Music 828: Late Beethoven

Recent scholarship and its trends. Assuming prior familiarity with the music in question, the seminar is reading-intensive. We shall be obliged to gather in some classic approaches to Beethoven’s "late style": background readings taken for granted (or debated with) in more recent Anglophone discussions (Adorno, Dahlhaus, Kerman, Rosen, Lockwood, Kinderman, and so on. More frequently, though, we shall address a selection of newer, divergent interpretations, analyses, and challenges that have emerged within English-language musicology and music theory in the past two decades (Hatten, Agawu, Chua, Rumph, Mathew, Taruskin, Spitzer, and several others). Quick tours through the late piano sonatas and a few other works will lead to more sustained considerations of three string quartets: opp. 127, 132, and 130.

Required Texts:


Music 828 assumes that you own copies of the scores to Beethoven’s Piano Sonatas and String Quartets (e.g., the Dover Scores of each or other suitable editions). If not, you will need to obtain copies to bring to each class. The assigned readings will be impossible without regular references to scores and, of course, to sound recordings. Here, again, one presumes that you are or will become closely familiar with each of the works to be discussed. To read critical commentaries and debates about works with which one is acquainted only hazily is pointless.
Seminar Expectations (may be revised, depending on enrollment):

- Group reading and discussion, i.e., weekly reading, listening, and preparation; active seminar participation (contributions to the discussion will be important) and interrelating of current and prior readings; some pre-meeting e-mail reply-assignments are possible, TBA.
- Two ten-minute oral presentations concerning your engagement with and assessment of the assigned reading, or portions thereof, to launch the seminar discussion. The final presentation (depending on enrollment) may be expanded in length.
- Initially, two short papers (1800-2000 words, of professional quality) based on your oral presentations. Each of these is due one week after its earlier, oral version, with copies distributed to all participants in the seminar. A third, longer paper (probably ca. 2800-3200 words)—engaging with issues brought up in the reading and discussion all term—will also be assigned: details TBA.

Seminar Schedule: Weekly Topics
(alterations may be made en route, as circumstances suggest)

Many of the titles below are shortened or bibliographically incomplete. See the separate list, “Late Beethoven: Selected Bibliography” for more complete bibliographical details, along with a list of significant recent writing on the topic.

Week 1. Missa Solemnis; Adorno; “Late Style”

(Pre-)Listening:

Beethoven: Missa Solemnis, op. 123

(Pre-)Reading:

Kinderman, Beethoven, pp. 218-19 (on periodization), 266-79, 298-307 (on the Missa Solemnis and the finale of the Ninth)


Leppert, “Commentary” [on Adorno on Late Beethoven], pp. 513-28.


Week 2. Op. 101; op. 106

Listening:

Beethoven: Piano Sonata in A, op. 101
Beethoven: Piano Sonata in B-flat, op. 106, “Hammerklavier”

Reading:

Kinderman, Beethoven, pp. 210-18; 223-32
Rosen, from The Classical Style, rev ed., pp. 404-34 (On op. 106; Beethoven as “classical”/“classicist”)
Hatten, Musical Meaning in Beethoven, pp. 9-90. (Chapters 1-3; introducing Hatten’s semiotic approach, beginning with a close study of op. 106/iii)

Supplement: Hatten, from Musical Meaning in Beethoven, pp. 91-111 (Ch. 4, on op. 101)
Adorno, “Beethoven’s Late Style” [The Moments musicaux 1934 essay], pp. 123-26, along with the separate comments on op. 101 and 106, pp. 126-29.

Recommended head-start (but not to be discussed in this session): Spitzer, from Music as Philosophy (introductory to Spitzer’s Adorno-based project: not specifically related here to opp. 101 and 106)
Ch. 1 “Away with All Rules,” pp. 3-14;
Ch. 2, “Styles: the First Movement of Op. 132,” pp. 16-43 [though we shall not focus on his few pages regarding op. 132 until a later session]

Week 3. Op. 109; op. 110; op. 111

Listening:

Beethoven: Piano Sonata in E, op. 109
Beethoven: Piano Sonata in A-flat, op. 110
Beethoven: Piano Sonata in C Minor, op. 111

Reading:

Rosen, from The Classical Style, rev ed., pp. 449-512 (Rosen’s interpretation of Beethoven’s late style plus a discussion of op. 110)
Kinderman, Beethoven, pp. 239-65.


Spitzer, Music as Philosophy:
Ch. 3, “Adorno’s Beethoven,” pp. 44-70;
Ch. 4, “Late Landscapes,” pp. 71-112;
Week 4. Differing Positions on Late Beethoven

**Listening:**

*Diabelli* Variations, op. 120  
Bagatelles, op. 119  
Bagatelles, op. 126

**Reading:**


Adorno, on the Bagatelles, op. 126, pp. 130-32; on other aspects of late style, pp. 134-37.

Dahlhaus, Extracts from *Nineteenth-Century Music*:

“The Twin Styles,” pp. 8-15  
“Rossini and Restoration,” pp. 57-64.  
“Beethoven’s Late Style,” pp. 81-88 [concerned especially with the later quartets]

Dahlhaus, “Late Works” from *Ludwig van Beethoven: Approaches to His Music*, pp. 219-37.  
[Contains some discussion of material from the late quartets and from *Diabelli*]

Spitzer, *Music as Philosophy* (more considerations of the late piano sonatas)

Revisit Ch. 5, “Invisible Cities,” extract, pp. 113-33.  
From Ch. 6, “Ways of World Making,” pp. 147-65.  

**To be supplied:**

Week 5. More Positions on Late Beethoven: Politics?

Listening (the first three casting back to 1813-14):

Wellingtons Sieg, op. 91
Germania, WoO 94
Der Glorreiche Augenblick, op. 136

Overture: Die Weihe des Hauses, op. 124 (1822)

Reading:

Kinderman, Beethoven, pp. 189-202


Rumph, Beethoven after Napoleon, pp. 1-132 (which sets up the later period through an examination of several earlier works and political concerns).

Introduction, pp. 1-8
Ch. 1, “A Kingdom Not of This World,” pp. 9-34.
Ch. 2, “The Heroic Sublime,” pp. 35-57
Ch. 3, “Promethean History,” pp. 58-91
Ch. 4, “1809, pp. 92-108.
Ch. 5, Contrapunctus I: Prelude and Fugue,” pp. 109-18 (op. 109); pp. 125-32 (op. 111) [skip pp. 119-24 for now]


Week 6. Op. 127, first movement

Listening:

String Quartet in E-flat, op. 127 (complete, with emphasis on the first movement)

Reading:

Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets*, pp. 191-96, 204-10
Kinderman, *Beethoven*, 308-10

Chua, *The “Galitzin” Quartets*, pp. 1-44 (chapter 1 and first part of chapter 2).
Rumph, pp. 118-24.
Krummacher, *Das Streichquartett*, relevant excerpts from pp. 242-56.

Week 7. Op. 127, remaining movements

Listening:

String Quartet in E-flat, op. 127 (complete, with emphasis on the later movements)

Reading:

Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets*, pp. 210-18, (223-29, “contrast”), 229-42
Kinderman, *Beethoven*, 310-18
Kinderman, “Beyond the Text: Genetic Criticism and Beethoven’s Creative Process.”
Week 8. Op. 132, first movement

Listening:

String Quartet in A Minor, op. 132 (complete, with emphasis on the first movement)

Reading:

Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets*, pp. 242-50
Kinderman, *Beethoven*, 318-25
Rumph, *Beethoven after Napoleon*, 133-43

Chua, *The “Galitzin” Quartets*, Ch. 3 “Unity and Disunity” (pp. 54-106)

Week 9, Op. 132, movements 1 [continued] and 2

Listening:

String Quartet in A Minor, op. 132

Reading:

Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets*, at least pp. 250-53
Kinderman, pp. 325-31

[start the reading also for next week?]
Week 10. Op. 132, movements 3 (“Heiliger Dankgesang”: our main focus) and (more briefly) 4 and 5; the quartet as a whole

Listening:

String Quartet in A Minor, op. 132
(cf. Symphony No. 9 in D Minor, op. 125, movement 3)
(cf. Piano Sonata in A-flat, op. 110, arioso dolente and fugue; cf. Kinderman, 329-30)

Reading:

Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets*, pp. 253-68.
Kinderman, Beethoven, revisit pp. 318-31, reviewing the entire argument.

Solomon, “Intimations of the Sacred,” in *Late Beethoven*, pp. 198-212.

Huxley, *Point Counter Point* [1928], Ch. 37 (final chapter), pp. 425-32.

Week 11. Op. 130, movements 1 and 3

Listening:

String Quartet in B-flat, op. 130/i-iii

Reading:

Kerman, The Beethoven Quartets, pp. 303-19
Kinderman, Beethoven, 331-36.
Indorf, Beethovens Streichquartette, pp. 406-21

Spitzer, Music as Philosophy, pp. 99-101, 139-47.

Hatten, Musical Meaning in Beethoven, Ch. 6, “Thematic Markedness,” extract, pp. 133-45.
Chua, The “Galitzin” Quartets, from Ch. 6, “Doubles and Parallels,” pp. 201-25 (mvmt. 1)

Agawu, Music as Discourse, from Ch. 9, “Beethoven, String Quartet, op. 130/i . . .,” pp. 281-301.

Chua, The “Galitzin” Quartets, from Ch. 5, “Cadences and Closure,” pp. 163-65, 175-88 (mvmt. 3)
Week 12. Op. 130, movements 5 (Cavatina)

Listening:

String Quartet in B-flat, op. 130/5

Reading:

Kerman, *The Beethoven Quartets*, pp. 196-99
Kinderman, Beethoven, pp. 339-41.
Indorf, *Beethovens Streichquartette*, pp. 421-25
Dahlhaus, revisit “Late Works,” 234-37.


Chua, *The “Galitzin” Quartets*, from Ch. 5, “Cadences and Closure,” pp. 193-200 (Cavatina)

**Listening:**

String Quartet in B-flat, op. 130 (complete, with emphasis on the later movements, including the *Grosse Fuge* and its subsequent replacement)

*Grosse Fuge*, op. 133.

Two-Piano Arrangement of the *Grosse Fuge*, op. 134

**Reading:**


Kinderman, *Beethoven*, 331-41 (again, as a whole)


Chua, *The “Galitzin” Quartets*, from Ch. 6, “Doubles and Parallels,” extract, pp. 225-48 (on the *Grosse Fuge*).
