Music 828: Late Beethoven

Trends of recent scholarship and commentary; analysis of individual movements and problems of hermeneutics. Assuming prior familiarity with the music in question, the seminar is reading-intensive. We shall encounter some classic approaches to Beethoven’s late style: background readings taken for granted (or debated) in more recent discussions (Adorno, Dahlhaus, Tovey, Kerman, Rosen, Kinderman, and so on). More frequently, we shall discuss a selection of newer, divergent interpretations, analyses, and challenges that have emerged within English-language musicology and music theory in the past two or three decades (Hatten, Chua, Rumph, Mathew, Spitzer, and others). Initial tours through the Missa Solemnis, two of the late piano sonatas (opp. 106 and 110) will be followed by considerations of individual movements from three string quartets (opp. 127, 132, and 130)—concluding with the Große Fuge, op. 133.

Required Texts:


Music 828 assumes that you own copies of the scores for Beethoven’s Piano Sonatas, the Missa Solemnis, and the String Quartets (e.g., the Dover Scores of each or other suitable editions). If not, you will need to obtain copies, imslp or other, to bring to each meeting. Accomplishing the assigned readings will be impossible without regular references to scores and sound recordings.
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. Introduction to the Course; “Late Style”; Missa Solemnis; Adorno

(Pre-)Listening:

Missa Solemnis, op. 123

(Pre-)Reading:


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


**Listening:**

Piano Sonata in B-flat, op. 106, “Hammerklavier.”

**Reading:**


Cooper, *Beethoven’s Last Decade*, from Ch. 16, pp. 157-71 (on op. 106).

Tovey, *A Companion to Beethoven’s Pianoforte Sonatas*, pp. 215-29.


Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven*, Introduction, pp. 1-5, and Ch. 1 on op. 106/iii, pp. 9-28. (Chs. 2 and 3 are essential to understanding Hatten’s larger semiotic project as it stood in 1994, but they are not assigned)

Adorno, “Beethoven’s Late Style” from the *Moments musicaux* 1934 essay), pp. 123-26; and the separate comments on op. 106, pp. 128-29. (The comments on op. 101, pp. 126-27, and the Bagatelles, pp. 130-32, are recommended but not assigned.)

**Week 3. Fugues: op. 106/iv; Agnus Dei, Missa Solemnis (“Dona nobis pacem”)**

**Listening:**

Piano Sonata in B-flat, op. 106, “Hammerklavier”

*Missa Solemnis*
Haydn, *Missa in tempore belli*, “Agnus Dei”

**Reading:**

Tovey, *A Companion to Beethoven’s Pianoforte Sonatas*, pp. 229-42.


Cooper, *Beethoven: The Last Decade*, pp. 171-76 (on op. 106/iv), and Ch. 20, pp. 415-38 (“Characteristics of the Late Style”).


Chua, from *Absolute Music and the Construction of Meaning*, “On History,” “On Modernity,” and “On Disenchantment” (pp. 3-22); “On Suicide” and “On Absolute Drivel” (pp. 266-86).

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**Week 4: Beethoven’s Faith World; Missa Solemnis, Kyrie, Gloria, and Credo**


Drabkin, *Beethoven: Missa Solemnis*, Chs. 4-6, pp. 28-65 (on the Kyrie, Gloria, and Credo).


**Week 5: Missa Solemnis, Sanctus (and Benedictus)**

Drabkin, *Beethoven: Missa Solemnis*, Ch. 7, pp. 66-82 (on the Sanctus) and Ch. 9, pp. 96-108 (“Concluding Thoughts”).

Kirkendale, Warren. “New Roads to Old Ideas in Beethoven’s ‘Missa Solemnis.’”


**Week 6: Piano Sonata in A-flat, Op. 110**


Tovey, *A Companion to Beethoven’s Pianoforte Sonatas*, pp. 256-71 (on op. 110).

Kinderman, *Beethoven*, pp. 245-50 (on op. 110).


**Week 7. Op. 127, first movement**

**Listening:**

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

**Reading:**
Gingerich, “Ignaz Schuppanzigh and Beethoven’s Late Quartets,” The Musical Quarterly 93 (2010), 450-513.

Kinderman, Beethoven, 308-10.

Cooper, Beethoven: The Last Decade, pp. 349-51.

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


Chua, The “Galitzin” Quartets, pp. 1-44 (chapter 1 and first part of chapter 2).

Week 8. Op. 127, remaining movements (with special focus on 127/ii)

Listening:

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

Reading:


Cooper, Beethoven: The Last Decade, pp. 352-55.

Kinderman, Beethoven, 310-18.

Kinderman, “Beyond the Text: Genetic Criticism and Beethoven’s Creative Process.”

Chua, The “Galitzin” Quartets, pp. 44-53.
Week 9. Op. 132, first movement

Listening:

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

Reading:

Kinderman, Beethoven, 318-25.


Kerman, The Beethoven Quartets, pp. 242-50.

Spitzer, Music as Philosophy, pp. 16-20 (on m. 92).


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

Week 10, Op. 132, movement 3 (Heiliger Dankgesang)

Listening:

String Quartet in A Minor, op. 132

Reading:

Kerman, The Beethoven Quartets, at least pp. 250-53.

Kinderman, pp. 325-31.


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

Huxley, *Point Counter Point*, extract from Ch. 37.


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**Week 11. Op. 130, movement 1**

**Listening:**

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

**Reading:**


Dahlhaus, “Late Works” (from *Ludwig van Beethoven: Approaches to His Music*), pp. 219-37; and “Beethoven’s Late Style (from Nineteenth-Century Music),” pp. 81-88.
Week 12. Op. 130, movements 5 (Cavatina)

Listening:

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

Reading:


Kinderman, Beethoven, pp. 339-41.


Dahlhaus, revisit “Late Works,” 234-37.


**Week 13. The *Grosse Fuge* (op. 133).**

**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.

**Reading:**


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


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