After Napoleon*, chap. 2.

⁷⁰Mark Evan Bonds, *Music As Thought: Listening to the Symphony in the Age of Beethoven* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 45.

34

Hn. in C

Trpt. in C

Alto

Trb.

Bass

I

Vn.

II

Vla.

Ten.

Bass

Vc., Cb.

Ka - a - ba, Ka - a -

Ka - a - ba, Ka - a -

Example 5 (*continued*)

the emphasis that today's Beethoven scholarship places on the symphonic sublime, almost to the exclusion of other genres, creates a historiographical problem: music historians widely acknowledge that the eighteenth-century aesthetic of the sublime was allied most closely with choral music, particularly Handel and Handelian Haydn, yet narratives about the "rise of instrumental music" and the disproportionate attention thus paid to instrumental genres in the decades "around 1800" tend to turn the sublime into a predominantly symphonic concept as the nineteenth century approaches. On the one hand, this situation is understandable: a present-day mode of historiography that privileges symphonies chooses to interpret its preferred repertoire through an important contemporary aesthetic category. On the other hand, in so doing scholars fail to address how a musi-

cal aesthetic with its origins in choral music should have come to characterize an instrumental genre. Nor do they ask what this development might suggest about the aesthetics of the symphony itself.

Dahlhaus is one of the few music historians to allude to these questions, calling them "contradictions in the concept of the sublime." He suggests that Hoffmann's "Alte und neue Kirchenmusik," coupled with his contemporaneous Beethoven writings, sought to mediate, on an abstract philosophical level, between the worlds of Beethoven symphonies and early choral music. Dahlhaus goes on to argue that Beethoven tackled an analogous problem in his symphonic style: "Beethoven found his models for the sublime style in Handel's oratorios, rather than in earlier instrumental music. He admired Handel's oratorios above all, it seems,

Musical score for Example 5 (continued). The score includes parts for Horn in C, Trumpet in C, Alto, Bass, Violin I and II, Viola, Tenor, Bass, and Cello/Double Bass. The vocal parts (Tenor and Bass) have lyrics: "ba, Ka a - ba, Ka - a - ba, Ka - a -". The score is marked with *sf* (sforzando) and includes a dynamic marking *a 2* above the Horn part. The music is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature.

Example 5 (*continued*)

because they embodied in vocal music the monumentality that he sought to achieve in the symphony."⁷¹ Dahlhaus thus maintains that Beethoven transported the aesthetic of the monumental Handelian chorus into his symphonies—just as Hoffmann displaced the aura of sacred choral music into secular genres and, by extension, the power of the divine into art.

Symphonies regularly rubbed shoulders with choral compositions on concert programs in early-nineteenth-century Vienna, and this is perhaps reason enough to wonder whether Beethoven and his contemporaries might not

have conceived of symphonic rhetoric—particularly in certain institutional contexts—as an instrumental transmutation of grand choral writing. Indeed, David Wyn Jones's study of the symphony in Beethoven's Vienna reveals that Beethoven was unusual in his continued cultivation of the symphony during this period.⁷² To the extent that there was a Viennese public concert life in the first decade of the nineteenth century, it consisted in large part of the performance of choral works—a fact that might appear anomalous in the context of traditional music histories that so often define

⁷¹Carl Dahlhaus, *Ludwig van Beethoven: Approaches to His Music*, trans. Mary Whittall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 71, 77. See also Dahlhaus, "E. T. A. Hoffmanns Beethoven-Kritik und die Ästhetik des Erhabenen," *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 39 (1981), 72–92.

⁷²David Wyn Jones, *The Symphony in Beethoven's Vienna* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), esp. chap. 7.

40

Hn. in C

Trpt. in C

Alto

Trb.

Bass

I

Vn. *sf*

II *sf*

Vla. *sf*

Ten.

ba, Ka - a - ba, Ka - a - ba!

Bass

ba. Ka - a - ba, Ka - a - ba!

Vc., Cb. *sf*

Example 5 (*continued*)

this period by the symphony.⁷³ For example, whereas Beethoven's Third and Fourth Symphonies were each performed several times in 1807, they featured in a calendar that included at least four performances of *The Seasons*, three of the *Creation*, and two of *Alexander's Feast*—not to mention performances of the Hallelujah Chorus, a Haydn chorus, an oratorio by Ferdinand Kauer, a pair of cantatas by Hummel, and further cantatas by Ignaz von Seyfried, Franz Veichtner, and Friedrich Kunzen.⁷⁴ And this was the year in which the short-lived Liebhaber Concerte temporarily boosted the presence of Viennese symphonic music.⁷⁵

While many concerts, depending on their purpose and location, included a symphony or an overture, the climax of a performance was commonly a choral excerpt of some sort. A representative example of this mix is a concert held at the Theater an der Wien on 8 September 1809, which opened with the *Eroica* Symphony and, after some Mozart and Cherubini, ended with the Hallelujah Chorus.⁷⁶ Beethoven's own concerts in the first decade of the nineteenth century paraded a similar mixture. His concert of 9 April 1803 in the Theater an der Wien featured his first two symphonies, the Third Piano Concerto, and *Christus am*

⁷³Ibid., chap. 3.

⁷⁴See Morrow, *Concert Life*, pp. 342–46.

⁷⁵See Wyn Jones, *The Symphony*, pp. 123–29.

⁷⁶See the report in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 7 (10 Feb. 1809), cols. 295–96.

Example 6: The Hungarians' concluding "oath chorus" from *Die Ruinen von Athen*.

Ölberg.⁷⁷ The notoriously grueling *Akademie* on 23 December 1808 featured the Fourth Piano Concerto, the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, a solo piano improvisation, the Gloria and Sanctus from the Mass in C, and the Choral Fantasy to end—an ode to the power of music

that, with its solo piano introduction, orchestral variations, and choral culmination, evidently sought to synthesize all the evening's genres (and bring together all the evening's performers) by way of a finale.⁷⁸ These concerts, surely intended to showcase Beethoven's work in all major genres, might serve as a reminder

⁷⁷Report in the *Zeitung für die elegante Welt* 3 (7 April 1803), 362; rpt. in *The Critical Reception of Beethoven's Compositions by His German Contemporaries*, ed. and trans. Wayne M. Senner, vol. I (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), pp. 164–65.

⁷⁸Report in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 11 (25 Jan. 1809), 267–69; rpt. and trans. in Senner, *The Critical Reception of Beethoven's Compositions*, vol. II (2001), 48–49.

48 *p cresc.*

Cl. in A

Bsn. *sfp* *sfp* *cresc.* *sfp* *sfp* *cresc.*

I *p cresc.* *3* *3* *3*

Vn. II *p cresc.*

Vla. *p cresc.*

Sop.

Ten. *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

Vc., Cb. *cresc.*

Dan - kend schwö - ren wir auf's Neu - e al - te un - ga - ri - sche Treu - e,
schwö - ren wir auf's Neu - e, schwö - ren wir auf's Neu - e,

Example 6 (continued)

to present-day scholars that Beethoven's career can be described as much through a series of large-scale choral pieces as through his symphonies, even though these choral pieces are now considered unrepresentative of his musical voice, not to mention his place in the history of music: *Christus am Ölberg*, the Mass in C, the Choral Fantasy, *Der glorreiche Augenblick*, the cantata *Meeresstille und glückliche Fahrt*, and the *Missa solemnis*—the piece that Beethoven famously called “the greatest work which I have composed so far.”⁷⁹ Even the Bonn cantatas, which were never performed while Beethoven was living, testify to the impact that eighteenth-century choral culture had on the young composer. When Beethoven's friend and collaborator Friedrich August Kanne—probably best remembered by Beethoven scholars as the earliest exegete of the Ninth Symphony—bemoaned what he called “the perceptible lack of great oratorios” in 1823, he made exceptions

for Haydn's “gigantic works of power,” Mozart's Requiem, which Kanne clearly understood as an oratorio of sorts, and Beethoven's choral compositions: “The power of the great *Beethoven* likewise has revealed itself in a few works of the above-mentioned genre, full of superb genius.”⁸⁰ Kanne's article was probably motivated in part by his awareness that Beethoven, having accepted the commission of an oratorio from the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in 1815, was considering a setting of Karl Bernhard's text *Der Sieg des Kreuzes* (The Victory of the Cross)—and had just completed the *Missa solemnis*. Given that Kanne placed Mozart's Requiem in the category of “oratorio” without feeling the need to justify himself, it is not hard to imagine that the *Missa solemnis* might also have been regarded as an “oratorio”—which, in this context, seems to have denoted any grand

⁷⁹Letter of 5 June 1822. Anderson II, no. 1079; *Briefwechsel* IV, no. 1468.

⁸⁰*Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung mit besonderer Rücksicht auf den österreichischen Kaiserstaat* 7 (1 Jan. 1823), 1–3; rpt. and trans. in Senner, *The Critical Reception of Beethoven's Compositions*, I, 57.

56 a 2

Cl. in A *sfp* *sfp* *cresc.* *sfp* *sfp*

Bsn.

Hn. in A *p cresc.*

I *sempre cresc.*

Vn. *sempre cresc.*

II *sempre cresc.*

Vla. *sempre cresc.*

Sop. *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

Alto *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

Ten. *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

Vc., Cb. *sempre cresc.*

schwören wir auf's Neue, schwören wir auf's Neue,
 Dankend schwören wir auf's Neue alt-e un-ga-ri-sche Treue,
 dankend schwören wir auf's Neue alt-e un-ga-ri-sche Treue,

Example 6 (continued)

choral composition that harnessed the gravitas of sacred themes for aesthetic ends in the concert hall. Indeed, Beethoven remarked to Friedrich Duncker in a letter of February 1823 that his new mass “could also be performed as an oratorio.”⁸¹

Critics have sometimes defended Beethoven’s choral compositions by implying that he brought “symphonic” qualities to bear on them: “Beethoven relies heavily on his symphonic instincts,” writes Maynard Solomon of the Mass in C.⁸² But it is notable, as Bonds has observed in his essay on the symphony and the Pindaric

ode, that late-eighteenth-century music criticism often described the symphony via the metaphor of the chorus, as a way of explaining its many-voiced textures and collectivist aesthetic.⁸³ The symphony “has as its goal, like the chorus, the expression of a sentiment of an entire multitude,” wrote Heinrich Christoph Koch in 1802.⁸⁴ Summarizing Beethoven’s symphonic development more than twenty years later, A. B. Marx compared the symphony to a hymn: both genres embodied emotions “expressed by a multitude,” he wrote. He subsequently described as “the most sublime hymn”

⁸¹Letter of 18 February 1823. Anderson III, no. 1139; *Briefwechsel* V, no. 1571.

⁸²Maynard Solomon, *Beethoven* (rev. 2nd edn. New York: Schirmer, 1998), p. 264.

⁸³See Mark Evan Bonds, “The Symphony as Pindaric Ode,” in *Haydn and His World*, ed. Elaine Sisman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 147–50.

⁸⁴Cited and translated in Bonds, *Music as Thought*, p. 65.

64

Fl. *p cresc.*

Ob. *p cresc.*

Cl. in A

Bsn.

in A

Hn. *a 2*

in D *p cresc.*

I

Vn. II

Vla.

Sop.

Alto

Ten.

Bass

Vc., Cb.

dan - kend schwö - ren wir auf's Neu - e al - te un - ga - ri - sche Treu - e,
sf. schwö - ren wir auf's Neu - e, *sf.* schwö - ren wir auf's Neu - e,
 schwö - ren wir, schwö - ren wir,
 Dan - kend schwö - ren wir auf's Neu - e al - te un - ga - ri - sche Treu - e,

Example 6 (continued)

not the Ninth Symphony—which he had yet to learn of—but the finale of the Fifth.⁸⁵

Beethoven's symphonic works are strewn with reminders of the choral sublime, not least

when they adopt the grand and exhortative tone that led Romain Rolland to formulate the idea of the heroic style—a concept most often associated with the odd-numbered symphonies.⁸⁶

⁸⁵Berliner *allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 1 (12 May 1824); rpt. and trans. in Senner, *The Critical Reception of Beethoven's Compositions*, I, 63, 65.

⁸⁶See Romain Rolland, *Beethoven the Creator: The Creative Epochs*, trans. Ernest Newman (Garden City, N.Y.: Garden City Publishing, 1937). See also Michael Broyles,

72

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in A

Bsn.

Hn.
in A
in D

Trpt.
in D

Timp.

Alto
Trb.
Ten.

Vn.
I
II

Vla.

Sop.

Alto

Ten.

Bass

Vc., Cb.

schwö - ren wir,

dan - kend schwö - ren wir auf's Neu - e

dan - kend schwö - ren wir auf's Neu - e

schwö - ren wir auf's Neu - e,

Example 6 (continued)

76

Fl.

Ob.

Cl. in A

Bsn.

in A
Hn.

in D

Trpt.
in D

Timp.

Alto
Trb.

Ten.

I
Vn.

II

Vla.

Sop.

Alto

Ten.

Bass

Vc., Cb.

schwö - ren wir

al - te un - ga - ri - sche Treu - e

al - te un - ga - ri - sche Treu - e

schwö - ren wir auf's Neu - e

Example 6 (*continued*)

Yet both the Fifth and the Sixth Symphonies conclude with “sublime hymns.” In the case of the Pastoral, the pseudochoral *Hirtengesang* is prompted by the passing of a thunderstorm—a progression from sublime force of nature to collective celebration that owed a great deal to the storm and evensong that conclude Summer from Haydn’s *The Seasons*.⁸⁷ And if the transition to the finale of the Fifth recalled the appearance of light in *The Creation*, the climax of the opening movement of the Second Symphony more or less quoted a striking harmonic progression from the end of “The Heavens Are Telling”—one of the oratorio’s grandest choruses.⁸⁸

Contredanse finales, so familiar to the Viennese public from Haydn’s London Symphonies, had long invested the genre with a communal ethos,⁸⁹ but Beethoven’s symphonies tended to monumentalize this ethos with topical gestures derived from official music. The last movement of the *Eroica* demonstrates this process, by elevating its contredanse with march topics and fugal writing. Fugue likewise infuses the Seventh Symphony’s Allegretto; the counterpoint adds textural intricacy and topical gravitas to the movement’s contemplative uniformity of harmony and rhythm—its gradual layering of voices and attendant increase in instrumental mass. The Seventh Symphony opened Beethoven’s Congress concert of No-

vember 1814, introducing *Wellingtons Sieg* and *Der glorreiche Augenblick*. The *Wiener Zeitung* even reported that the symphony had been composed as an “accompaniment” (*Begleitung*) to the other works.⁹⁰ It is reasonable to suppose, given this context, that Congress audiences heard the rhetoric of the Seventh—its celebratory finale, for example—in relation to the compositions that it accompanied. After all, a comparable mixture of collectivist ethics, sublime topics, and choral aesthetics was on display in *Wellingtons Sieg*, whose concluding fugato on “God Save the King” blended political hymn, counterpoint, and even—with its jaunty $\frac{3}{8}$ meter—contredanse.⁹¹

In the same year as this November *Akademie*, the quasichoral elements in *Wellingtons Sieg* were presented as genuinely choral in Peter Winter’s own *Schlacht-Sinfonie* (Battle Symphony)—a composition that music historians have occasionally dubbed the first “choral symphony” because of its concluding series of German national hymns.⁹² Whether or not one accepts this view, Beethoven’s introduction of a chorus into the Ninth certainly appears less surprising and novel when viewed against the aesthetic and institutional background of the choral sublime. In the years following the Napoleonic Wars, the Viennese musical calendar continued to be dominated by the choral works of Handel and Haydn. Beethoven’s choral music likewise maintained a presence; when the Seventh Symphony was presented in the two Lenten concerts of 1817, it was paired with *Christus am Ölberg*.⁹³ Only after 1819, with the combined effect of the concerts of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde and the Concerts Spirituels, did something resembling a “symphonic repertoire” gain a secure foothold in Viennese concert life.⁹⁴ No wonder, then, that Beethoven’s introduction of a chorus in the Ninth provoked less comment among contemporary critics than the perceived heteroge-

Beethoven: The Emergence and Evolution of Beethoven’s Heroic Style (New York: Excelsior, 1987); and Scott Burnham, *Beethoven Hero* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

⁸⁷On the sublime of the Pastoral Symphony and its relationship to Haydn’s *The Seasons*, see Richard Will, *The Characteristic Symphony in the Age of Haydn and Beethoven* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 177–84, esp. 181. For an account of the relationship between sublime and pastoral registers in *The Seasons* and *The Creation*, see James Webster, “The Sublime and the Pastoral in *The Creation* and *The Seasons*,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Haydn*, ed. Caryl Clark (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 150–63.

⁸⁸See James Webster’s discussion of this passage in “*The Creation*, Haydn’s Late Vocal Music, and the Musical Sublime,” in *Haydn and His World*, ed. Elaine Sisman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 83–88.

⁸⁹For a discussion of this ethos, see Will, *The Characteristic Symphony*, pp. 230–37. For the political connotations of contredanse, see also Thomas Sipe, *Beethoven: Eroica Symphony* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), esp. p. 115.

⁹⁰See Thayer-Forbes, p. 599.

⁹¹See also Will, *Characteristic Symphony*, pp. 230–31.

⁹²See Steiner, *Zwischen Kirche, Bühne, und Konzertsaal*, p. 92.

⁹³See Wyn Jones, *The Symphony*, pp. 181–82.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 184–91.

neity and vulgarity of his musical materials.⁹⁵ The chorus only came to be seen as a serious generic transgression—that is, as “pure” instrumental music becoming vocal—in the era of Wagner and Brahms. Instead, one could argue that the finale of the Ninth, which so plainly recapitulates the primary musical topics of the choral sublime in its ultimate recourse to hymn and double fugue, openly revealed what the symphony had been for decades: a genre that drew heavily upon the aesthetic and the culture of the sublime chorus. Moreover, through Schiller’s “An die Freude” Beethoven dwells on a key trope of the “authoritarian sublime,” as if echoing the early cantata for Leopold II: “Do you prostrate yourselves, ye millions? World, do you sense the Creator?”⁹⁶

SUBJECTION AND THE SYMPHONIC SUBLIME

While these contextual, aesthetic, and musical connections might blur the boundary between Beethoven’s authoritarian, “political” sublime and his “authentic,” symphonic one, I do not want to argue that the latter—that is, the Kantian sublime of human freedom—is merely a myth or some kind of ideological smokescreen. In the first place, the cultural entanglements of chorus and symphony, propaganda and art, subjection and freedom give us an insight into the nature of the political power that the sublime obliquely described. As Tom Furniss has observed, eighteenth-century theories of the sublime are often as concerned with the “restatement of limits” as with human freedom: “This double impulse is inscribed within the etymological structure of the term itself: although the sublime gestures towards the infinite, its prefix—from the Latin *sub*, meaning ‘under, close to, up to, towards’—suggests that its effect depends upon a relation to

the *limen*, the threshold or limit.”⁹⁷ Indeed, while the Kantian sublime alerts us to the full extent of our mental freedom, it is also a severe aesthetic of checks and limits; its crucial moment is not when we are overwhelmed by the illusion of infinity or by complete domination, but when we recover our equilibrium—our subjective coherence bolstered by this intimation of an otherwise imperceptible power. The sublime revelation that we are free thus contains within it a reminder of our subjective boundaries. Moreover, the realization that one is free appears, in the Kantian tradition, inseparable from the uncoerced decision to behave according to duty. In Kant’s view, truly sublime experience, as opposed to mere masochism, involves a kind of turning back on oneself. This is the ethical distinction that Kant draws between being crudely dominated and being humbled: humility requires a “sublime mental attunement” involving the “voluntary subjection of ourselves to the pain of self-reprimand”; freedom in this instance means self-regulation.⁹⁸

As Schiller recognized in his 1794 letters *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, the aesthetic thus provided a potent model for a noncoercive kind of social control—the sort of delicate, hegemonic power commensurate with the emergence of civil societies and the associated ideal of individual freedom.⁹⁹ Man as yet unformed by the aesthetic, persisting in an infantile state of self-love, is, writes Schiller, “self-seeking, and yet without a *self*; lawless, yet without freedom; a slave, yet to no Rule.” Such a man “merely feels the fetters which reason lays upon him, not the infinite liberation she is capable of affording him”; echoing Kant, Schiller concludes that “the spirit in which he worships God is therefore fear, which degrades him, not reverence, which exalts him in his own estimation.” Through aesthetic experience, however, man comes to understand that the potentially distant and authoritarian injunctions of duty constitute his innermost being: the voice of

⁹⁵See, for example, the account of the reviews of the first performances in David Levy, *Beethoven: The Ninth Symphony* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), chap. 5.

⁹⁶“Ihr stürzt nieder, Millionen? / Ahnest du den Schöpfer, Welt?” Granted, Maynard Solomon reads Beethoven’s setting as anxious in the face of an absent father. See “The Ninth Symphony: A Search for Order,” in *Beethoven Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), esp. p. 30.

⁹⁷Tom Furniss, *Edmund Burke’s Aesthetic Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 23.

⁹⁸Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 123.

⁹⁹I explore this idea in connection with Haydn in my “Heroic Haydn, the Occasional Work, and ‘Modern’ Political Music,” esp. 23–25.

reason “is bound to seem like something external to himself as long as he has not yet reached the point of regarding his self-love as the thing that is really external to him, and the voice of reason as his true self.” In the form of art, “Duty, stern voice of Necessity, must moderate the censorious tone of its precepts.” By engaging with human feeling and gaining its consent, the aesthetic “consummates [vollzeiht] the will of the whole through the nature of the individual”; Schiller thus envisions a mode of human freedom managed almost at its subjective origin.¹⁰⁰

Schiller’s conception of the social and ethical function of the aesthetic was crucial in shaping his understanding of the sublime; in his essay “On the Sublime,” published in 1801, he argued that sublime experience produces “a frame of mind which morality teaches as the concept of resignation in the face of necessity, and which religion teaches as the concept of submission to the divine judgment.” And, once again, authentic human freedom is only achieved via a sort of mental substitution, in which overwhelming external powers become internal ones: “The morally cultivated man, and only he, is wholly free. Either he is superior to nature as a force, or he is at one with her. Nothing that she can do to him is violence because before it reaches *him* it has already become *his own action*.”¹⁰¹ Here, Schiller’s sublime comes remarkably close to an Althusserian account of subject-formation: a free subject is created only in the very moment that it is “hailed” by an external source of authority.¹⁰² Power is no longer a brutal system that “bears down upon” the human subject from without; instead, the free self becomes meaningful and coherent only in the moment that it is delineated by power itself.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, ed. and trans. Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 171, 179, 217, 215.

¹⁰¹Friedrich Schiller, “On the Sublime,” in *Naïve and Sentimental Poetry and On the Sublime*, trans. Julius A. Elias (New York: F. Ungar, 1966), p. 195.

¹⁰²See Louis Althusser’s famous essay, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001), pp. 85–126, esp. pp. 106–26.

¹⁰³This conception of power as the condition of subjective freedom rather than an external system of domination, or

While it would be easy to overstate the case for such conceptions of power and subjectivity in the study of politics *tout court*—not least in the context of Metternich’s police state, where power obviously took more directly coercive forms—it nonetheless works well as an account of the modern politics of art, particularly in Beethoven’s case. Scott Burnham has argued that Beethoven’s symphonic music (though by no means all of it, of course) constructs a compelling sense of self—even though it often strikes an authoritarian tone, redolent of collective or even universal imperatives rather than heroic individualism. “The external presence heard in the heroic style is one of imposing authority, often inspiring the sense of awe associated with the sublime,” writes Burnham. Given this exhortative tone, he remarks, it is paradoxical that this music should have become “so closely associated with our sense of self,” rather than remaining as separate from us as we usually feel authoritarian injunctions to be. In his exploration of this paradox, Burnham draws parallels between Beethoven’s music and Hegel’s philosophical method, emphasizing the music’s merging of Goethean heroic action with its “Hegelian narration of consciousness”—a musical embodiment of the modern idea of the self that, Burnham argues, is created largely through Beethoven’s linear and goal-oriented thematic and formal processes.¹⁰⁴

Yet there is a relatively simple fact that might also shed light on the issue. The lofty symphonic utterances that critics and listeners have repeatedly heard as the most intensely subjective—moments that encourage maximal listener identification—are often those that reprise most clearly the stock topics and gestures of official music: fanfares, marches, and hymns. Beethoven’s symphonic sublime thus appears to construct its listening subject in part by prompting a sort of conceptual substitution; as Burnham himself puts it, “an external presence

even a pernicious form of authority that subjects come to internalize, is explored, ultimately from a psychoanalytic perspective, in Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

¹⁰⁴Burnham, *Beethoven Hero*, pp. 149, 144.

is simultaneously heard as an internal presence"—listeners come to hear the sound of power as the sound of the self.¹⁰⁵

Remaining within Burnham's Hegelian frame of reference, then, Beethoven's music might be seen to illustrate the paradox outlined in Hegel's master-slave dialectic. This section of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* sets out to describe man's transition to "the freedom of self-consciousness" from his abject condition of bondage.¹⁰⁶ The paradox takes this form: the eventual freedom won by the slave upon rejecting his servitude is conditional on an inaugural surrender to a power formerly external, but now internalized; the master ends up reemerging as the slave's "own" conscience: "having a mind of one's own is self-will," concludes Hegel, "a freedom still enmeshed in servitude"; the price of freedom is what Hegel calls "unhappy consciousness."¹⁰⁷ Thus, as Furniss has observed, even though Hegel had no time for the late-eighteenth-century aesthetic of the sublime, the master-slave dialectic nonetheless bears a striking structural resemblance to it, the subject emerging as "free" only through an almost annihilating encounter through which it registers its limits.¹⁰⁸ If Beethoven's canonical symphonic music can be understood as presenting a Hegelian vision of self-determination, therefore, then one might also say that it falls into a sort of musical "unhappy consciousness."

Beethoven and Kotzebue thematized precisely this double-edged idea of freedom in *König Stephan*: "I come to you with brotherly love, and may your shackles be removed by my own hand" (Mit bruderliebe komm' ich dir entgegen, und deine Fessel sei von meiner Hand gelös't) says the eponymous hero to Gyula, the vanquished leader of Hungary's pagan tribes. "Now I am yours for eternity, without qualms!" responds the prisoner, prostrating himself at the king's feet, "a free slave" (Jetzt bin ich dein auf ewig, ohne Zittern! Ein freier Knecht). I

would suggest that the substitution of the sound of external power for the sound of internal freedom within Beethoven's symphonic music parallels this ideological gesture: a free subject is inaugurated at the very moment that it prostrates itself. Beethoven's musical subject is a free slave.

"I much prefer the empire of the mind, and I regard it as the highest of all spiritual and worldly monarchies," wrote Beethoven to Johann Nepomuk Kanka around the time of the first performance of *Der glorreiche Augenblick*.¹⁰⁹ Scholars have often invoked remarks of this sort in order to demonstrate Beethoven's fundamental disdain for politics. And yet, much like his music, Beethoven here constructs the independent dominion of his imagination by modeling the human mind on distinctly worldly hierarchies. More than any other, it is this aesthetic trope, which recasts external powers as internal ones, that conceals the operation of power in Beethoven's symphonic music: power becomes the condition of the subject's emergence rather than an external authority that constrains it. In this aesthetic framework, the stark musical injunctions that one might easily hear as the sound of mere propaganda become newly audible as the sound of subjectivity itself. This helps to explain why, throughout a long and varied reception history, critics have often intimated the authoritarian quality of this music but have seldom explained the relationship between the sense of self that Beethoven's music can create and the sense that it also wields tremendous power.¹¹⁰ Part of the reason is that the sound of power in this music is often the precondition of the sound of the self; the moment at which the self becomes audible is the very moment in which power becomes hardest to hear. Thus are a whole series of attendant relationships only ever hinted at by music historians: that between Beethoven's symphonic music and his marginalized political music; between his instrumen-

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 149.


¹⁰⁶See Butler's account of the master-slave dialectic in *Psychic Life of Power*, chap. 1.

¹⁰⁷G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 119. Cited in Butler, *Psychic Life of Power*, p. 42.

¹⁰⁸Furniss, *Edmund Burke's Aesthetic Ideology*, pp. 49–51.

¹⁰⁹Autumn 1814. Anderson I, no. 502; *Briefwechsel* III, no. 747.

¹¹⁰Hans Eggebrecht's 1972 study of Beethoven reception included "authority" as a recurrent theme; see *Zur Geschichte der Beethoven-Rezeption* (Laaber: Laaber, 1994), particularly the table on p. 56.

tal works and his choral compositions; between the music of freedom and the music of authority. These relationships are relevant to questions far beyond musical style and aesthetics, for they tell us about the continuing connection between Beethoven's music and political power. Indeed, one might argue that a work such as the Ninth Symphony has been so open to repeated political appropriation, and so potent as a political vehicle, in part because of the way in which it confounds gestures of oppression with gestures of freedom.¹¹¹ As Maynard Solomon has written, "ultimately, the coercive and subversive implications of the Ninth Symphony may be inseparable."¹¹² Beethoven's sublime of human freedom is often at the same time an authoritarian sublime—an aesthetic power that, even as it removes our shackles, also has us prostrate ourselves. 

¹¹¹Scott Burnham discusses the Ninth's apparent susceptibility to political appropriation in his review article "Our Sublime Ninth," *Beethoven Forum* 5 (1996), 155–63.

¹¹²Maynard Solomon, *Late Beethoven: Music, Thought, Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), p. 227.

Abstract.

This article argues for a number of hitherto unrecognized continuities—stylistic, aesthetic, and ideological—between Beethoven's marginalized "political music" from the period of the Congress of Vienna and his canonical symphonic works. It rereads his oeuvre against the background of the popularity and ubiquity of the "Handelian sublime" in early-nineteenth-century Viennese public life—that is, the aesthetics and social practice of grand choral singing, associated primarily with some of Handel's oratorios, but also with the late choral works of Haydn. Presenting new archival research into Vienna's po-

liticized choral culture, the article argues that contemporary theorizing about the power of the musical sublime became the theoretical wing of music's changing social status, as it was mobilized by the state during the Napoleonic Wars more than ever before. These new, Handelian contexts for Beethoven's music lead to three conclusions. First, the choral aesthetic background to Beethoven's symphonies has been largely overlooked. With reference to original performance contexts as well as the topical character of Beethoven's symphonies, the article argues that the symphonies are often best understood as orchestral transmutations of the grand Handelian chorus. Against this background, the appearance of an actual chorus in the Ninth might be reconceived as a moment when the genre's aesthetic debt is most apparent, rather than a shocking generic transgression. Second, the distinction, commonly elaborated by Beethoven scholars, between the mere bombast of Beethoven's political compositions and the "authentic," Kantian sublime of human freedom supposedly articulated in his symphonies cannot easily be sustained. Third, the cultural entanglement of choral and symphonic music in Beethoven's Vienna reveals something not only of the political origins but also of the continuing political potency of Beethoven's symphonies. With reference to Althusserian theories of power and subjectivity, the article speculates that the compelling sense of listener subjectivity created by Beethoven's most vaunted symphonic compositions (noted by Scott Burnham) comes about in part through the music's and the listener's transformation of external, choral reflections of political power into internal, symphonic ones—a transformation that leaves its mark on the topical character of the symphonies, which, especially in their most intense moments of subjective engagement, are replete with official topics and gestures: marches, hymns, and fugues. This might explain why the music has so often been heard as simultaneously browbeating and uplifting, authoritarian and liberating. Key words: Beethoven, Handel, Haydn, sublime, politics.