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REVIEW ESSAY

Historiographical Reflections on the Beethoven Year 250

Lockwood, Lewis. *Beethoven's Lives: The Biographical Tradition*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2020. xxii + 209 pp. £18.99 (cloth), £19.99 (ebook).

Bonds, Mark Evan. *The Beethoven Syndrome: Hearing Music as Autobiography*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. xiii + 325 pp. £25.49.

Kinderman, William. *Beethoven: A Political Artist in Revolutionary Times*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020. x + 256 pp. $35.00 (cloth) $34.99 (ebook).

For a certain subset of eminent Beethoven scholars, the celebration of Beethoven's 250th birthday in 2020 represented a challenge. In taking up the opportunity to communicate with a wider population of educated music lovers, the standard vehicle, a Beethoven biography, was off the table for them – because they had already written one.[1] In the three books reviewed here, each author responds to this dilemma by focusing on themes in reception history. I will attempt to clarify their main points, comment on similarities and differences in their approaches, and evaluate how successful each one might be in in making recent Beethoven scholarship more accessible for the general reader. I will argue that all three of these books successfully target the more musically literate segment of lay readers, and that any weak points arise at the intersection between their academic content and the address to these members of their presumed readership.

In the introduction to his biography *Beethoven: The Music and the Life* (2003), Lewis Lockwood addressed the issue of writing for multiple audiences. Observing that 'for no matter how faithfully painters work to present their subjects, they also present themselves', he acknowledged that both his background and scholarly work directed him towards a biography whose chief focus was Beethoven's music.[2] However, he also hoped to reach readers more interested in Beethoven's life or his cultural context. Lockwood recalls this metaphor of portrait painting in his new *Beethoven's Lives: The Biographical Tradition*, where he applies it

[1] These are Lewis Lockwood, *Beethoven: The Music and the Life* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003); Mark Evan Bonds, *Beethoven: Variations on a Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020); and William Kinderman, *Beethoven*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[2] Lockwood, *Beethoven: Music and the Life*, xvii–xviii. This quotation is an allusion to the Italian proverb 'Every painter paints himself'; see Frank Zöllner, '"Ogni Pittore Dipinge Sé": Leonardo da Vinci and "Automimesis"', in *Der Künstler über sich in seinem Werk: Internationales Symposium der Bibliotheca Hertziana, Rom 1989*, ed. Matthias Winner (Weinheim: VCH Verlagsgesellschaft MbH, Acta humaniora, 1992): 137–60.

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not just to himself but to all the biographers he will consider (p. x). He also returns to the question of audience, highlighting the ambiguous place in musicology of biography. In contrast to musicology and music theory, which are generally conducted by specialists, music biography 'tends inevitably towards the public sphere' (p. xvii). For 'lay readers', their fascination with Beethoven may rest not only on love of his music but also on his status as a 'cultural token', his historical background and his personal struggles (pp. xiv–xv).

These reflections show that *Beethoven's Lives* is to some extent a meditation on the earlier book, aimed at a somewhat different audience. Lockwood is addressing his colleagues here, but also, by implication, the educated Beethoven lover with some exposure to historiography.[3] His masterful writing style may draw them in, but they will be challenged here by an intellectually complex argument. As background, Lockwood observes that musicologists are now operating in a context where 'social and political issues tend to dominate the current horizon of scholarly interest' (p. xvii). At the same time, many of Lockwood's potential non-academic readers are professional, amateur or student musicians 'deeply interested in music as structure or expression' who are impatient with this emphasis on matters they see as extraneous (p. 170). *Beethoven's Lives* presents biography as a focal point where political, social and cultural history, archival research, paleography, style studies, music analysis, music criticism and contemporary musical life all come together. This is simply because some of these disciplines are central to any kind of historical research, but even more fundamentally, because a composer's music provides the rationale for writing his or her biography at all.

This complex goal accounts for some heterogeneity in style. The second part of the book seems aimed at music scholars and contains more background for the issues I've outlined above, while the first part is more for Beethoven fans looking for an absorbing read. Like the Bernard Rose film *Immortal Beloved* (a comparison Lockwood would hate!), the historical survey of *Beethoven's Lives* begins at Beethoven's funeral, with a quote from Franz Grillparzer's funeral oration.[4] Lockwood's narrative of the first Beethoven biographies shows a good amount of novelistic talent, with its heroes, villains, scenarios and bit parts. Through this all, he shows a careful curation of the most important biographical sources and issues. He also sets up dramatic foreshadowings of later plot developments such as the unmasking of Anton Schindler's forgeries through source studies, and the specialization of musical scholarship into biography, criticism, historical musicology and music analysis.

Lockwood's next profile, of the Beethoven biographer Alexander Wheelock Thayer, stands out both in its extent and in its laudatory tone. Lockwood calls Thayer, an American lawyer and journalist, 'the true founding father of modern Beethoven biography', and fills out the context that allowed the German musical

[3] Communication to a wider audience has been a concern of Lockwood's throughout his career. In an article published in 1988, he urged his colleagues to produce more content that would appeal 'to the larger audiences of musicians (including performers and many others), to musically cultivated and educated laymen, and … to the general lay public'; Lewis Lockwood, 'Communicating Musicology: A Personal View', *College Music Symposium* 28 (1988): 7.

[4] Lockwood's rating of *Immortal Beloved* might be classified as 'one star'; he finds many things to criticize besides its intentional historical inaccuracy. See Lewis Lockwood, 'Film Biography as Travesty: *Immortal Beloved* and Beethoven', *The Musical Quarterly* 81/2 (1997): 190–98.

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establishment to accept this rather improbable candidate as a leading expert on Beethoven (p. 31). Indeed, Lockwood's heading to this section, 'Alexander Wheelock Thayer and the Pursuit of Truth', pays tribute to Thayer's dogged determination to verify his statements about Beethoven's life and music to the greatest extent possible. Thayer's contributions to Beethoven research were undertaken completely on his own initiative and continued for many years, even in the face of other professional commitments and chronic health problems. Lockwood's praise of Thayer's biography might even inspire readers to purchase it – a confusing task as many versions are available! – so he also covers its complicated publication history after its completion was interrupted by Thayer's death in 1897 (pp. 69–73).[5]

Proceeding chronologically, Lockwood next turns to three biographers active in the mid-nineteenth century: Wilhelm von Lenz, A.B. Marx and Ludwig Nohl. He briefly summarizes their contributions, and then focuses on a figure who, except in the rarefied world of Beethoven scholarship, is not usually regarded as a biographer: Gustav Nottebohm. He points out that Nottebohm himself regarded studies of Beethoven's sketches, manuscripts and counterpoint studies as biographical, at least in part.[6] In this way, Lockwood reinforces a dichotomy which he had suggested in his preface, between Beethoven's outer and inner life. He moves from Thayer, whose focus was on the external conditions of Beethoven's life and career, to Nottebohm, whose 'pathbreaking research on Beethoven's creative life – the composer's inner world – secures him a major place in any study of the Beethoven literature and helps to broaden and deepen our concept of biography' (p. 47).

It is hard for even such a skilled storyteller as Lockwood to bring the reclusive, eccentric Nottebohm to life as well he did with Thayer, who must have possessed great personal magnetism.[7] Another problem presents itself in communicating

[5] The last two decades have yielded much additional information on Thayer's own life, with the publication of Luigi D. Bellofatto's *Alexander Wheelock Thayer, the Greatest Biographer of Ludwig van Beethoven: A Study in Nineteenth-Century American Music Criticism* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2011), and the more fully documented series of articles by Grant William Cook III in *The Beethoven Journal*, 2002–2019.

[6] Douglas Johnson has isolated the key passages in Nottebohm's writings that discuss their biographical significance as opposed to their usefulness for the analysis of music; see his 'Beethoven Scholars and Beethoven's Sketches', *19th-Century Music* 2/1 (1978): 4–5. In a response to this article, Sieghard Brandenburg points out that there are many musicological approaches that are not exclusively biographical or music-analytical. See his contribution to Sieghard Brandenburg, William Drabkin and Douglas Johnson, 'On Beethoven Scholars and Beethoven's Sketches', *19th-Century Music* 2/3 (1979): 270–74. Lockwood's definition of biography also seems to oppose such a clear opposition between biography and 'the music itself'.

[7] Lockwood refers to Nottebohm's 'eccentricities' in his article 'Nottebohm Revisited', *Current Thought in Musicology*, ed. John W. Grubbs (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976): 187n5. In *Beethoven's Lives* he calls him 'a thorny and demanding personality' (p. 51). Much of Thayer's personal charm is apparent in his music criticism; for a list see Michael Ochs, 'A. W. Thayer, the Diarist, and the Late Mr. Brown: A Bibliography of Writings in *Dwight's Journal of Music*', in *Beethoven Essays: Studies in Honor of Elliott Forbes*, ed. Lewis Lockwood and Phyllis Benjamin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984): 78–95. The picture is filled out in the writings of Bellofatto and Cook, particularly Grant William Cook III, '"I Was Now in the Birthplace of Beethoven": The First European Research Expedition of Alexander Wheelock Thayer, 1849–1851', *The Beethoven Journal*

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Nottebohm's importance to the non-specialist reader. The decision to exclude musical examples from *Beethoven's Lives* makes Nottebohm's work difficult to describe. In Lockwood's earlier *Beethoven: The Music and the Life*, the decision was made to keep 'music examples within the book … to the barest minimum' in order 'to make the discussion of Beethoven's works as accessible as possible', and the same rationale must have applied here.[8] I suspect that Lockwood's editors have a better picture of the average reader than did Johannes Brahms, who recommended Nottebohm's technical sketch studies 'to artists, connoisseurs, and amateurs' (!).[9] The professional scholar will have no trouble tracing the sources for Nottebohm's works through the notes, abbreviations and bibliography of *Beethoven's Lives*. But for the non-specialist reader, I would recommend referring back to *Beethoven: The Music and the Life* and following a link to the book's website, where additional music examples will be found, including a couple of sketch transcriptions and an excerpt from Nottebohm's *Zweite Beethoveniana*.[10] At that website, they will also find many more sketch transcriptions among the music examples for Lockwood's 2015 book *Beethoven's Symphonies: An Artistic Vision*, which focuses more on the compositional process of individual works.[11] Both of these books clarify how useful sketch studies have been, both to the chronology and to the interpretation of Beethoven's music.

Nottebohm's friendship with Brahms provides a skilful transition to the next section, which also underlines the central position of Beethoven for nineteenth-century music. Richard Wagner was not a biographer but a significant contributor to the image of Beethoven; accordingly, his early involvement with a potential Beethoven biography is covered here. During Wagner's first stay in Paris (1839–1842), he and a librarian known as G.F. Anders planned to collaborate on a Beethoven biography. According to one of Wagner's letters, it would have '"contain[ed] an accurate and detailed account of both the great master's artistic and domestic life"' and, at the same time, be '"more a great novel about an artist than a dry listing of data and anecdotes compiled in chronological order"' (p. 55).[12] Lockwood's source is clearly Klaus Kropfinger's *Wagner and Beethoven*, but he might be going farther than Kropfinger intended. Lockwood assumes that this somewhat ill-assorted duo would have at least attempted to meet '"the most thorough and meticulous historical scrutiny"', again quoting Wagner's letter

31/2 (2016): 71–82, and '"Mr. Dwight's Indefatigable Diarist" and London's "Literary Lion"', *The Beethoven Journal* 34/2 (2019): 57–68. These two articles illustrate both Thayer's ease in social situations and how meetings with many of his contacts often opened up new Beethoven-related connections for him.

[8] Lockwood, *Beethoven: Music and the Life*, xvi.

[9] Brahms to J. M. Rieter-Biedermann, quoted in Lockwood, *Beethoven's Lives*, 50. An English translation of the full letter is given in Styra Avins, ed., *Johannes Brahms: Life and Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997): 415–16; this book, a combination of biography and selected correspondence, also discusses other dimensions of the Brahms–Nottebohm relationship.

[10] The website link, www.wwnorton.com/trade/lockwood (accessed 18 November 2021) is available at two locations in Lockwood, *Beethoven: Music and the Life*, xi, xvi.

[11] Lewis Lockwood, *Beethoven's Symphonies: An Artistic Vision* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2015).

[12] From a letter from Wagner to Theodor Winkler; see Klaus Kropfinger, 'The Romantic Background and Beethoven Biography', Chap. 3 in *Wagner and Beethoven: Richard Wagner's Reception of Beethoven*, trans. Peter Palmer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991): 61–67. I cite Lockwood's translation here rather than Palmer's.

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(p. 55). He also points out that Wagner clearly thought that a chronology of Beethoven's works, undoubtably to be prepared by Anders, would be valuable, thus implicitly recognizing the utility of the later chronologies by Thayer and Nottebohm. Kropfinger does not take this plan so seriously, concluding that it was just an early example of Wagner's aim 'to process biographical data with a view to explaining Beethoven in the context of the drama of the future'.[13] While Lockwood's theory may be a bit of a stretch, it accords well with Nicholas Vazsonyi's *Richard Wagner: Self-Promotion and the Making of a Brand*, which argues that Wagner's intense self-identification with Beethoven as a German artist grew out of his unsuccessful Paris experience during these years.[14] There is no way to write a history of Beethoven reception without including Wagner, and the story of this unrealized biography was surely the most pertinent vantage point in the context of Lockwood's book.

From this point on, the discussions of individual biographers are less extensive, and rather than attempt to summarize them all, I shall highlight some important themes. One is the increasing contribution of music theory to the understanding of Beethoven's music. Heinrich Schenker did not write a biography, but his investigations of the relationship between counterpoint and common-practice music inspired much of twentieth-century theory. Schenker was a late, peripheral member of the Brahms circle and was influenced by Nottebohm's works; he used Beethoven's sketches in several of his major analyses.[15] Schenker does not have his own section in *Beethoven's Lives*, but two important early twentieth-century Beethoven biographers, Paul Bekker and Walter Riezler, are contrasted here in terms of their relationship to him. Another writer on music who made significant contributions to the biographer's toolkit was Donald Francis Tovey. Tovey's writings represent a middle way between technical music analysis and more public-facing music criticism, and they have exerted a profound influence on Anglo-American musicology. Tovey also exemplifies a second important theme, the expansion of Beethoven scholarship outside German-speaking countries. For England, Lockwood also profiles George Grove and J.W.N. Sullivan. Many French musicians, including Hector Berlioz, were admirers of Beethoven, and early twentieth-century France yielded important biographies by Romain Rolland and Vincent D'Indy, as well as Rolland's Beethoven-based novel *Jean-Christophe*.

On Beethoven and twentieth-century politics, Lockwood has enlarged upon his personal feelings about the appropriation of Beethoven by the Nazi regime elsewhere, and his treatment here is brief.[16] In a couple of spots, we sense some

[13] Kropfinger, 'The Romantic Background', 66. Also closer to Kropfinger's view are Thomas S. Grey, *Wagner's Musical Prose: Texts and Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995): 54–8; K.M. Knittel, 'Pilgrimages to Beethoven: Reminiscences by His Contemporaries', *Music & Letters* 84/1 (2003): 35–38; and Sanna Pederson, 'Music History', in *The Cambridge Wagner Encyclopedia*, ed. Nicholas Vazsonyi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013): 332–5.

[14] Nicholas Vazsonyi, 'Image', Chap. 1 in *Richard Wagner: Self-Promotion and the Making of a Brand* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 31–45.

[15] On Schenker's use of Nottebohm's publications and private notes, see Ian Bent and William Drabkin, 'Die letzten fünf Sonaten von Beethoven (Erläuterungsausgabe)', *Schenker Documents Online*, https://schenkerdocumentsonline.org/profiles/work/entity-001733.html (accessed 24 October 2021).

[16] Lockwood's reflections are found in the last section of *Beethoven's Symphonies*, 'Epilogue', 221–30.

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anger that Nazi sympathizers were allowed to maintain positions of authority in German and Austrian musicology after the war.[17] But in general, he directs the reader to major studies on music and politics in twentieth-century Germany by David B. Dennis, Pamela Potter and Elaine Kelly.[18] An interesting choice is his focus on post-war international musicological gatherings for the two Beethoven years 1970 and 1977. He contributed to at least one of these, and with that, he becomes a character in his own narrative.[19] However, the shift to his own persona does not fully explain the increased density of musicological reference here. While this content will be a barrier for some readers, I propose that Lockwood may have seen this topic as a story that he wanted to tell. The Beethoven conferences would have happened shortly after the 1960s, a decade that scholars such as Frank Trommler see as crucial for the opening up of political debate on the Nazi era within Germany.[20] Lockwood's reminiscences point to the increased internationalization of Beethoven studies, especially in the 1977 conferences as compared to those in 1970. Moreover, projects like the reconstruction of the Beethoven sketchbooks required international cooperation.[21] Much has been written lately on émigré musicologists, but not as much on how the continuing shadow of the *NS-Zeit* was handled by the next generation of scholars.[22]

[17] Cases referred to specifically in *Beethoven's Lives* are Ludwig Schiedermair at the Beethoven-Haus Bonn (pp. 106–7) and Erich Schenk at the University of Vienna (p. 110).

[18] David B. Dennis, *Beethoven in German Politics, 1870–1989* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996); Pamela M. Potter, *Most German of the Arts: Musicology and Society from the Weimar Republic to the End of Hitler's Reich* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); and Elaine Kelly, *Composing the Canon in the German Democratic Republic: Narratives of Nineteenth-Century Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[19] This was the 1977 Beethoven conference in Vienna sponsored by the *Österreichische Gesellschaft für Musik*; see Lockwood, *Beethoven's Lives*, 111–12. The proceedings were published as Rudolf Klein, ed., *Beethoven-Kolloquium 1977: Dokumentation und Aufführungspraxis* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1978).

[20] Writing in 1997, Trommler pointed to the Eichmann and Auschwitz trials in the 1960s as events which made it impossible for German writers to ignore the past; see his 'What Should Remain? Exploring the Literary Contributions in Postwar German History', in *Beyond 1989: Re-reading German Literary History Since 1945*, ed. Keith Bullivant (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1997): 167–72. Trommler wrote several articles in the 1970s, in the same decade as the Beethoven conferences, that characterized the immediate post-war period as one of continuity with conservative or apolitical views in the German intelligentsia before the rise of Hitler; see, for instance, his 'Emigration und Nachkriegsliteratur. Zum Problem der geschichtlichen Kontinuität', in *Exil und innere Emigration: Third Wisconsin Workshop*, ed. Reinhold Grimm and Jost Hermand (Frankfurt: Athenäum, 1972): 173–97.

[21] The major collections are in Berlin, Bonn, Kraków, London, Paris and Vienna, according to Douglas Johnson, Alan Tyson and Robert Winter, *The Beethoven Sketchbooks: History, Reconstruction, Inventory* (Berkeley: University of California Press: 1985): 599. In 1988, Lockwood recalled that 'these were years of postwar optimism; of restabilization; of the exploration of newly reopened European libraries; of the forging of new forms of international cooperation'; Lockwood, 'Communicating Musicology', 2.

[22] For instance, Reinhold Brinkmann and Christoph Wolff, *Driven Into Paradise: The Musical Migration From Nazi Germany to the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Melina Gehring, *Alfred Einstein: Ein Musikwissenschaftler im Exil* (Hamburg: von Bockel, 2007); and Matthias Pasdzierny, 'Exilforschung in der (west)deutschen Musikwissenschaft: Zwischen Vergangenheitspolitik und Erinnerungskultur', in *Belastete Beziehungen: Studien zur Wirkung von Exil und Remigration auf die Wissenschaften in*

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In bringing the narrative up through the rest of the twentieth and into the twenty-first century, Lockwood naturally takes a different tone regarding scholars he knew and worked with. When a mention includes a death date, he offers a gracious encomium to a valued colleague: examples include musicologists Joseph Kerman and Klaus Kropfinger, as well as two important scholars who, like Thayer, were imports from other fields: Maynard Solomon and Alan Tyson. For a younger generation of musicologists, Kerman is best known for his idiosyncratic survey of musicology, *Contemplating Music*.[23] Lockwood's tribute here is a reminder that he was also an important Beethoven scholar, although one with whom Lockwood has sometimes crossed swords.[24] For Solomon and Tyson, one tantalizing question that Lockwood leaves unanswered is why the music recording producer (Solomon) wrote a psychoanalytically oriented biography, while the trained psychoanalyst (Tyson) turned to the more philological study of musical sources. One clue may be found in the British Academy's obituary for Tyson, who was a member. Tyson did not abandon faith in psychoanalysis, but rather found musicology more suited to his personality; also, he considered the psychoanalysis of no longer living persons to be impossible.[25] Lockwood's citation of biographer, philosopher and psychoanalyst Elisabeth Young-Bruehl near the end of *Beethoven's Lives* shows that he has more than a passing interest in whether psychology is useful for the biographer, and a follow-up discussion would be welcome.

I suspect that general readers will skim over the increased attention to professional musicologists at the end of Lockwood's chronology. Perhaps he sensed this when he chose to add two more chapters to *Beethoven's Lives*. In the penultimate chapter, he shifts gears from reception to biography in action. Here, he experiments with a technique he had not used in his previous biography, focusing on selected years in Beethoven's life. The years 1787, 1809 and 1826 were chosen to 'furnish insights that can be applied to his longer artistic career and its context' (p. 145). His picture of the talented 16-year-old Beethoven and his first trip to Vienna is based upon some recent advances in Beethoven scholarship, Dieter Haberl's discovery of new travel records and John D. Wilson's redating of some early works.[26] For the year 1809, Beethoven is portrayed as an adroit manager of his career. He had just premiered his Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, and received a job offer from Jerome Bonaparte that he parlayed into a lifetime annuity paid by

Deutschland nach 1945, ed. Kirsten Heinsohn und Rainer Nicolaysen (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2021): 148–73.

[23] Joseph Kerman, *Contemplating Music: Challenges to Musicology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985).

[24] Much of Kerman's work on Beethoven is listed in 'Comment & Chronicle: Joseph Kerman', *19th-Century Music* 7/3 (1984): 189–98; this issue serves as a Festschrift for Kerman's sixtieth birthday. Lockwood's disagreements with Kerman centred around the importance of traditional source studies in musicology, see Lockwood, 'Communicating Musicology', 5–6; and Lewis Lockwood, 'On Current Trends in Musicology: Some Informal Reflections', *Il Saggiatore musicale* 6 (1999): 219–21.

[25] Oliver Neighbour, 'Alan Walker Tyson 1926–2000', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 115 (2002): 367–82. Available at www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publishing/memoirs/1/tyson-alan-walker-1926–2000/ (accessed 15 November 2021).

[26] Dieter Haberl, 'Beethovens erste Reise nach Wien. Die Datierung seine Schülerreise zu W. A. Mozart', *Neues musikwissenschaftliches Jahrbuch* 14 (2006): 215–55. See *Beethoven's Lives*, 152–3 regarding Wilson's research in progress; Lockwood's summary is based partially upon personal communications.

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Viennese aristocrats. For 1826, the last full year of Beethoven's life, filled as it was with illness and personal difficulties, Lockwood admits that even the most careful biographer must sometimes resort to speculation. Here he suggests that the composition of 'two works as deep, complex, and different from each other as his string quartets Opus 131 and Opus 135 … feels as if his removal of his creative persona to a place of safety from the disorder of his outer life must have been even more decisive than in the past' (p. 163).

Lockwood concludes *Beethoven's Lives* with an eloquent final chapter where he summarizes his personal involvement with Beethoven and repeats his conviction that for him, writing Beethoven's life was not possible without an intimate understanding of his music. He gently takes issue with Young-Bruehl, contending that great artists confound her view of biography in one respect: they are 'primarily conditioned by the riveting obsession to produce the works they feel to be the raison-d'être of their being in the world' (p. 177). His vivid portrayal of the trials and rewards of biographical research is highly recommended, both for lovers of Beethoven as well as for potential biographers and music scholars.

Mark Evan Bonds has produced an impressive body of work centred on German music and its intellectual context from the eighteenth century to the early twentieth. To feel at all qualified to review *The Beethoven Syndrome: Hearing Music as Autobiography*, I felt compelled to read not only Bonds's four scholarly books, but over 200 other books and articles. Moreover, the *Beethoven Syndrome* is one of two Beethoven books that Bonds published in 2020, in a veritable flurry of Beethoven Year activity. The other one, *Beethoven: Variations on a Life*, is directed at the general reader, and is itself evidence of his commitment to reaching a wide audience. However, it is dependent upon arguments developed in *The Beethoven Syndrome*, and it cannot be treated properly in a scholarly review without reference to them. Therefore, this review of *The Beethoven Syndrome* will focus upon these arguments, how they relate to Bonds's previous work, and the revisions he has proposed to the traditional history of music since Beethoven.

The first popular element in *The Beethoven Syndrome* is its address to the listener and the defence of all modes of listening. This is not primarily a book about Beethoven biography, or even reception history, unless taken in the broadest sense; in fact, Beethoven himself exits the scene at the end of Act I. The principal thesis that Bonds sets forth is this: that a common assumption for current listeners – that music expresses the thoughts and feelings of its composer – is in fact a product of the first half of the nineteenth century. For Bonds, Beethoven is at once the catalyst and the major recipient of this belief. He describes the development of this concept almost like a scientific discovery, with shifts encompassing three distinct paradigms.[27] To move on from the first paradigm ('Part One: The Paradigm of Objective Expression: 1770–1830'), three components must be in place. First, a belief in the power of music to express moods (Chapter 1, 'The Framework of Rhetoric'); second, an emphasis on human subjectivity and the artist's inner creative potential (Chapter 2, 'Toward the Perception of Subjective Expression'); third, the application of this subject-centred concept of 'genius' to composers, something that Beethoven helped set in motion through his cultivation of the fantasia genre (Chapter 3, 'Hearing Composers in Their Work').

[27] This resemblance struck me even before I noticed that Bonds explicitly invokes Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd edn (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) in the conclusion to *The Beethoven Syndrome* (p. 198).

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Once all three of these prerequisites are met, a new paradigm takes over, outlined in the three chapters of 'Part Two: The Paradigm of Subjective Expression, 1830–1920'. In the first, 'The Framework of Hermeneutics'. he describes two important assumptions it requires. The first is the belief that a composer's 'message' was conveyed sincerely – that it represented the composer's own thoughts or feelings – and the second is the principle of 'oracularity': that it was the job of the listener to decipher this message. The next chapter, 'First-Person Beethoven', is the only one to deal specifically with Beethoven reception. Bonds walks us through a sample of nineteenth-century Beethoven biographies and music criticism to illustrate 'the perception of his works as an outpouring of his inner self' (p.120).[28] At this point, it becomes apparent why Bonds has chosen the term 'Beethoven syndrome', which he defines in his title as 'hearing music as autobiography' and in his text as 'the inclination of listeners to hear composers *in* their music' (p. 1). The 'syndrome' is 'a pattern of symptoms, in this case behaviors that point to an underlying condition', and in the third chapter of the 'The Paradigm of Subjective Expression', entitled 'After Beethoven', Bonds shows the syndrome spreading to the reception of other composers (p. 2).

The chief historiographical innovation by Bonds is his 'Part Three: Dual Paradigms: Since 1920'. Instead of introducing a new paradigm with the advent of musical modernism, he argues that the two previous paradigms remain active throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This section provides a second reason to consider *The Beethoven Syndrome* appropriate for the general reader, with an engagement with popular music genres absent from previous books by Bonds. He connects the ideal of objectivity, related to a more craftsman-like compositional aesthetic, with the modernist music of composers like Stravinsky and Hindemith (pp. 172–174). However, he observes that 'the idea of music as a revelation of the compositional self' is still prevalent for most classical music listeners and many contemporary composers (p. 169, 186–191). The 'Objective Expression' (rhetorical) paradigm prevails in jazz and in 'covers' of popular songs, where emphasis is on the performer and his/her delivery. The 'Subjective Expression' paradigm is operative when songwriter and performer are the same person(s) (pp. 194–196). This more fluid historiographical landscape for music after 1900, also encompassing a broader stylistic and geographic range, may well be closer to the lived experience of lay listeners.[29]

The third feature that might make *The Beethoven Syndrome* appropriate for the educated listener or music student is the one I find most problematic. This is because, for all its claims to represent a new way of looking at musical experience, it reproduces a standard chronology that the average classical music listener would have picked up through programme notes, general reading or an introductory course in music history. This chronology, with breaks at 1830 and 1920, recalls the controversial definitions of Classic and Romantic music that Hans Lenneberg has called 'the common modern usage, the Music 101 usage'.[30] By defining the transition of Beethoven reception from 'current' to 'posthumous' as a major turning

[28] 'Critics took palpable pleasure in regarding Beethoven's life as a nonfictional *Bildungsroman*, a record of personal growth and development audible in his compositions'; Bonds, *Beethoven Syndrome*, 120.

[29] For a good overview see David Clarke et al., 'Forum: Defining Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century Music', *Twentieth-Century Music* 14/3 (2017): 411–62.

[30] Hans Lenneberg, 'Classic and Romantic: The First Usage of the Terms', *The Musical Quarterly* 78/3 (1994): 621.

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point, Bonds avoids an issue he was not quite able to explain away in his earlier work. That is his desire to define nineteenth-century music aesthetics, even Hanslick's, as 'Romantic'.[31] The persistence of genres such as the symphony also makes 'Romanticism' as a basis for nineteenth-century music attractive to Bonds, whose *After Beethoven* treats music from Berlioz to Mahler.[32]

Now, there are varying definitions of Romanticism, but when Bonds refers to it in his other books, he tends to mean either the philosophical movement of German Idealism, with the key figures of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Hölderlin, Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel; or the literary movement including Tieck, Wackenroder, Schleiermacher, Novalis and Friedrich, Dorothea, Caroline and A.W. Schlegel, or perhaps Friedrich Schlegel, Jean Paul, Hölderlin, Novalis, Tieck, Brentano, Arnim, Hoffmann and Eichendorff.[33] Bonds has not always been consistent in how he situates these figures in relation to music.[34] In *The Beethoven Syndrome*, he includes a brief discussion of 'Romantic poets and critics' and their 'new aesthetics of self-expression' in the chapter 'Toward the Perception of Subjective Expression' within the 'Objective Expression' paradigm (pp. 39–40). While this doesn't quite make sense (assuming subjective and objective are antonyms) it at least matches the most active years of literary Romanticism in Germany. However, there is little evidence that Beethoven himself engaged in any meaningful way with the thought of these Romantic contemporaries.[35] Bonds also does not explain why Herder, Schiller, Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel appear in Chapter 4 within the 'Paradigm of Subjective Expression, 1830–1920' when they were writing 'around the turn of the nineteenth century' (p. 110). A similar unexplained temporal gap requires Bonds to jump rather awkwardly from E.T.A. Hoffmann's reviews of Beethoven (1810–13) to the beginning of the 'Subjective Expression' paradigm in

[31] See Mark Evan Bonds, 'Aesthetic Amputations: Absolute Music and the Deleted Endings of Hanslick's *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen*', *19th-Century Music* 36/1 (2012): 3–23. Bonds connects Hanslick with Romantic conceptions of 'the infinite' through the first edition of *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen* (1854), with its invocation of ideas from Romantic *Naturphilosophie*.

[32] Mark Evan Bonds, *After Beethoven: Imperatives of Originality in the Symphony* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

[33] For the philosophical definition, see Frederick C. Beiser, *German Idealism: The Struggle against Subjectivism, 1781–1801* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002): vii; for the literary definition, see Ernst Behler, *German Romantic Literary Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 33–54; for an alternative literary definition, see Eric A. Blackall, *The Novels of the German Romantics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983): 7.

[34] Bonds considers their remarks on instrumental music as part of the rhetorical tradition in his *Wordless Rhetoric: Musical Form and the Metaphor of the Oration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991): pp. 166–9, 174–80. In Chapter 1 of his *Music as Thought: Listening to the Symphony in the Age of Beethoven* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), they are often referred to as the 'early Romantics' and discussed in connection with Kant, Herder, Moritz and Schiller; their chief contribution is a unified conception of music and philosophy that is already in place by the time of E.T.A. Hoffmann's review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony (1810). In his *Absolute Music: The History of an Idea* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), they are discussed in Chapter 7, 'Disclosiveness', for the period around 1800, mainly to make the point that these authors saw music as especially suited to convey meaning inexpressible in words.

[35] There are other sources but it is sufficient to cite Mark Evan Bonds, 'Irony and Incomprehensibility: Beethoven's "Serioso" String Quartet in F Minor, Op. 95, and the Path to the Late Style', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 70/2 (2017): 306.

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1830, using the publication of the Heiligenstadt Testament in 1827 as a convenient plot device (pp. 128–131).[36]

By asserting that 'Beethoven spent his entire professional career working in a musical culture that functioned within a framework of rhetoric', and 'It was not until the early 1830s … that critics in general came to accept the essentially subjective nature of expression as the new norm for both composing and listening', Bonds allows himself to introduce 'subjectivity' as a stand-in for musical 'Romanticism', re-establishing the traditional music-historical time span beginning around 1820–1830 and covering the rest of the 'long' nineteenth century (p. 72). This argument also helps him explain the troubled reception of Beethoven's late works among contemporary listeners, which Bonds attributes to a clash of old and new paradigms (pp. 107–108). But in order to apply the concept 'Romanticism' in this way, we have to accept all the qualifications proposed by Carl Dahlhaus, or simply conclude with Gerhard Schulz that 'the broad use of "romantic" and "Romanticism" in music, extending over more than a century, thus disconnects these terms from their usage in literary and art history, so that they can no longer be employed as historical concepts in the same sense'.[37]

For instance, I found it jarring to see Julian Schmidt, a chief critic at the mid-nineteenth-century journal *Die Grenzboten*, cited by Bonds as an example of the 'Subjective Expression' paradigm when the general programme of that journal was anti-Romantic (p. 10).[38] Bonds does not reveal that Schmidt brought up the

[36] According to Stephen C. Rumph, 'A Kingdom Not of This World: The Political Context of E. T. A. Hoffmann's Beethoven Criticism', *19th-Century Music* 19/1 (1995): 52, Hoffmann was most active as a musician in 1806–1814, years in which he was forbidden to practice law for political reasons. He reviewed five works by Beethoven between 1810 and 1813: the Symphony No. 5 in 1810, the Overture to *Coriolan* in 1812, and the two Piano Trios, Op. 70, the music to Goethe's *Egmont*, and the Mass in C in 1813. See Wayne M. Senner, Robin Wallace and William Meredith, eds., *The Critical Reception of Beethoven's Compositions by His German Contemporaries*, vol. 2 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001): 6, 72–79, 95–112, 149–170; and Robin Wallace, trans. and ed., *The Critical Reception of Beethoven's Compositions by His German Contemporaries, Op. 73 to Op. 85* (Boston: Center for Beethoven Research, Boston University, 2018): 44–51, 44n1, and *The Critical Reception of Beethoven's Compositions by His German Contemporaries, Op. 86 to Op. 91* (Boston: Center for Beethoven Research, Boston University, 2020): 8–19; both at https://www.bu.edu/beethovencenter/publications-by-the-center/ (accessed 19 November 2021).

[37] 'Die weite, sich über mehr als ein Jahrhundert erstreckende Verwendung von "romantisch" und "Romantik" in der Musik trennt demnach die Begriffe vom Gebrauch in Literatur- und Kunstwissenschaft, so daß sie nicht mehr in gleicher Bedeutung als historischer Begriff benutzbar sind'; Gerhard Schulz, *Romantik: Geschichte und Begriff*, 2nd edn (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2002): 80. For Dahlhaus, see Carl Dahlhaus, 'Neo-romanticism', in *Between Romanticism and Modernism: Four Studies in the Music of the Later Nineteenth Century*, trans. Mary Whittall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980): 1–18; also the sections 'Music and Romanticism' and 'The Metaphysic of Instrumental Music' in his *Nineteenth-Century Music*, trans. J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989): 15–26, 88–96.

[38] Peter Uwe Hohendahl's history of literary criticism in Germany places *Die Grenzboten* squarely within his chapter 'Literary Criticism in the Epoch of Liberalism, 1820–1870', while Romanticism is treated in a separate chapter by Jochen Schulte-Sasse, 'The Concept of Literary Criticism in German Romanticism, 1795–1810', both in *A History of German Literary Criticism, 1730–1980*, ed. Peter Uwe Hohendahl (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988): 179–276, 99–177. On *Die Grenzboten* in particular, see ibid., 214–7, 255–76. Schmidt was primarily interested in literature, not music, but became involved in mid-

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example of Beethoven here to illustrate an artistic period that was 'predestined to bloom just briefly' because '[art] therefore buries itself more and more in a dream land'.[39] Bonds also refers to music critic Franz Brendel's 1845 article on Mendelssohn and Schumann to make the point that Schumann's early piano music was perceived as autobiographical (p. 151).[40] However, he does not add that Brendel saw both Schumann and Mendelssohn as incapable of real musical progress. Jürgen Thym calls Brendel's attitude towards Mendelssohn and Schumann 'ambivalent', and states that 'he doubted that either composer would have any lasting significance for the future development of music in Germany'.[41] In Schumann's case, according to Brendel, part of the problem was his over-dependence upon late Beethoven's outmoded musical premises. Brendel paints a picture of the 'predominantly subjective' Beethoven who 'withdrew more and more into the realm of the purely spiritual'; here 'content rules over form; his working-out is of a more fantastic kind, and its progress is determined by the idea to be represented'.[42] Brendel characterized Schumann explicitly as a 'Romantic' whose sensibility resembled that of Romantic poets like Eichendorff.[43] Brendel saw both him and Mendelssohn as lacking 'sympathy with the course of history, and familiarity with the new content that has moved the world since 1830'.[44]

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century music-aesthetic debates because of Wagner. See Chapter 5, 'Music and the Politics of Post-revolutionary Culture', in James Garratt, *Music, Culture and Social Reform in the Age of Wagner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 156–77.

[39] 'Diese Kunstperiode zu einer kurzen Blüthe prädestinirt war. … [Die Kunst] vertieft sich daher immer mehr in ein Land der Träume'; Julian Schmidt, *Geschichte der Deutschen Nationalliteratur im neunzehnten Jahrhundert* (Leipzig: F. L. Herbig, 1853): 2: 410.

[40] Bonds cites Franz Brendel, 'Robert Schumann mit Rücksicht auf Mendelssohn-Bartholdy und die Entwicklung der modernen Tonkunst überhaupt', *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (*NZfM*) 22/35 (30 April 1845): 145.

[41] From Thym's introduction to the second and the fourth parts of Brendel's article, published as Franz Brendel, 'Robert Schumann with Reference to Mendelssohn-Bartholdy and the Development of Modern Music in General (1845)', trans. Jürgen Thym, in *Schumann and His World*, ed. R. Larry Todd (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994): 317–18.

[42] 'In Beethoven beherrscht der Inhalt die Form; seine Ausarbeitung ist mehr phantastischer Art, und der Fortgang durch die darzustellende Idee bestimmt. … Beethoven, überwiegend subjectiv, … zog sich immer mehr in das Gebiet des rein Geistigen zurück'; Brendel, 'Robert Schumann', *NZfM* 22/15 (19 February 1845): 67. Brendel's disparagement of 'content' and 'the represented idea' is consistent with his later characterization of late Beethoven in his *Geschichte der Musik in Italien, Deutschland und Frankreich*: 'However, also with *Beethoven*, in the further progression of his development, the poetic idea increasingly predominates, and confronts the exclusively musical element' ('Allerdings ringt sich auch bei *Beethoven* im weiteren Fortgang seiner Entwicklung immer mehr die poetische Idee heraus, und tritt dem ausschließlich musikalischen Element gegenüber'). Franz Brendel, *Geschichte der Musik in Italien, Deutschland und Frankreich. Von den ersten christlichen Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart*, 4th edn (Leipzig: Matthes, 1867): 552.

[43] 'Schumann is a romantic … and his realm of sentiments is therefore closely related to that opened up by the poets of our romantic school. The fantastic opulence of which they dreamed was captured musically by Schumann in his *Liederkreis* on texts by Eichendorff'. Brendel, 'Robert Schumann', trans. Jürgen Thym, 330. Thym's source is Brendel, 'Robert Schumann', *NZfM* 22/29 (9 April 1845): 122.

[44] 'Sympathie mit den Bewegungen der Geschichte, und Vertrautheit mit dem neuen Inhalt, welcher seit 1830 die Welt bewegt'. Brendel, 'Robert Schumann', *NZfM* 22/36 (3 May 1845): 150. For more on Brendel's politics see James Garrett, 'Radical and Social Aesthetics in the *Vormarz*', Chap. 2 of *Music, Culture and Social Reform*, 54–71. He places

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In short, Bonds muddles his argument by citing the anti-romantic critique of Brendel and Schmidt as evidence in favour of a romantic aesthetic of subjectivity. To posit the 'Beethoven syndrome' as an unavoidable imperative for later nineteenth-century listeners and composers is also misleading. For instance, Chaikovsky is used as a chief example of a composer whose self-presentation as a composer was highly subjective (p. 157). However, Richard Taruskin emphatically denies that Chaikovsky matched that 'stereotype of the nineteenth-century artist'.[45]

Bonds's demarcation of 1920 as the beginning of 'Dual Paradigms', marked by 'The Return of Objectivity', is also belied by his own sources (p. 169–171). He cites Mallarmé, Verlaine, Rimbaud and Wilde as literary influences when their death dates are 1898, 1896, 1891 and 1900, respectively (p. 171). It is possible that Bonds's twentieth-century 'Dual Paradigm' model actually works better for the nineteenth century than his 'Paradigm of Subjective Expression' hypothesis. Note that a leading composer in nineteenth-century France, Camille Saint-Saëns, also rejected the aesthetic of subjectivity. Saint-Saëns described the addition of potentially emotional content to music, through words, as completely a matter of choice; a composer could create a satisfying work with 'line, modeling, and color (this last through instrumentation)' and also, particular to music, 'movement'.[46] Even with Wagner and Brahms, the two German composers most often mentioned as Beethoven followers, the situation is not clear. In the performance of a Wagner opera, it not always easy to isolate a specific Wagner 'voice' among his traditional textual sources, his own poetic adaptations, his music, the stage action, and the agency of individual performers.[47] For Brahms, there is reliable documentation that he associated his personal feelings with certain compositions, but we do not know how far that can be extended to other works, or whether he intended to convey these specific emotions to his audience.[48]

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him in the category of 'Left Hegelians', whose chief concern was 'the progress of human freedom' (p. 56). For members of this movement, Romanticism served as 'a catch-all for the reactionary elements within modernity' (p. 57). According to Garrett, Brendel employs various strategies to support a Left-Hegelian historical periodization and still present Beethoven as a champion of democracy (p. 63–6). One is to present the Ninth Symphony as the culmination of Beethoven's progress, while seeing 'a lapse into isolation and self-division' in the late quartets (p. 65).

[45] Richard Taruskin, 'Chaikovsky and the Human: A Centennial Essay', Chap. 11 in *Defining Russia Musically: Historical and Hermeneutical Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997): 263.

[46] 'La ligne, le modelé, la couleur par l'instrumentation … de plus le mouvement'. Camille Saint-Saëns, 'L'art pour l'art', in *École buissonnière: Notes et souvenirs*, (Paris: Lafitte, 1913): 137; translation and discussion in Carlo Caballero, 'In the Toils of Queen Omphale: Saint-Saëns's Painterly Refiguration of the Symphonic Poem', in *The Arts Entwined: Music and Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Marsha L. Morton and Peter L. Schmunk (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000): 125–7.

[47] See Carolyn Abbate, 'Wotan's Monologue and the Morality of Musical Narration', Chap. 5 in *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991): 156–205; 'Metempsychotic Wagner', Chap. 3 in *In Search of Opera* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001): 107–44; and 'Immortal Voices, Mortal Forms', in *Analytical Strategies and Musical Interpretation: Essays on Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Music*, ed. Craig Ayrey and Mark Everist (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 288–300.

[48] For an analysis of these issues, see especially John Daverio, 'Schumann: Cryptographer or Pictographer' and 'Brahms's Musical Ciphers: Acts of Homage and

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While *The Beethoven Syndrome* is a provocative contribution to the Beethoven literature, the richness of its material may have caused Bonds to oversimplify a complex process in intellectual history. Yet its new picture of Beethoven and his importance for musical listening will give both amateur music lovers and professional scholars food for thought.

In *Beethoven's Lives,* Lewis Lockwood singled out William Kinderman's scholarly Beethoven biography from 2009 for its blend of 'aesthetic aspects of the music', incorporation of new research, and 'cogent discussions of many works' informed by Kinderman's professional training as a concert pianist.[49] It combined up-to-date scholarly information about Beethoven's life with detailed musical analyses of his works, not just the well-known masterpieces but others that music students and skilled amateurs are more likely to play. So Kinderman was well set up to write a book for Beethoven Year that was different, more popular, and devoted to what he saw as the essence of Beethoven.

In *Beethoven: A Political Artist in Revolutionary Times,* Kinderman fills out this picture over eight chapters covering Beethoven's life, from his adolescence in the relatively liberal university town of Bonn through his life during the turbulent years of the French Revolution, the Napoleonic wars, and finally the repressive Viennese regime that followed. Along the way, he introduces little-known facts about Beethoven's associates, and highlights works that illuminate his political beliefs. For instance, several members of Beethoven's circle in Bonn, as well as his teacher Christian Gottlob Neefe, belonged to a liberal reading society; such connections, manifesting themselves in minor works, can provide clues to later masterpieces such as the Fifth Symphony (pp. 22–24). The revolutionary Bonn professor Eulogius Schneider, translator of the *Marseillaise* and eventually a victim of the Terror, plays a much larger role here than in Kinderman's earlier *Beethoven*. Kinderman refers to him as 'a crucial yet underestimated figure in Beethoven's formative education' (p. 12).[50] A possible connection with Schneider of Beethoven's *Cantata on the Death of the Emperor Joseph II* had already been noticed by Thayer, and Kinderman supplements this with evidence of Beethoven's subscription to the publication of Schneider's poems (1790).[51] Compared to the longer *Beethoven*, the music discussions here are shorter and less technical. However, some of the music examples are essential to Kinderman's argument, as they represent possible

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Gestures of Effacement', Chaps. 3 and 4 in *Crossing Paths: Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002): 65–124. Also pertinent is Christopher Alan Reynolds, *Motives for Allusion: Context and Content in Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

[49] Lockwood, *Beethoven's Lives*, 132–3; the reference is to Kinderman, *Beethoven* (2009).

[50] Schneider's years in Bonn are discussed in Lockwood, *Beethoven: The Music and the Life*, 37–8, although Lockwood is less convinced of any sympathy on Beethoven's part for Schneider's more radical views. Kinderman draws upon a recent article by Peter Höyng, '"Denn Gehorsam ist die erste Pflicht freier Männer": Eulogius Schneider as a Paradigm for the Dialectic of Enlightenment', in *The Radical Enlightenment in Germany: A Cultural Perspective*, ed. Carl Niekerk (Leiden: Brill Rodopi, 2018): 310–27, for an even-handed discussion of Schneider's activities.

[51] Alexander Wheelock Thayer, *Ludwig van Beethovens Leben*, 2nd edn, vol. 1, trans. and ed. Hermann Deiters (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1901): 274–5. Kinderman reproduces a plate from Schneider's poems, with its list of subscribers including 'Hr van Bethoven, Hofmus'., in *Beethoven, A Political Artist*, 15, plate 1.2. On the connection between Beethoven and Schneider, see Peter Höyng, 'Mephistopheles' *Flohlied* Meets Beethoven's Devilish Sting', *Publications of the English Goethe Society* 83/2 (2014): 78–81.

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allusions to the *Marseillaise* and other revolutionary songs in Beethoven's music (pp. 123–124, 152–153).

As in his earlier book, Kinderman interprets the *Eroica* Symphony by focusing on the *Creatures of Prometheus* ballet and its alterations to the original myth. He argues that even the simple *contredance* theme in the finale had political significance by implying a mixing of social orders. His discussion of *Fidelio* shows how several of Beethoven's most important instrumental works were influenced by the opera's political tilt, and he makes the convincing case for increased attention to the influence of French opera on Beethoven, where good groundwork has been laid by Michael Fend.[52]

Why did Kinderman see the need for another book on Beethoven's politics, a theme that certainly, for both specialists and the general public, has no lack of representation? Part of the answer is a new tone from Kinderman on current events. He is much more outspoken about connections between Beethoven's time and our own. He compares the excitement and disillusionment that Beethoven's generation felt about the French Revolution with the premature celebration of the crumbling of the Soviet empire in 1989 (p. 4). He takes a stance that was also apparent in the official German *Beethoven-Jahr* celebration, where Beethoven's love of nature is seen as a prefiguration of the environmental movement (pp. 149–150).[53] As Lockwood had emphasized in *Beethoven's Lives*, biographers write from their own standpoints, and especially in a biography dealing with politics, current events can affect these perspectives.

Another motivation was to address the controversial claims made in three recent books by Nicholas Mathew, Stephen Rumph and Daniel K.L. Chua.[54] Because *Beethoven: A Political Artist in Revolutionary Times* uses the unnumbered-endnote format of a trade book, it is possible to read through the entire text without discovering the identity of three 'recent commentators' who are Kinderman's targets: one who 'rehabilitat[es] the composer's most propagandistic pieces'; one who 'associates the evolution of Beethoven's later musical style with the reactionary trend in Austrian politics'; and a third who 'doubts the value of freedom itself, purporting to unmask autonomy as void or as disguised authority' (p. 9).

Understandably, Kinderman might not want to burden his reader with the inner workings of musicological disputes. However, the targeted books are themselves very different, making refuting them without clearly identifying them confusing. Chua's idiosyncratic *Beethoven and Freedom* begins with a rather postmodernist presentation full of photos and graphs, settles into a more playful presentation of Adorno (as if being less playful were possible), filters this through

[52] Michael Fend, 'Romantic Empowerment at the Paris Opera in the 1770s and 1780s', *Music & Letters* 94/2 (2013): 263–94; and 'An Instinct for Parody and a Spirit for Revolution: Parisian Opera, 1752–1800', in *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Music*, ed. Simon P. Keefe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009): 295–330. Kinderman's references to French opera are found in his discussion of *Fidelio*, 110–13.

[53] Beethoven Jubiläums GmbH, Beethoven Pastoral Project, www.bthvn2020.de/en/program/beethoven-pastoral-project (accessed 20 November 2021).

[54] Nicholas Mathew, *Political Beethoven* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Stephen Rumph, *Beethoven after Napoleon: Political Romanticism in the Late Works* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); and Daniel K. L. Chua, *Beethoven & Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); all identified in Kinderman, *Beethoven, A Political Artist*, 228.

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Emmanuel Lévinas and somehow ends up with a Christian conclusion.[55] Rumph's *Beethoven After Napoleon* explores the possibility that Beethoven's politics changed after 1815 due to the influence of Romantic conservatism. It is a rather dense scholarly book that was reviewed as such, not always favourably, by Kinderman, Barry Cooper, and Peter Höyng.[56] As for Mathew's *Political Beethoven*, although it includes much criticism of previous methodologies, it seems to work through the premise that all 'political' works of a composer must be taken in exactly the same sense. Mathew appears to argue that Beethoven's early cantata for Joseph II, his *Wellington's Victory*, his *Der glorreiche Augenblick* for the Congress of Vienna, and his Ninth Symphony all have to be regarded as equally sincere expressions of his beliefs. Taken together, these books convey a general dissatisfaction with how the subject of Beethoven and politics has been treated in the past, and in response Kinderman may have felt the need to defend traditional liberal political engagement against proposals for a more fashionable, but yet unrealized synthesis. For the non-specialist, however, objections to these three different, unnamed opponents obscure Kinderman's intentions.

At a time when citizen involvement in politics is crucial, *Beethoven: A Political Artist in Revolutionary Times* presents a broader, more socially relevant vision of political activity. Both professionals and laypersons can appreciate Kinderman's convincing demonstration that Beethoven's politics involved not just heroes, fanfares and funeral marches, but also his ideals, performance practice, social relations, and even wit and humour.

One of the lessons of historiography is that the history of music is always being written from new vantage points. Each new generation of Beethoven scholars has found different ways to explain how a composer who lived under hereditary monarchies could have written music that's relevant to today's listeners. The books of Lockwood, Bonds and Kinderman will nourish new Beethoven enthusiasts, as well as prove to younger scholars that Beethoven research is alive and well. There is still much new to discover, and new insights to gain from the work of this monumental composer whose story still inspires us. Where they have sown, may others reap. Onward to 2027!

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[55] For a review of Chua that highlights some of the same themes, see Scott Burnham, review of *Beethoven & Freedom*, by Daniel K.L. Chua, *Music Analysis* 39/1 (2020): 128–34. To show how little these groupings cohere, I observe that Chua groups Kinderman, Mathew and Rumph together in one spot as scholars who see Beethoven as political (whether pro- or anti-democratic); otherwise, he cites Kinderman approvingly, especially his article 'Beethoven's Symbol for the Deity in the *Missa solemnis* and the Ninth Symphony', *19th-Century Music* 9/2 (1985): 102–18. See Chua, *Beethoven & Freedom*, 26n6, 48, 191, 202.

[56] These reviews of Rumph, *Beethoven after Napoleon*, are by Barry Cooper, *Music & Letters* 86/4 (2005): 636–8; Peter Höyng, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 60/2 (2007): 431–5; and William Kinderman, *Music Library Association. Notes* 61/4 (2005): 1010–13.

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