

Beethoven's Vision of Joy in the Finale of the Ninth Symphony

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The primary purpose of this study is to investigate possible implications of comments by Beethoven and Czerny concerning the finale of the Ninth Symphony and its relation to improvisation. In introducing his Symphony to potential publishers, Beethoven referred to parallels between the finale and the *Chorfantasie*, op.80, a work that featured improvisation at its first performance and that incorporates improvisational style in its published version. Czerny's comments are, however, explicit and categorical—that the finale of the Ninth constitutes an example of a specific musical structure as used by Beethoven in his piano improvisations.¹

1. I am most grateful to the friends and colleagues with whom I have discussed this study and its central line of argument, though in courtesy I note that not all concur with everything I have written: Barry Cooper, Nicholas Cook, Peter Hill, Nicholas Marston, Nigel Simeone, Michael Struck, and Philip Weller; to the London Philharmonic Orchestra for asking me to speak on the Ninth at the Royal Festival Hall in the first place; to the staff and students of Bangor University, University College Dublin, and Sheffield University, who favored me with engaged and stimulating feedback on earlier versions. There are many significant studies of the structure of the finale, including Otto Baensch, *Aufbau und Sinn des Chorfinale in Beethovens Neunter Symphonie* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1930); James Webster, "The Form of the Finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony," *Beethoven Forum* 1 (1992), 25–62; Nicholas Cook, *Beethoven: Symphony No.9* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993); Michael C. Tusa, "Noch einmal: Form and Content in the Finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony," *Beethoven Forum* 7 (1999), 113–37; Esteban Buch, *La Neuvième de Beethoven: Une histoire politique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1999) trans. as *Beethoven's Ninth: A Political History* (Chicago: U Chicago P, 2003); David Benjamin Levy, *Beethoven: The Ninth Symphony*, rev. edn. (New Haven: Yale UP, 2003). It is not proposed to refer to these *in extenso*, for the purpose here is rather to present a view of the movement that has not hitherto been significantly elaborated in

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Comments by Beethoven and Czerny

Beethoven wrote to Maurice Schlesinger in Paris on 25 February 1824: “I also offer you the *score* of a wholly new grand symphony, which can however not be published until 1825. It has a *grand finale* with choruses and solo voices, in the same manner as my *Piano Fantasie* but on a grander scale.” He wrote in a similar vein to Schotts in Mainz and Probst in Leipzig on 10 March.² Czerny made a similar connection between the *Chorfantasie* and the Symphony finale in his detailed accounts of Beethoven’s improvisatory practice, to be found in the *Erinnerungen an Beethoven* and in his treatise on improvisation: *Systematische Anleitung zum Fantasieren auf dem Pianoforte*. In the former he specified the following typology for Beethoven’s improvisations:

1. In the first-movement form or as in the final rondo of a sonata, when he regularly closed the first section and introduced a second melody in a related key, etc., but in the second section gave himself freely to all manner of treatment of the motivi. In Allegros the work was enlivened by bravura passages which were mostly more difficult than those to be found in his compositions.
2. In the free-variation form, about like his Choral Fantasia, Op.80, or the choral finale of his Ninth Symphony, both of which give a faithful illustration of his improvisations in this form.
3. In the mixed genre, where, in the potpourri style, one thought follows upon another, as in his solo Fantasia, Op.77. Often a few tones would suffice

the literature, though elements of it appear in Baensch, *Aufbau*; Tusa, “*Noch einmal*”; Helga Lühning, “Grenzen des Gesanges: Beethoven und Schiller im Finale der 9. Symphonie,” in *Ordnung und Freiheit: Almanach zum Internationalen Beethovenfest, Bonn 2000*, ed. Thomas Daniel Schlee (Laaber: Laaber, 2000), pp. 25–46; and in James Parsons, “Deine Zauber binden Wieder: Beethoven, Schiller, and the Joyous Reconciliation of Opposites,” *Beethoven Forum* 9 (2002), 1–53.

2. Brandenburg, letter no. 1782, V, 270: “Auch biethe ich Ihnen die *Partitur* einer ganz neuen grossen *Symphonie*, welche aber erst 1825 herausgegeben werden kann. Dazu gehört ein grosses *Finale* mit Chören u. *Solostimmen*, auf dieselbe Art, doch größer ausgeführt, als meine *Clavierphantasie*” (translations are mine unless otherwise noted). Beethoven wrote to B. Schott’s Söhne in Mainz on 10 March offering: “eine neue große *Sinfonie*, welche mit einem *Finale* (auf Art meiner Klawier-Fantasie mit Chor) jedoch weit größer gehalten mit *Solo’s* u. Chören von *Singstimmen* die worte von Schillers unsterbl. bekannten lied *an die Freude* schließt” (Brandenburg, letter no. 1787, V, 278). And he wrote to Heinrich Albert Probst in Leipzig on the same day (!) offering: “eine neue g[r]oße *Symphonie*, welche ein *Finale* hat mit eintretende[n] *Singstimmen Solo* u. Chören mit den Worten von Schillers unsterbliche[m] Lied an die Freude auf die Art wie meine KlawierFantaise mit chor, jedoch weit größer gehalten als selbe” (Brandenburg, letter no. 1788, V, 282).

to enable him to improvise an entire piece (as, for instance, the Finale of the third Sonata, D major, of Op. 10).³

In the *Anleitung*, he wrote: “Beethoven was unsurpassed in this style of fantasy-like improvisation. . . . He has left a legacy of two glorious movements of this style among his works: namely the Fantasy with Orchestra and Chorus, op. 80, and the Finale of this last symphony (the Chorus to Joy, op. 125). In both of these, a single idea is exploited through the greatest variety of procedures.”⁴ Also he claims the *Fantasie*, op. 77, as an exemplar of the capriccio: “The freest form of improvising in fantasy style, namely an arbitrary linking of individual ideas without any particular development, a whimsical and swift shifting from one motive to the other without further relationship than that bestowed by chance or, unintentionally, by the musical inclination of the performer.”⁵ Of this work, he states elsewhere that it presents “a true picture of the manner in which [Beethoven] used to improvise when he had no wish to develop a particular theme but instead gave himself over to the genial invention of ever new motives.”⁶

Thus in the *Erinnerungen*, Czerny’s first type describes sonata or rondo expositions with discursive developmental treatment; we may note that he does not write of how the music was concluded, although he probably was implying, by naming first-movement and rondo-finale forms, that some kind of recapitulation or return was featured. Whichever Beethoven’s customary practice, this type of improvisation relates clearly and naturally to his central compositional concerns, and the account of Beethoven improvising a protofinale for the “Appassionata” Sonata, op. 57, “for at least an hour” and then writing down his composition exemplifies and highlights

3. Thayer-Forbes, p. 368. Thayer is here quoting from *Die Erinnerungen an Beethoven*, ed. Friedrich Kerst (Stuttgart: J. Hoffmann, 1913), pp. 60–61 in his own translation. The relevant part of the original German is cited in Tusa, “*Noch einmal*,” p. 130, n. 42: “2tens in der freyen Variations-form ungefähr wie seine Chorfantasia op. 80 oder das Chorfinale der 9ten Sinfonie, welche beyde ein treues Bild seiner Improvisation dieser Art geben,” following Carl Czerny, *Über den richtigen Vortrag der sämtlichen Beethoven'schen Klavierwerke: Czerny's "Erinnerungen an Beethoven" sowie das 2. und 3. Kapitel des IV. Bandes der "Vollständigen theoretisch-praktischen Pianoforte-Schule op. 500,"* ed. Paul Badura-Skoda (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1963), p. 21.

4. Carl Czerny, *A Systematic Introduction to Improvisation on the Pianoforte (Systematische Anleitung zum Fantasieren auf dem Pianoforte)*. *Opus 200*, trans. and ed. Alice L. Mitchell (New York: Longman, 1983), p. 52.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

6. *Beethoven: Interpretationen seiner Werke*, ed. Albrecht Riethmüller, Carl Dahlhaus, Alexander L. Ringer (2nd edn. Laaber: Laaber, 1996), p. 604: “ein getreues Bild von der Art, wie er zu improvisieren pflegte, wenn er kein bestimmtes Thema durchführen wollte und sich daher seinem Genie in Erfindung immer neuer Motive überließ.”

such a relationship.⁷ Since the finale of the “Appassionata” lasts considerably less than sixty minutes, the account also emphasizes the discursive nature of this type of Beethovenian improvisation. It may well be that this type was more suited to private, perhaps quasi-experimental music-making. Czerny’s second category is concerned with one principal theme, and he names it from the essential feature: that of variation. The defining characteristic of his third type, vis-à-vis the second, is that it has several ideas. In choosing not to stress, or indeed not even to allude to the fact that the *Fantasia*, op.77, also has a variation-set based on one of its themes, Czerny maximizes the formal differences between op.80 and the op.125 finale, on the one hand, and op.77, on the other.

Czerny nowhere claims that any of these three movements results from the writing down of music previously improvised on the piano, rather that they are representative of what could occur when Beethoven so improvised. We know of course that Beethoven did improvise the opening section of the *Chorfantasia* at its first performance, though we do not know how similar that improvisation was to the published version. Some scholars have suggested that a protoversion of the *Fantasia*, op.77, was also improvised on this occasion.⁸ The idiomatic nature of the piano writing in the *Chorfantasia* and the *Fantasia*, op.77, makes inception and evolution of the material at the keyboard distinct probabilities.⁹ There is, however, no suggestion inherent in the argument presented in this study that Beethoven improvised the finale of the Ninth Symphony on the piano before writing it down for orchestra and voices, and indeed the sketches that have come down to us suggest a different story. What is at stake is the altogether more radical claim that in this finale Beethoven harnesses the structure and processes characteristic of improvisation, and that in so doing he composed what becomes, by that token, an allegory of improvisation; furthermore, it is an allegory enhanced by a narrative aspect that Beethoven gives to his setting of Schiller’s text, initiated by his instrumental and vocal introductions to it and carried through in prominent elements of the setting itself.

7. *Beethoven: Impressions by His Contemporaries*, ed. O. G. Sonneck (New York: Dover, 1967), p.53.

8. See, for instance, Elaine R. Sisman, “After the Heroic Style: *Fantasia* and the ‘Characteristic’ Sonatas of 1809,” *Beethoven Forum* 6 (1998), 67–96, here p.68.

9. Czerny tells how Beethoven gave a scale as a theme for improvisation to a foreign pianist, to the pianist’s discomfiture, and he notes “shortly after Beethoven’s *Fantasia*, op.77 appeared, which is founded on such a scale and is simply the product of Beethoven’s humorous temperament” (von Beethovens lustigen Laune). Carl Czerny, *Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben*, ed. and annotated by Walter Kolneder, *Collection d’études musicologiques* Sammlungen musikwissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen, vol. 46 (Strasbourg: Editions P. H. Heitz, 1968), p.46.

We normally consider the theoretical relationship between improvisation and composition to be linear and progressive; that is, intuition-based creative spontaneity—however much it may be conditioned by learned gestures and structures—leads, through various degrees of reflection and consideration, to an elaborated and polished durable written text. The argument here, based on Czerny's claim, is that Beethoven has, for profound expressive purposes, reduplicated this linear process back on itself. Of course, the finale of the Ninth is carefully considered, elaborated, polished, fixed, and durable, but its extraordinary originality and indeed its subtlety—deeply embedded within its euphoria—lie in Beethoven's chosen generic-structural mode.

Beethoven as Improviser

When visitors or friends asked Beethoven to play, he would clearly prefer not to perform pieces but to improvise. He had apparently done so for Mozart in 1787;¹⁰ he did so in concerts around the turn of the century, also taking part in improvising competitions, for instance, on two pianos with Joseph Woelffl.¹¹ He improvised the opening of the *Chorfantasie* at its premiere in 1808 and possibly gave another improvisation on this occasion (see above). Even in later years, when profoundly deaf, he improvised, for instance, for Cipriani Potter in 1818, John Russell in 1821, George Smart in 1825, and Friedrich Wieck in either 1824 or 1826.¹² As Lewis Lockwood has recently maintained: "keyboard improvisation was for him a central imaginative process."¹³

Reports of auditors on the characteristic approach Beethoven took in improvising emphasize the fecundity, range, and abruptness of his musical thought. Tomaschek noted in 1798, for instance, "his frequent daring deviations from one motive to another,"¹⁴ and Sir John Russell gave a more elaborated but essentially

10. Sonneck, *Beethoven: Impressions*, p.11. Further accounts of Beethoven's early improvising may be found on pp.13 and 15.

11. *Ibid.*, pp.22–23, 28, 36, 52, 73, 77. Stephan Ley, *Beethovens Leben in authentischen Bildern und Texten* (Berlin: B. Cassirer, 1925), p.43, quoting Ignaz von Seyfried.

12. Sonneck, *Beethoven: Impressions*, pp.111, 116, 194, 208. For a supplementary listing of occasions on which Beethoven improvised, see Theodor von Frimmel, *Beethoven-Handbuch* (Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1926; rpt. Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1968), I, 132–36.

13. Lewis Lockwood, *Beethoven: The Music and the Life* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003), p.285. See also William Meredith, "Beethoven's Creativity: His Improvisations," *Beethoven Newsletter* 1 (1986), 25–28.

14. Sonneck, *Beethoven: Impressions*, p.22.

similar account in 1821: “At first he only struck now and then a few hurried and interrupted notes, as if afraid of being detected in a crime; but gradually he forgot everything else, and ran on during half an hour in a fantasy, in a style extremely varied, and marked, above all, by the most abrupt transitions.”¹⁵

Beethoven’s sketched notes to himself on improvisation around the time of the first performance of the *Chorfantasie* are indicative. “One improvises actually only when one gives no consideration to what one plays, so—if one is to improvise in the best and truest manner in public—one gives oneself over freely just to what pleases one.” The emphasis on spontaneity is of course no surprise; the implication that one should not concern oneself with continuity—“logic” as Schoenberg might have called it—helps us understand the discursive, at times disruptive, nature of Beethoven’s practice. “Lied varied / at the end a fugue and / finishing pianissimo / each fantasy drafted in this fashion / and then carried through in the theatre.” This note is clearly an *aide mémoire* referring to one or more specific occasions that have seemingly already happened or at least are about to happen in the near future: the important aspects to stress here are the references to Lied, variations, and fugue. We may also remark on the combination of spontaneity and planning that these two notes taken together imply: general procedures are brought into play, but intuition should not be gainsaid and conventionally good continuation may be suspended. Two additional notes stress the importance of variations and of a Lied as theme. “On other occasions let oneself be given the theme written down and immediately vary it.” “Have read through all opera-libretti and sometimes appropriate texts to be used for a Lied for variations, for example a Lied bidding farewell or similarly about goodbyes, as it may be when one takes one’s leave for somewhere else.”¹⁶ An interesting implication of this last note is that Beethoven

15. *Ibid.*, pp.22, 116. See also Frimmel, *Beethoven-Handbuch*, I, 134, for Johann Friedrich Nisle’s account of an improvisation in 1808 in which he emphasizes the swiftness and radicalness of the changes in mood.

16. These remarks are found on the sketch bifolium Bonn Mh 75, fols.3–4, part of the Sketchbook of 1807–08 (digital images may be accessed at www.beethoven-haus-bonn.de): 1. “Man fantasirt eigentlich nur, wenn man gar nicht acht giebt, was man spielt, so—würde man auch am besten, wahrsten fantasiren öffentlich—sich ungezwungen überlassen, eben was einem gefällt.” 2. “Lied variiert / am Ende Fuge und / mit pianissimo aufgehört / auf diese Art jede Phantasie entworfen / und hernach im Theater ausgeführt.” 3. “Bei andern Gelegenheit[en] sich das Thema geben lassen / geschrieben und gleich variiert.” 4. “alle opern-Bücher durchgelesen und manchmal passende Texte / zu einem lied zum variieren anzuwenden, so z.B. / ein lied er lebe wohl oder d.g. von Abschiede wie es kömmt / wenn man irgendwo fortgeht” (quoted following Sisman, “After the Heroic Style,” p.76, nn.18–19, who in turn follows Helmut Aloysius Löw, *Die Improvisation im Klavierwerk L. van Beethovens* [diss. Univ. Saarland, 1962]).

needed a text on which to generate a suitable new Lied, and one might speculate on whether that text had further influence on the course of the improvisation arising; since there is no known text to the Lied in op.77, an investigation into any possible impact of the text of *Gegenliebe*, WoO 118, on op.80 is the only course open to scholars at present.

Thus we may build up a general picture of the type of improvisation at issue in this body of evidence: that it was characterised by an imaginative freedom entailing abruptness, variety and surprise, that it included a Lied for variations and fugal material. Well-thought-out deceptions (“vernünftige Betrügereyen”) had been identified by C. P. E. Bach as belonging to a good *fantasie*,¹⁷ and in his improvisations Beethoven clearly followed the teaching of this guide that he respected so much. The essence therefore in this respect is the thwarting of particular expectation, and this can be achieved by breaking off a seemingly established continuity, by searching for an appropriate theme for a generically established slot in inappropriate directions, or by substitution. The nature of the Lied for variations is of course essentially vocal in origin, and further deductions concerning its characteristically *volkstümlich* style and the types of fugal material Beethoven thought appropriate will be offered below.

Overall Structures

Both the *Fantasie*, op.77, and the *Chorfantasie*, op.80, begin with the rhetoric of disorientation. In op.77 the downward scalar flourishes define G minor, in which key the first phrase of a possible theme appears (m.1³–3¹); when this opening is repeated in sequence a tone lower, the disruption is thematic as well as tonal, for we know the melody cannot in this form now become a structured theme for elaboration. The following potential theme in D^b major (m. 5^{2.2.2}*ff.*) has the necessary tonal stability—its first four-measure phrase moves to V and its second is a repeat at a different register—but it is interrupted after the first phrase by the most extensive scale in the piece yet and after the second by a sequential cadence-extension and further scalar gestures; it is thus decisively denied normal continuation. In op.80 the emphatic C-minor I–IV progression of mm. 1–3 points toward V in m.4, an expectation that is subverted by the arrival of V⁷/III. By the time the new delicate figuration appears in m.6 we have reoriented to E^b major as tonic and

17. Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, *Versuch über die wahre Art, das Clavier zu spielen: Faksimile-Nachdruck der 1. Auflage, Berlin 1753 and 1762*, ed. Lothar Hoffmann-Erbrecht (Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1957), p.330.

repared the opening as “out-of key”; yet this new tonic also proves deceptive, for it is deviated back to C minor at the beginning of m.7, initiating sequential spirals that allow neither key to become truly established. Furthermore, the figuration is not permitted to flower into anything of thematic substance either. In both these beginnings, there is an energizing of creativity, idiomatically connected with what the fingers will do on the keyboard.

The rhetoric of disorientation develops in both works into the quest for thematic material that can bring stability with it: the Lied for variations. In op.77 the quest proceeds through proposals and delays in which at least one suitable theme is presented and left: the so-called *Frühlingslied* theme,¹⁸ with its simple structure, the last phrase of which is prevented from reaching cadence. Since the aim is toward the *volkstümliches* Lied, a measure of the similarity/difference of the material being tried out, to and from such a Lied, gives meaning to the piece. In op.80 the orchestral proposal of a protofugue subject is brought to abandonment by the horn calls, summoning the soloist to main purpose, as it were. In the finale of the Ninth the rhetoric of disorientation takes violent form in the *Schreckensfanfare*¹⁹ and the emphatic instrumental recitatives; the review and dismissal of preceding movements constitute a special form of quest—might the old material yet serve?

As we have seen, the Lied for variations is a consistent feature of this form of improvisation, and in all three movements this Lied is relatively simply structured, easily singable, memorable, in essence *volkstümlich*. This is the interim goal of the opening uncertainties. The course of the variations in each work is similar also: initially simple elaborative variations proceed on the lines of good continuation as suggested by the formal variation-archetype, until a disruption occurs, after which the variation sequence is reestablished on a refreshed, enhanced basis. Where does the disruptive interruption come from? How is it motivated—perhaps by intuitive dissatisfaction with the normality and predictability of the variation sequence, perhaps by recollection that the creator is in the middle of a *fantasie*, perhaps a mixture

18. Peter Schleuning's designation in *Beethoven: Interpretationen seiner Werke*, p.607.

19. Wagner's term, in “Zum Vortrag der neunten Symphonie Beethovens,” *Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen von Richard Wagner* (Leipzig: Fritzsche, 1887/8), IX, 241. He also called this passage the “furchtbare Fanfare” (IX, 243), and had earlier characterized it as: “der wilde, chaotische Aufschrei der unbefriedigten Leidenschaft” (the wild, chaotic shriek of unresolved passion) in “Bericht über die Aufführung der neunten Symphonie von Beethoven im Jahre 1846, nebst Programm dazu” (*Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen*, II, 61). Schenker called it “eine fürchterliche Sturzwelle” (a fearsome breaker) in his *Beethovens Neunte Sinfonie: Eine Darstellung des musikalischen Inhaltes unter fortlaufender Berücksichtigung auch des Vortrages und der Literatur* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1912), p.249.

of both (for these two reasons are not in conflict)? Or perhaps it is symbolic of lack of rational control: the controlled has to be answered by the uncontrolled.

Fugue has a roving function, characteristically outside the variation-chains: in the *Fantasia*, op.77, it occurs during the quest for the Lied theme finally adopted; in the *Chorfantasia* it is merely suggested in the two orchestral interruptions, the one stopping the soloist's introduction and the other forming part of the intervention in the variation sequence; in the finale of the Ninth it has a hugely elaborated role, again on two separate formal occasions, as the "battle" fugue following the Turkish variations and as the double fugue combining the *Freude* and *Seid umschlungen* themes. All three movements have elements of contrast integrated within the structure and end with diversification and its correlative compression, in the rhetoric of enhanced closure. Thus we may posit a repertoire of general procedural constituents: rapid traverse of sharply contrasted gestural fragments (RT); establishment of interim stability, being the characteristic Lied and variations (S1); disruption, including a surprise factor (DI); establishment of replacement stability, being a resumption of the variation sequence under new circumstances of key and/or instrumentation (S2); contrast and integration, that is: a new contrasting theme, which is then combined with previous material (CI); diversification and compression, in which variations or transformations of the theme(s) become intensified (DC). Abruptness and discursion naturally belong together in this kind of music-making: discursion without abruptness would lead to prolixity and loss of energy, abruptness without discursion to unmotivated disconnectedness and loss of eloquence.

The following list gives a synoptic overview of the *Fantasia*, op.77: a kind of map, if you will, of its main phases of activity and segmentations; this has been kept deliberately summary, to lay bare the higher, procedural level of structure.²⁰

The Fantasia, op.77

1. Mm.1–14. Rapid scales divide and connect registers; isolated melodic phrases are interspersed, structured by sequence or registral change; a

20. A detailed study of the work's genesis, recent critical reception and structure may be found in John Rink, "Schenker and Improvisation," *Journal of Music Theory* 37 (1993), 1–54, here 14–21. Rink's subtle and persuasive analysis offers a different perspective on the piece, oriented as it is to uncovering Schenkerian principles at work in Beethoven's improvisatory/compositional thinking. Particularly significant for present purposes is Rink's identification of deception and uncertainty as determining constituents of "free fantasy" improvisation and form. Elaine Sisman also gives a persuasive analysis of the work, in "After the Heroic Style," pp.70–78.

- possible theme tries to emerge; the extreme tonal poles of G minor and D \flat major act as primary points of reference. = RT.
2. Mm.15–156. Four contrasted themes are presented: a fuller *Frühlingslied* theme in B \flat major, which could well serve as the Lied for variations until, in its repeated cadence, it becomes stuck on the final subdominant chord of m.24, prolonged through repetition and dynamic decrease for four measures, then tonicized through a further eight-and-one-half measures of primitive imitative work; an energetic and figurative theme in D minor,²¹ by way of a cadenzalike eruption of arpeggios, strongly structured but clearly inappropriate as a Lied theme for variations, especially as its melody is already divided by idiomatic diminutions; the coming variation theme is allusively presaged in A \flat major and B \flat minor, separated by a brief return of the scale from the opening and succeeded by a reference back to the cadenzalike arpeggio eruption; an *Eingang* on V of B minor leads to a fugato on a subject that combines scale and arpeggio—the counterpoint is held at a primitive level and leads to a varied return of the allusive presaging, now prolonging V in B minor. The evolutionary process here is the trying out of material for potential stability, which for various reasons is inappropriate and/or abandoned, in the dual context of cadenza and emergence of the Lied; the fugato is not centrally part of this scheme and acts as delay, deception, and diversion. = (illusory) S1 + CI, as RT continued.²²
 3. Mm.157–221^{1.1}. The Lied theme of eight measures in B major is followed by seven figural variations that retain both form and key of the theme. = S1.
 4. Mm.221^{1.2}–45. The work's opening scales return as interruption; the variation theme reappears in C major (suggesting the replacement stability), but development with modulation substitutes for its responsive phrase, leading to a cadential peroration in B major and continuing variation VII (from just before the interruption, therefore); the scales and the Lied theme in its simplest form conclude the work in B major. The second stability thus proves deceptive. = DI + (S2) + DC.

Three powerful foregroundings of deception in the *Fantasie*, op.77, have been alluded to in the list above: the noncompletion of the cadence-repeat underway at the anticipated end of the *Frühlingslied* theme and the ensuing abandonment of this theme as the expected central theme of the *Fantasie* (expected because of the

21. Sisman calls this a “*Sturm-und-Drang* étude” (ibid., p.77).

22. Further such “illusory” functions are indicated below by means of brackets surrounding the appropriate abbreviations.

rhetorical transits preceding it and because of its clear suitability); the trying out of the étude and the fugue as possible main themes; and the deviation to C major following the interruption of the variation chain, so suggestive of a new beginning in theme (as another variation-chain) and key, but diverted quickly back to the old in both aspects.

The *Chorfantasie*, op.80, has long been identified closely with Beethoven's improvisatory practice. It was conceived as the finale to the concert on 22 December 1808, in which the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, and the Fourth Piano Concerto were premiered and the Gloria and Sanctus of the C-Major Mass and concert aria *Ah Perfido!* performed, along with an improvisation by Beethoven; this could have been the *Fantasie*, op.77, or the opening of op.80 itself, for Beethoven improvised this opening at the concert and in the score did not write the heading "Finale" until the orchestra enters. The concert advertisement described the conclusion of the event as consisting of a "Fantasia for the piano which ends as a finale with the gradual entrance of the entire orchestra and finally the introduction of choruses." Culmination or finale-ness was thus here already conceived as both incremental and inclusive. A synoptic overview of this work follows.

The Chorfantasie, op.80

1. Mm.1–26. Full-chord arpeggios, scales, and figurative work are interspersed with more delicate figurative material and elaborated by sequence; C-minor tonality surrounds a modulatory trajectory that includes interim tonicizations of E \flat , E, and G majors. = RT.
2. Mm.27–60¹. An emergent orchestral fugato is interleaved with melodic piano material, leading to horn calls; C minor→major. = RT renewed.
3. Mm.60^{2,1}–388¹. The Lied theme of sixteen measures in C major, drawn from the song *Gegenliebe*, WoO 118,²³ is followed by five figural variations retaining the form and key of the theme, successively for flute, oboes, clarinets and bassoon, solo string quartet, and full orchestra; links and developments lead into and surround four further "character" variations, being a scherzolike compression for pianoforte and orchestra in C minor; a flowing, simplified yet extensively developed version of the theme for pianoforte and orchestra beginning in B major, modulating through various keys to A minor, with

23. The theme as song-verse consists of six phrases: a,a₁,b,b,a,a₂. For the *Chorfantasie*, Beethoven essentially shortened and simplified the theme into four phrases, to the third of which, however, he added an elaborative cadenza: a,a₁,b,a₁.

emphatic cadential material in three-measure phrases; a slow lyrical movement for orchestra with filigree figuration for pianoforte in A major; and a march for pianoforte and orchestra in F major, followed by modulatory transitional material. = S₁ + elements of (C₁).

4. Mm. 388²–612. Arpeggios, the emergent fugato, and the horn calls return as interruption, suggesting a compressed rebeginning; a further three, now vocal variations and coda close the work: variation X has the theme on high voices with figural decoration on pianoforte; variation XI transfers the theme to low voices with an increased rate of figural decoration on pianoforte; variation XII is for full choir with orchestral accompaniment; a coda includes imitation between the voices and an acceleration of tempo, C major. = D₁ + S₂ + D_C.

The suggestions of fugue, which tries to begin in the bass on two separate occasions, are expressively powerful while remaining contrapuntally distinctly rudimentary, and, in their brevity, they surely constitute a pair of “well-thought-out deceptions.” Since the main theme is taken directly from the second part of the song-pair “Seufzer eines Ungeliebten—Gegenliebe” (1794–95), it is already a Lied and is, indeed, one in *volkstümlich* style. The first variation sequence becomes relatively elaborate, especially with the generically diverse “character” variations, which bring elements of contrast into play. The origins of the work were clearly occasional, as it was designed as the summation of the great concert. It is therefore distinctly possible that the decision to include voices was pragmatic, relatively late, and arrived at because the choir was on hand. According to Czerny, the poetry was written to fit the music. The poet Christoph Kuffner responded to Beethoven’s request at the shortest notice and wrote of the force of music and words to bring light, peace, and spiritual renewal.²⁴

If we follow the leads provided by these overviews and parse the 11 sections of the finale of the Ninth as found by Webster and Tusa (= W/T in the list below) in terms of the improvisational processes so far delineated, the results are as follows.

The Ninth Symphony, Op. 125: Finale

1. (= W/T 1–2). Mm. 0³–91 and 92–208². The startling rhetoric of the *Schreckensfanfare*, its attendant instrumental recitatives, the review and dismissal of

24. See Wilhelm Seidel’s essay on op. 80 in *Beethoven: Interpretationen seiner Werke*, p. 621. Czerny is also cited in Willy Hess’s introduction to the Eulenberg score of op. 80 (E.E. 6451), where Hess adduces sketch and other evidence that call this account somewhat into question.

- the preceding movements, and the emergence of the *Freude* theme constitute the trying-out of the medium and seeing what occurs, the questing “will-this-do?” phase, together with the finding of the beginnings of a theme with appropriate potential. In mm.92–208² that theme is fully found and its immediate potential realized, in the instrumental version of the *Freude* theme and three variations and postlude. D minor→major. = RT + S₁.
2. (= W/T 3–7). Mm.208³–594. The *Schreckensfanfare* and the rejection of instrumentality by vocal recitative lead to the introduction and establishment of the vocal version of the *Freude* theme plus four variations; the last two change key and topos, being the Turkish (military) music followed by the instrumental fugue (“battle” music); this Turkish music and fugue act as surprise contrasts and are followed by integration, enacted by the climactic restatement of the *Freude* theme. D minor→major; B \flat major→minor→B minor; D major. = DI + S₂ + (CI).
 3. (= W/T 8–9). Mm.594³–762. Sacred hymn and vocal double fugue (the learned style; drawing together the worldly and transcendent, and integrating the two themes: *Freude* and *Seid umschlungen*) and restatement of part of hymn. G major→C major→F major→D major. = CI.
 4. (= W/T 10–11). Mm.763–940. Codalike compression of fast and slow transformations and elaborations of the *Freude* theme (mm.763–842) and *Seid umschlungen* theme (mm.851–940), including an operatic vocal cadenza, presto and prestissimo vocal and instrumental passages, a piling up of rhetorical gestures in euphoric closure, intensified by brevity and abrupt abutments, and including a return of the Turkish percussion. D major→B major →D major. = DC.

The emergence of the Turkish music as an abrupt abutment, forming an entirely new expressive moment or topos, is thus here viewed as lying in the middle of a macro-structural section. Heinrich Schenker’s and Lewis Lockwood’s analyses of the movement are among the relatively rare ones that group the Turkish music with the preceding variations in this way,²⁵ allowing surprise to be integrated into “normal” good continuation, as it were. The finale of the Ninth thus shares with Beethoven’s improvisations, albeit in enhanced and highly elaborated ways, the characteristic combination of breadth and compression, the intensity of such impacted discursion, the inclusion of rhetorical gesture and a very wide range of expressive topoi,²⁶ with abrupt changes between these, the use of the improvisation-

25. Schenker, *Beethovens Neunte Sinfonie*, pp.268–92; Lockwood, *The Music and the Life*, pp.433–38.

26. See Table 1 in Tusa, “*Noch einmal*,” p.117.

friendly forms of variation and fugue, and the interruption and resumption of a variation-chain.

On the strength of these broad-brush accounts we may postulate a generic formal template for Beethoven's composed "free fantasias" and—by extrapolation based on the assurances of Czerny—of some of his lost improvised ones also. In sum:

- Op.77 progresses through: RT; (S₁) + CI, as RT continued; S₁; DI + (S₂) + DC
- Op.80 progresses through: RT; RT renewed; S₁ + elements of (CI); DI + S₂ + DC
- Op.125, movt. IV progresses through: RT + S₁; DI + S₂ + (CI); CI; DC

The emergent generic formal template is therefore: begin with rapid traverse of sharply contrasted gestural fragments (RT); move to establishment of interim stability (S₁); break off with disruptive interruption (DI); move to establishment of replacement stability (S₂); possibly move to contrast and integration (CI); and conclude with diversification and compression (DC).

Aspects of the Development of the Finale of the Ninth

While sketching the Seventh and Eighth Symphonies in 1812, Beethoven noted a further projected Symphony in D Minor,²⁷ but the earliest sketch appearance of a theme actually used in the Symphony is in 1815/16²⁸ an abbreviated form of the fugue subject of the scherzo, to lead to a "slow ending" and not noted as at that time for the Symphony. By 1817 Beethoven was working specifically on the Symphony with sketches that, however, we can recognize for its first two movements, though at this stage he was undecided on whether the scherzo should be placed second or third. From 1818 (the second half, in Nottebohm's dating, ca. March/April, in Brandenburg's revision) comes the extraordinary draft plan: "Adagio Cantique—Solemn song in a symphony in the old modes—Herr Gott dich loben wir—alleluja—either as an independent piece or as an introduction to a fugue. Perhaps the entire second symphony to be characterized in this manner, whereby singing voices will enter in the finale, or even in the Adagio. The violins, etc. in the orchestra will be increased tenfold in the finale. Or the Adagio will be

27. N II, pp. 101–18, here p. 111.

28. For the dating of the Scheide Sketchbook and its contents, see JTW, pp. 241–46; and Sieghard Brandenburg, "Die Skizzen zur Neunten Symphonie," in *Zu Beethoven 2: Aufsätze und Dokumente*, ed. Harry Goldschmidt (Berlin: Verlag Neue Musik, 1984), pp. 88–129, here p. 91.

repeated in a particular fashion in the finale, with the singing voices introduced one by one. In the adagio the text of a Greek myth, *Cantique Ecclésiastique*—in the Allegro, a Bacchanalian Festival.”²⁹ This is the first indication that Beethoven was thinking of introducing voices into one of his symphonies; the idea for a slow modal song, however, found its way later and without voices into the “*Heiliger Dankgesang*” of op. 132 of 1824–25. “*Herr Gott, dich loben wir*” is, of course, the Lutheran *Te Deum*, the chorale for which is in the Phrygian mode. The reference to two symphonies at this stage is surely in direct response to the terms of the original commission from the Philharmonic Society of London.³⁰

Other works engaged his attention: the Piano Sonatas, ops. 109, 110, and 111, the *Missa solemnis*, the Overture *Die Weihe des Hauses*; and it was not until 1822 that he returned in a sustained way to symphonic plans. At this time the first movement of the Ninth was confirmed in place, but Beethoven was now exploring a range of ideas for the scherzo. There are also two settings of the first lines of Schiller’s poem, one in $\frac{6}{8}$ with the note: “The German Symphony either with or without variations after which the choir enters. The end of the Symphony with Turkish music and choir”; the other setting gives the first four measures of the *Freude* theme, fully formed and headed “finale,” with the comment “recht fugirt”³¹—these two alternatives were later to come momentarily together, of course.

By Schiller’s own account, his poem rapidly became a “folk-poem,” and Beethoven met it with a tune of universal appeal and ready recall. After its first appearance in

29. N II, pp. 157–92, here p. 163: “Adagio Cantique—Frommer Gesang in einer Sinfonie in den alten Tonarten—Herr Gott dich loben wir—alleluja—entweder für sich allein oder als Einleitung in eine Fuge. Vielleicht auf diese Weise die ganze 2te Sinfonie charakterisirt, wo alsdenn im letzten Stück oder schon im Adagio die Singstimmen eintreten. Die Orchester Violinen etc. werden beim letzten Stück verzehnfacht. Oder das Adagio wird auf gewisse Weise im letzten Stücke wiederholt wobei alsdenn erst die Singstimmen nach u. nach eintreten—im Adagio Text griechischer Mithos Cantique Ecclésiastique—im Allegro Feier des Bachus.” The sketch is in Bonn HCB BSk 8/56. The transcription given in the digital archives of the Beethovenhaus (www.beethoven-haus-bonn.de) is at variance in certain details, including “im Allegro Fuge des Bachus”; I have preferred Nottebohm, not least because the Bonn transcription of Fuge here appears to be a misreading of Beethoven’s “Fejer.” The Web site dates the sketch leaf to 1817/18. Brandenburg, “Die Skizzen zur Neunten Symphonie,” p. 103.

30. See Brandenburg, letter no. 1129 (Ferdinand Ries to Beethoven, 9 June 1817), V, 64–67.

31. The last note is written as a quarter note; while the sketch represents the music of the first four measures, the actual duration is three-and-three-quarter measures. The sketch is in Artaria 201, p. 111; Nicholas Cook has shown that Nottebohm was incorrect to attribute the comment “recht fugirt” to the scherzo theme: Cook, *Symphony No. 9*, p. 16. JTW, pp. 275ff. dates the Ninth Symphony sketches in Artaria 201 to between October 1822 and February/March 1823.

the sketches, it underwent much work before reaching its final form.³² There is no evidence in the sketches or otherwise that Beethoven ever considered the *Freude* theme as a recomposition of the *Gegenliebe* theme of op.80, as many commentators have assumed it to be. The *volkstümliche Manier* is relatively rare in Beethoven's work; it is related to but clearly different from the elevated hymnic style, in, for instance, the Arietta from the Piano Sonata, op.111, in the Cavatina from the String Quartet, op.130, or indeed in the slow movement of the Ninth. Like these, it is essentially diatonic, singable, clearly phrased, but it is faster, more repetitive. As we have seen, Beethoven used this manner in both his fantasies, and it was clearly the archetypical style of the Lied for variations in improvisations and improvisationally based works.

He had sketched instrumental material labeled "Finale" and "Vor der Freude" probably around April 1823, and followed this with other similarly intended material, all not used.³³ He was thus exercised over a problem of transition: how to introduce the Ode setting in a way that made it a logical outcome of the preceding instrumental movements, anchoring the vocality as much as possible within the symphonic genre. In the second half of 1823, he came to the idea that this integration was to be achieved by a narrative of rejection, and he brought into play two elements of his improvisatory technique: the opening rhetoric of disorientation and the quest for material. Accordingly, he sketched the fanfare, recitatives, review, and dismissal of the previous movements (here done vocally with text) and emergence of the *Freude* melody. For the review and dismissal of movements in this sketch, Beethoven wrote after the quotation from the first movement: "Oh, no! Not this, something more agreeable is what I require," after the quotation from the second "this neither, it's no better, just somewhat more jovial," after that from the third "also this one, it is too delicate; something more get-up-and-go will have to be sought, as . . . I will see to it that I myself sing you something in accord with the mood [the first two measures of the *Freude* theme appear] this is it, ha, now we have found it: Freude schöner."³⁴ We particularly note his intention to become

32. N II, pp.183–84, and Robert Winter, "The Sketches for the 'Ode to Joy,'" in *Beethoven, Performers, and Critics: The International Beethoven Congress Detroit, 1977*, ed. Robert Winter and Bruce Carr (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1980), pp.176–214, here pp.182–97.

33. N II, pp.186ff.; Nottebohm dated the first of these sketches, in Landsberg 8/1 p.12, at the latest to July 1823. In JTW, pp.290–91, this date is revised to around April 1823. See also Winter, "Sketches for the 'Ode to Joy,'" p.197.

34. The sketch is in Landsberg 82 (gathering VII, p.69); see JTW, pp.292–98. The text in this sketch is hard to decipher, and my translation here follows N II, pp.190–91: "o nein, dieses nicht, etwas anderes gefälliges ist es was ich fordere / auch dieses nicht, ist nicht besser, sondern nur etwas heiterer / auch

himself a *dramatis persona* in his own work—which he later ameliorated but could not fully gainsay simply by deleting the personal pronoun.

The next stage of development involved a further harnessing of the procedures of improvisation; the breaking into and renewal of a variation sequence, which brought with it the decision to have the first part of the variation sequence instrumental, and the breaking into it and its renewal vocally based. Accordingly, the prefatory review, dismissal, and discovery had to become instrumental too, in which the cello/bass recitatives already imply the inadequacy of the purely instrumental. This implication was then realized by the astonishing intervention of Beethoven-baritone, who stops the Symphony as prepared and in progress: narrativity itself thereby becomes explicit as he initiates notes “more pleasant and more full of joy.” These notes turn out to be the same as the purely instrumental theme, but with words and sung: it is thus pure vocalicity that is “more pleasant and more full of joy.” Here the topos of improvisation becomes part of not only the musical structure but also the dramatic narrative, as will be discussed further below.

What of Schiller's text and its treatment in the Symphony? Beethoven did not use this text in any conventional way to establish musical form, and in three fundamental respects he subverted, undermined, and reconstituted it for musicodramatic purposes: he altered the position of “Seid umschlungen, Millionen!” from just after “Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt” to much later, to precede “Ihr stürzt nieder, Millionen!”; he reduced the text and its content by over half, cutting out entirely the Bacchanalian element; and he made parts of the text recur as the musical themes with which they had become associated.

Schiller had written his poem *An die Freude* in 1785 (published in 1786)—he himself did not call it an ode—it was Beethoven who did that in titling the Ninth for publication. In 1800, however, Schiller wrote to his friend Christian Gottfried Körner that it was “entirely flawed” and “a bad poem,”³⁵ and in 1803 he published a revised version, slightly shorter and with some alterations of detail. This revision

dieses es ist zu zärtl.[ich] etwas aufgewecktes (?) muss man suchen wie die . . . ich werde sehn dass ich selbst euch etwas vorsinge was der stimm . . . mir nach / dieses ist es ha es ist nun gefunden Freude schöner.” See also Lühning, “Grenzen des Gesanges,” pp.38–39, where she illustrates the sketch and offers a somewhat differing transcription: “O nein dieses nicht—etwas andres gefälliges ist es was ich fordre / auch dieses nicht, ist nicht besser sondern nur etwas heiterer / auch dieses es ist zu zärtlich, etwas aufgewecktes muß man suchen / ich werde sehn, daß ich selbst euch etwas vorsinge / dieses ist es ha es ist nun gefunden.” For a list of transcriptions, see Stephen Hinton, “Not *Which* Tones? The Crux of Beethoven's Ninth,” *19CM* 22 (1998), 61–77, here p.68.

35. Cited in English translation in Levy, *The Ninth Symphony*, p.10. For further discussion of Schiller's dissatisfaction, see Solomon, *Essays*, p.209.

can in no sense be described as radical, however, and should not be taken therefore as a full response to or outcome of its creator's dissatisfactions; perhaps it was only Beethoven who could thoroughly fulfill Schiller's corrective urge! Beethoven had first used material from the poem in his "Leopold" Cantata (1790); he formed plans for a fuller setting before leaving Bonn, and there is a lengthy series of sketch- and work-traces related to this project: a sketch in C major of 1798–99, different from any of his subsequent music for the poem;³⁶ a now-lost song offered to Simrock by Ferdinand Ries on Beethoven's behalf in 1803;³⁷ the finale to *Leonore/Fidelio* act II of 1804–05 setting "Wer ein holdes Weib errungen"; a new C-major sketch of 1811–12, during which the note "ripped out verses like princes are beggars etc. not the whole" appears³⁸—evidence that he already intended to take a severe editorial approach to the poem for musical purposes. This music, without its words, found its way in 1815 into the Overture *Namensfeier*, op. 115.

At least by the time he came to set the text for the finale of the Ninth he knew both of Schiller's versions of the poem and conflated them—for instance: "was die Mode streng getheilt / Alle Menschen werden Brüder" comes from the second (in the first it is "was der Mode Schwert getheilt / Bettler werden Fürstenbrüder"), while "Laufet, Brüder, eure Bahn" is from the first (in the second it is "Wandelt, Brüder, eure Bahn"). The reordering of material serves the primary purpose of strategic placement of the central move from the essentially secular world of the opening to the transcendental world of the sacred hymn *Seid umschlungen*; this allows more variational elaboration of the *Freude* theme before the change and groups the first occurrence of the Turkish music straightforwardly with the earlier secular world.

As to the cutting, Schiller's first version of his poem has 108 lines, the second 96; Beethoven takes well under half of these: 46 in total. What then did Beethoven—Schiller's great enthusiast and here his greatest critic—omit? Exhortations to honor sympathy, to endure for a better world, to forgive our enemy, to defeat perfidy, delineations of Joy as the animating force of nature, as lighting the way to the angels, as solace to the dying. But during its latter half, Schiller's poem grows explicitly into the drinking song it was always intended to be, albeit into a very elevated one: "This glass to the good spirit, there above the starry sky," and "swear fidelity to the vow through this golden wine." Of this turn there is no trace in Beethoven's

36. Grasnick 1, fol. 13^r. See N II, p. 479.

37. Brandenburg, letter no. 155 (13 September 1803), I, 180; Lühning, "Grenzen des Gesanges," p. 25.

38. Petter Sketchbook, Bonn HCB Mh 59, fol. 43^r: "abgerissene sä[t]ze wie Fürsten sind Bettler u.s.w. nicht das Ganze"; see the digital image at www.beethoven-haus-bonn.de. Further references to Schiller's poem are found at the bottom of fol. 42^r: see JTW, p. 215.

adaptation, and in treating Schiller's text in this way he has simplified, clarified, reemphasized perhaps even refocused the central message, removing the worldly alcohol in favor of a purely spiritual intoxication. His projected Bacchanal in an early sketch for the Symphony has thus become ethical and aspirational, and we find ourselves listening, at least in some senses, to a humanist/pantheist version of the *Missa solemnis*.³⁹ The composer's central, essentially social message is supported by "Be embraced, you millions / this kiss for the whole world" and "brothers, above the canopy of stars a dear Father has to dwell"—the kiss is a ritualistic greeting, bodying forth and enacting joy itself, bringing humanity together in unity, and it points the way to the numinous and veiled godhead from whom it comes and whom it substantiates. The mix of classical and Christian theology is characteristic and allusive and, together with the Turkish music, breaks religious exclusivity decisively open.

Beethoven sets Schiller's opening lines 1–2 "Freude, schöner Götterfunken, / Tochter aus Elysium" on five separate structural occasions, including near the beginning of the vocal part of the movement and at its very end; Schiller's lines 9–10 "Seid umschlungen Millionen! / Diesen Kuß der ganzen Welt" he sets on three separate such occasions; lines 11–12 "Brüder – überm Sternenzelt / Muß ein lieber Vater wohnen" and lines 29–32 beginning "Ihr stürzt nieder," each on two. Thus he treats the phrases of the text as if they were primarily the musical themes they have in a sense become; Debussy even went as far as to maintain: "Schiller's verses are given, in fact, an exclusively sonic meaning."⁴⁰ But, *pace* Debussy, the verbal semantics remain for those who wish to hear them, as they remained for Beethoven in composing the work, and the repetitions play a distinctive role in the development of the narrative drama, as we shall see. Furthermore, "Joy, beautiful spark of the gods, Daughter from Elysium" becomes the emblematic and predominant motto of Beethoven's message, of the composer who may well have claimed that music must "strike fire from the soul,"⁴¹ whose Promethean quest for the fire of the gods was made actual in his own creativity (not only in his *Prometheus* music),

39. William Kinderman gives a persuasive account of musical parallels between the two works in "Beethoven's Compositional Models for the Choral Finale of the Ninth Symphony," in *Beethoven's Compositional Process*, ed. William Kinderman (Lincoln: U Nebraska P1991), pp.160–88.

40. Claude Debussy, *Monsieur Croche et autres écrits*, intro. François Lesure (Paris: Gallimard, 1987), pp.36–37 "(les vers de Schiller n'ont vraiment là qu'une valeur sonore)."

41. TDR III, pp.328–29. The letter in question is, of course, now held to be a fabrication of Bettina von Arnim; however, she was undeniably close to the composer, and the words she put into Beethoven's mouth here may well have once been there. The issue of their relationship would seem to be ripe for reevaluation.

and who was later portrayed in Klinger's great memorial sculpture as Beethoven-Prometheus.

The Narrative of Spontaneity

In each of the preceding movements Beethoven prepares us in a subtle way for the allegory of the last movement by suggesting that spontaneous creativity itself is part of the subject matter of the work. These places embody therefore a self-reflexivity about the processes of the Symphony's making. While the very opening of the work may be based, in its remote past, on the *Eingang*—such as Beethoven had used at the beginning of the finale of the First Symphony—in the Ninth the first theme is not so much “led-in”; rather it takes very *form* before our ears: the star-stuff of which it is made rushes together in an elemental gathering of energy, coalescing into the emphatic presence of the astonishing first theme. A similar kind of inscription of creativity itself occurs at the close of the scherzo, mm. 549–63, where seven measures of the trio return before breaking abruptly off, to be followed by the final cadence of the movement. Beethoven is customarily viewed here as playing with audience expectations: teasing the listener by a feigned return to the trio after the scherzo da capo. However, what he does is surely more radical than that. By breaking off so summarily before the end of the responsive phrase, Beethoven has actually composed a creative change of mind and made it part of the piece—a change of mind so compelling that it allowed of neither revision (erasure) nor amelioration (continuing to a natural caesura). This is unequivocally a motion of creativity in the raw, made into high art. Then the extraordinary final returning section (mm. 99–157) in the slow movement shows a range of invention and elaboration that bursts the bounds of the normal for such sections; in particular, the horn and trumpet calls (mm. 120¹².*ff.* and 130¹².*ff.*) and their aftermath suggest that fantasy has taken over and marginalized the archetype.

The allegory of improvisation is both formal and narrative, being two aspects of the one musicodramatic continuum. The beginning of the finale, with the *Schreckensfanfare*, the review and dismissal of previous movements, the emergence of the *Freude* theme and its consolidation in instrumental variations—all this lays bare a scenario of compositional choice and decision, the quest for material, the cross-generic instrumental recitative;⁴² it also sets the scene for surely one of the most startling, stupendous interventions in all music: the entry of the baritone at

42. Cooper relates this passage to Beethoven's creativity in the following terms: “The composer did, however, make something like a general statement about his creative process, but this comes in the form of a stylized representation in music. The passage in question is, of course, the beginning

“O Freunde, nicht diese Töne.” Who is speaking, who is this disruptive singer, this *figura*, unnamed but omnipotent? It is certainly the director of the performance and must be therefore the composer himself—Beethoven, in the guise of an anonymous representative human being, using his own words to express his own will to abort the prepared music: “O friends, not these notes, but let us sound forth ones more agreeable and more full of joy.”

The composer thus once again ruptures his own composition: but here he stops explicitly its prepared form as unsatisfactory, decisively altering its course into “uncharted” territory. Furthermore as continuing participant in his own music, he shapes the sequel: having stopped the work, he restarts it with the announcement “Freude, Freude” and begins to teach his newly drawn-in performing colleagues how to sing the *Freude* theme. These colleagues pick up the musical cues gradually and become progressively caught up in the music-making: the chorus basses sing “Freude!” on one note; the lower chorus voices repeat the second half of the melody after Beethoven-baritone; the soloists (chorus leaders) have now learned the tune and begin to offer relatively simple elaborations; again the lower chorus voices repeat after them. This is musicodramatic make-believe of the most potent sort, and one which enhances the expressed unity of the participants: if humanity can work together spontaneously like this, then all are indeed “brothers.” As the elaborations become more complex, the chorus realizes that the emergent religious dimension (“Und der Cherub steht vor Gott”) requires of it a new degree of awe, expressed in the climactic homophony of mm. 321–30 and the powerful harmonic move: V/V → V=I → VI in mm. 325–30.⁴³

Picking up Schiller’s marginal simile, “wie ein Held zum Siegen,” Beethoven, extreme improviser, seizes the opportunity to introduce his planned Turkish music—the local military music around him in Vienna—and the soldiers come jauntily marching in.⁴⁴ However abrupt and interruptive this music is, it remains part of the variation sequence: thus Beethoven-instrumentalist (marching bands don’t sing) starts up the

of the finale of the Ninth Symphony, which is as specific and programmatic as anything he wrote” (Barry Cooper, *Beethoven and the Creative Process* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1990, rpt. 1998], p.8).

43. This move is taken directly from the *Chorfantasie*, where it occurs twice, in mm. 506–13 and 566–73.

44. Haydn had already brought such music into the concert hall in his “Military” Symphony, and Mozart had done so for the opera house in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*; Turkish percussion stops were added to some pianos. Beethoven himself had made special use of Turkish music for the theatrical happening *Die Ruinen von Athen*, which has a march and chorus of dervishes, replete with almost caricaturing augmented fourths and lavish percussion. He was clearly having fun here; and in the Ninth too, there is no reason why extolling “Freude”—joy—should be a wholly serious matter! As Ignaz von

new Turkish variation, to which a colleague-soloist adds a countermelody.⁴⁵ The following instrumental fugue was seen by Wagner as battle music, a view surely encouraged and supported by the martial dotted rhythm of its countersubject and by the energetic, almost frenetic nature of the working out. But the battle is metaphoric—there is no enemy here—and the “brothers” are simply following their destined course with joy, as does the sun and the representative hero. The multitude, clearly on the side of the victors, if not the victors themselves, sings the first verse of the Ode as a song of triumph. The Turkish music with its fugue takes a decisive part in the allegory of improvisation, as a distinctive and vivid episode, as surprise “other” that nevertheless draws on materials ready-to-hand and readily understood, as coming abruptly upon us yet carrying forward the variation-chain, and as extending it into the formal typicality of fugue. The fugue empties into an artless bridge, leading to emphatic restatement of the *Freude* theme, by a chorus eager to reassert, demonstrate, and harness its knowledge to the emotion of the moment.

Beethoven builds on the secular expressions of joy so far achieved to turn to new spiritual material, taking in Schiller’s reaffirmation of inclusivity and turn to contemplation of the divine. In terms of the by-now established narrative of the finale, *Seid umschlungen* is clearly a known hymn to the singers, needing no prompting from a leader, and expressly signaled as sacred music by the trombone doubling of the voices. The hymn embodies the singers’ ecstatic aspirations and vision and switches into a more contemporary religious mode, no longer with the plural Greek gods of the opening, but now invoking “ein lieber Vater” and thus picking up the lead of the arrest at “und der Cherub steht vor Gott” immediately before the Turkish music. Within the enactment of the improvisational plan this works as diversification, to be followed by integration: the double fugue uniting the sacred and secular in the euphoric hymn-dance. The fugue represents a profoundly rethought version of Czerny’s improvisational type, the “potpourri,” a type that, in his *Anleitung*, he exemplifies in part by contrapuntal combination.⁴⁶

Seyfried related of Beethoven the man: “All who were better acquainted with him knew that in the art of laughter he also was a virtuoso of the first rank” (Sonneck, *Beethoven: Impressions*, p.41).

45. The improvisational force of this variation was certainly not lost on Vaughan Williams, though he expressed himself perhaps somewhat quaintly. He says of the singer: “He is without doubt a Welshman, for he is obviously singing a ‘Penillion’ to the principal melody, though he probably has not obeyed all the rules of ‘Penillion’ singing. Gradually his companions join in, and the song culminates in a lusty shout” (Ralph Vaughan Williams, *Some Thoughts on Beethoven’s Choral Symphony, with Writings on Other Musical Subjects* [London: Oxford UP, 1953], p.45). Penillion requires a singer to improvise a descant or counterpoint to a melody s/he is playing on the harp.

46. Czerny, *Systematic Introduction to Improvisation*, pp.88–90.

The codalike phase of compression and intensification that concludes the finale is constructed as a bipartite parallel to the two vocal phases of the movement: mm.763–842 as a transformative précis of the *Freude* melody together with new elaboration growing out of it, and mm.851–940 as a transformative précis of the sacred hymn *Seid umschlungen* and further new elaboration growing out of that. In mm.763^{ff.} the opening two measures of the *Freude* melody are treated instrumentally in diminution and canon, with a vocal elaboration of the cadence to the first half of the melody appended. The passage “Deine Zauber” (mm.782^{3ff.}) adumbrates the beginning of the second half of the melody—the first eight notes of the half are foreshortened here to notes 1, 2, 4, 7, 8—and treats this précis in canonic elaboration. “Alle Menschen” (mm.806^{2ff.}) features the characteristic anticipatory syncopation at the beginning of the melody’s penultimate phrase and takes the first and last pitches F# and D of this section of the melody as its starting point; its own cadence refers to that of the melody itself, particularly in the motions G–F# and G–E–D–E. For “Seid umschlungen” the four-measure phrase that forms the outset and basis of the new section here is constructed of the opening four notes of the hymn in diminution and sequence, joined to a filled-in version of the rising fourth of “Brüder! überm Sternenzelt”; the cadences again refer to that of the *Freude* melody. The euphoria of the codalike phase is thus generated by compression and intensifying elaboration, by extremes of tempo and their stark juxtapositions (there are seven changes of tempo, only one of them gradual), and by the tonal and generic detour of the soloists’ cadenza. The music and text in this final phase thus constitute a self-reflexive review of the substance of the movement; the participants in the narrative of joy look back, and in doing so their joy is enhanced, deepened, enriched, brought to ecstatic culmination.

The central thesis of the present study is that the finale of the Ninth Symphony is structured in a similar though much “grander” way to one of the characteristic structures Beethoven used for his improvisations, that this compositional choice for the overall form of the finale is part of his interpretation and expression of essential aspects of Schiller’s text, and that awareness of this basis for the composition can call forth a particular and suitable listening stance.

Listening Stance

What then are the elements that might underpin such a stance? For improvisation itself we listen in an events-based way, open to surprise, to change, to following new leads, to the spirit of exploration. “The best thing of all is a combination of

the surprising and the beautiful!” as Beethoven himself announced.⁴⁷ Surprise has to do with implication and its nonrealization, with the flouting of conventionally normal good continuation. When such continuation is disrupted, what is thematized is unpredictability, ambiguity, exposure to the unknown—and this can be as much an experience of the listener as it is of an improviser at work. For the improviser, spontaneity and the exigency of the moment come together to suggest and promote remote sequels; for the listener, one accepts the uncertainty and adventure with engagement and excitement. Simplicity and strong characterization of contrasts enhance the impact of this rhetoric, and when abrupt changes are compacted the excitement of uncertainty is correspondingly further intensified.

In his remark quoted above on the importance of giving oneself over freely “just to what pleases one,” Beethoven emphasizes the “moving-on-ness” of improvisation.⁴⁸ And this in turn suggests the events-based listening strategy or stance: we move on (with Beethoven), savoring the difference and distinctiveness of the particular present as it manifests itself before and within us. In the course of a criticism he voiced to Johann Wenzel Tomaschek in 1814, Beethoven gave a view on the relationship of improvisation to composition: “It has always been acknowledged that the greatest pianists were also the greatest composers, but how did they play? Not like the pianists of today, who only run up and down the keyboard with passages they have learned by heart—putch, putch, putch! What does that mean? Nothing! The real piano virtuosos, when they played, gave us something interconnected, a whole. When it was written out it could at once be accepted as a well-composed work. That was piano playing, the rest is nothing!”⁴⁹ While this might seem immediately to contradict the above proposal concerning events-based musical experience, further thought leads us surely to a different view: that composition can itself legitimately adopt this events-based form, as indeed Beethoven had already done in his two fantasies discussed above. In play here is both a stretching of the work-aesthetic and a concomitant enlargement of our repertoire of response-strategies: well-formedness can be based on a foregrounding of the episodic: an episodic with multiple enriching resonances of considered and long-cultivated structurations, but one that, in essence, remains moment-focused,

47. Quoted in Cooper, *Beethoven and the Creative Process*, p.22.

48. Indeed James Webster has noted precisely this characteristic of the finale of the Ninth in his own analysis of the movement, drawing attention to “its gestural character: its constant urge to move forward, to avoid coming to rest” (Webster, “The Form of the Finale,” pp.50–51).

49. Sonneck, *Beethoven: Impressions*, p.105.

incorporating the freedom to move on, with the improviser, to where imaginative fantasy takes him/her.⁵⁰

In the finale of the Ninth we are listening to an allegorical improvisation, and one initiated instrumentally but that comes to have human participants vocally present. The narrative of spontaneity is thus generic to start with—the rhetorical gestures, the quest for material, the finding of a *volkstümliches* Lied treated instrumentally in the normal variative fashion. Then the intervention of Beethoven-baritone changes all that. However much this intervention constitutes a form of the interruption characteristic of instrumental improvisation and initiates an enhanced recommencement of the variation-chain as per that generic norm, it brings uniquely into play vocal participants enacting a musicodramatic story, a story that we as listeners are bidden to heed and follow. The newly recruited participants learn the tune and text, explore and elaborate the possibilities in light of human living in the world—friendship, marriage, the gifts of nature—before they turn attention to the numinous. As they sing “und der Cherub steht vor Gott,” this line of contemplation is interrupted by the scenic eruption of the Turkish military episode. Again, however much the variation-chain is continued by this music, however much the key of B \flat major is prepared as secondary key by the preceding movements, this episode remains digressive. The chorus is as surprised as we, but one of its number is nevertheless able to sing a countermelody to the band's second variation and succeeds in bringing in his male fellows. After the programmatically suggestive fugue, the chorus reaffirms its learned melody in an appropriately celebratory slot. In the sacred hymn, joy as a kiss for the whole world brings the brethren into contemplative awe of the godhead. This constitutes a dif-

50. Although the overall forms of the first three movements of the Ninth Symphony are relatively clear, scholars have found multiple formal resonances in the structure of the finale. Thus William Kinderman writes: “The overall form of the choral finale combines aspects of concerto and sonata form with the basic chain of variations and the suggestion of a four-movement design encapsulated in a single movement” (William Kinderman, *Beethoven* [Berkeley: U California P, 1995], p.278). James Webster gives a more elaborate account, including also rondo and *Grossbarform* in addition to those listed by Kinderman, and incorporating the views of Schenker and Tovey; see James Webster, “Zur Form der Finales von Beethovens 9. Symphonie,” in *Probleme der symphonischen Tradition im 19. Jahrhundert: Internationales Musikwissenschaftliches Colloquium Bonn 1989: Kongreßbericht*, ed. Siegfried Kross with collaboration of Marie Luise Maintz (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1990), pp.157–86, here pp.162–63 as also in Webster, a “revised and expanded translation” of the foregoing, “The Form of the Finale,” pp.32–33. The purpose of the present study is not to supplant these findings but rather to supplement and inflect them (there can be, joyously, no end to interpreting the Ninth). Naturally, Beethoven's improvisations must have reflected compositional practices: how, indeed, could it be otherwise? The considered enriched the immediate; spontaneity erupted out of experience.

ferent realm of knowledge, which is then to be integrated with the worldly joy of the outset in the double fugue. The codalike peroration is self-reflexive as text, as music, and as narrative—we with the participants review their immediate past and come through that to an elevated, enhanced experience of joy in its fullness.

Allegory multiplies meaning by correspondence and dialectic. Here Beethoven draws us into engaging with composition as improvisation and with the lyric as drama. We know this is an intricately worked-out composition, yet are willingly complicit in the fiction that the music, at least from the entry of the voices, is unprepared. Beethoven-baritone's dramatic intervention in a strong sense determines the structural procedures throughout the finale; it is the fulcrum or focus, a point of intensity where before and after meet and that gives meaning to their relation—an essential conditioner of the structural whole. We are aware the singers are presenting a setting of a lyric poem, yet follow the dramatic supplementation as they become participants in the story of its presentation. There are thus multiple layers of reality in play, and as they interact this complex allegory is realized. The more general point beyond this, however, is surely that in the finale of the Ninth Beethoven uses the mode and manner of improvisation to an altogether higher expressive end: an encomium to joy, even perhaps its representation, draws powerful enhancement by being based on immediacy, for joy is an emotion at its purest when its epiphany is unexpected, unplanned, and when our expressions of it are essentially intuitive.