Beethoven's Tenth Symphony. II. The Ninth and the Tenth (Continued)

Author(s): Ludwig Nohl

Source: *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, Vol. 20, No. 432 (Feb. 1, 1879), pp. 66-69

Published by: [Musical Times Publications Ltd.](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3357978>

Accessed: 18-11-2015 08:46 UTC

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

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

Musical Times Publications Ltd. is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

men and women, not to speak of the large influx from the United States which, in that case, would naturally reach London instead of Stuttgart and Leipzig. This large surplus of students, minus only the 600 Academy scholars, would inevitably find its way to the private or semi-private schools. We have, indeed, little hesitation in saying that these, one and all, would profit by the new stimulus given to musical life, and the keen competition consequent thereon. At the same time the artistic tone of this competition would be secured by the example of the National School, which, independent itself of commercial considerations, would serve as an educational model to teachers and taught. In this way the nucleus and germ of national musical life might be formed without prejudice to vested rights and individual susceptibilities, and it ought not to be difficult to find a common basis on which all serious-minded musicians could meet. Details should be left to a later period. The whole musical community must appear before Parliament in serried rank and file. The battle-cry should be: a National School for Music, supported by Government, and constituted, broadly speaking, on the model of the Paris Conservatoire. This is a scheme which the most practical-minded legislator will appreciate, for it implies nothing but the acceptance of a well-tried example. At any rate, let us first get the money, there will be plenty of time afterwards to discuss how it may be spent most advantageously.

BEETHOVEN'S TENTH SYMPHONY.

By LUDWIG NOHL.

(Continued from page II.)

II.—THE NINTH AND THE TENTH.

"WHATEVER the Philharmonic Society may desire me to do I shall endeavour to carry out, and never before have I undertaken a new work with so much love." These are the concluding words of the expunged portion, already referred to, of the letter intended for Moscheles in London, while in the one actually received the following passage occurs: "May heaven only grant me a speedy restoration to health, and I will then prove to those generous English how well I know to value their compassionate interest in my cruel fate." Now, although this Tenth Symphony, intended for the "generous English," was never accomplished, it is nevertheless to England we owe in the first instance Beethoven's *chef-d'œuvre*, the Ninth. With the outward circumstances of the origin of the latter work the twin-character of this last and most gigantic double conception is to some extent connected. We must therefore consider the subject somewhat more closely, since it moreover affects the general character of both works; their predominating abstractedly poetic tendency, and with it the progression of Beethoven's symphonies in the direction of the "symphonic poem," and in this respect, also, the external influence bearing upon the origin of the works in question must be allowed a share of importance in the further development of our art generally.

The intention on the part of our composer to write new symphonies we meet with during the composition and after the final completion of the Seventh and Eighth, viz., in the year 1812. In the sketches referred to in our previous article, those of the Seventh contain the words, "Second Symphony, D minor," and again in those of the Eighth, the words occur, "Symphony in D minor—third symphony." Hence, as a pendant to the Eighth, the Ninth had been found unsuitable, i.e., too grandly conceived. For it is to be presumed that it was the latter which was present in Beethoven's mind when fixing the key. Of the first movement (which in a symphony

is, of course, all decisive) we possess, it is true, no earlier sketches than those from the year 1816. But even if none should have existed at a more remote period (an assumption by no means proved), the mere fixing of the characteristic key for an instrumental work, like the symphony or the sonata, indicates, so to speak, the first breath of life, the presence of the creative "Spirit of God upon the face of the waters," since in an art-work partaking of the sonata form, the conception is, like the poet's, the result of the contemplation of a picture of life, whereas in the fugue and other polyphonic structures, the whole is built up or "composed" in an architectural form from the theme. Thus Schiller, after close self-observation, distinctly recognised the fact that the creative activity of his genius manifested itself in the first instance as a musical mood, during which the poetic imageries and the diction gradually developed themselves. In the case of the creative tone-poet, this fugitive point of life is infinitely more dependent for its presence upon a similar momentary mood, flitting past like a brilliant shadow, and is doubtless fixed first of all by the determination of the key, the respective character of which impresses upon every musical composition its distinctive peculiarity. Beethoven himself attached great importance to this distinct individuality of the separate keys. Writing to his esteemed friend Madame Streicher in the year 1817, he says: "If you visit the old ruins (at Baden, near Vienna), remember then that Beethoven has often lingered there; if you wander through the magnificent pinewood, think that Beethoven has often poetised there, or, as they call it, composed." He looked upon himself, then, as a poet, and to be a poet is to possess the faculty of creating by abstract contemplation, and from out the depth of emotion, a picture of life. And of such an inwardly conceived picture, one of the grandest that ever poet produced, we have here the first distinguishable traces, while, alas! those acquainted with Beethoven's biography will recognise the fact that his preceding bitter experiences in life had sufficiently prepared him for the conception of a tragic world-picture such as the Ninth Symphony enrolls. Individual emotions of a most intense nature, as well as outward shocks of peculiar violence, were, however, yet needed in order to call this dark-coloured vision of life into the living reality of the elaborated picture itself; and in this respect the special circumstances of the commission for writing this Ninth Symphony were as significant as the composer's individual experiences during the years between 1812 and 1816, when the first sketches for the work appeared. It will be necessary to dwell upon this subject, more especially since it concerns the history of the Tenth Symphony quite as much as it does that of the Ninth.

In the first place it is a fact worthy of notice that we meet with sketches of the Scherzo of the Ninth Symphony as far back as 1813. In the same year, and more strikingly still in the autumn of 1814 (on the occasion of the famous "academy," held during the sitting of the Congress of Vienna, when Beethoven produced his Seventh Symphony), the composer experienced for the first time on a grand platform the colossal effect produced by his genius in an artistic sphere wherein his soul could pour itself out to the fullest extent, wherein his imaginative powers could be displayed without restraint, viz., in purely instrumental music, above all in the orchestra. Hence in a book of sketches for the cantata, "Der Glorreiche Augenblick," intended as a welcome to the august assembly at the Congress, and dating presumably from the year 1814, we find the words inserted, "Sinfonie für zweierlei Horn." This suggestion has, it is

true, never been followed up by the composer, neither has a "Symphony in B minor," alluded to in a sketch-book, likewise of 1814, ever become a reality. But the same book also contains the following memorandum: "At Drury Lane Theatre on the 10th, and by general desire repeated on the 13th"—referring to the composer's "Battle of Vittoria," intended to glorify the first decisive victory which British valour had achieved over the mighty French conqueror whom Beethoven hated as immoderately as his imagination had exalted the deeds of Wellington and of the English generally. For had he not, when in the composition referred to he depicted the entry upon the field of the British army amidst the strains of the national anthem, exclaimed, "I must show these Englishmen what a blessing there lies in their 'God save the King!'" And now this same "noble Albion" tendered him a recognition of his genius, all the more to be appreciated by him since it was in London where a Handel had lived, where a Haydn had reaped a full measure of honours, and where a Mozart too would undoubtedly have met with a personal appreciation equally stimulating, had not death prematurely shortened his career. The time, moreover, had gone by when it was the attractive power of English gold merely which brought foreign musicians to London. England, great already at home, had recently manifested a high spirit in her influence upon European politics, and in an album possessed by the youthful Beethoven we already meet with the words: "Siehe es winkt, Freund, lange dir Albion." With the composer's growing fame, the solicitations on the part of his English visitors to undertake the journey to England had gradually become more urgent, while now, after the to him so significant experiences in connection with the Congress, the importunities of his admirers took the form of direct invitations. In answer to one of these he replied (June, 1815) that he had always "cherished this wish," and in his diary he writes: "What joy to behold once more my native country, to visit England, and then to spend here (referring to Bonn) some four weeks." Meanwhile English publishing firms were offering liberal terms for the acquisition of some of his more important works, such as "Wellington's Victory" and the Symphony in A major; and in the summer of 1815 one of the founders of the London Philharmonic Society, Charles Neate (but recently deceased at the age of ninety-one) paid a visit to Vienna, where the amiable musician soon gained the entire friendship of Beethoven. Subsequently, on the 24th of January, 1816, the latter wrote a canon on a leaf of Neate's album, dedicating it to "his dear English compatriot," and recommending him on his departure to his friends Brentano at Frankfurt as "an excellent English artist and congenial man." Besides this new friend, Beethoven's own pupil, F. Ries, was an old resident in London. Thus, the projected visit to the English metropolis became more and more plausible, and although it was, as we know, never actually carried out, we must not lose sight of the fact that the thought of his being able at any moment to take his flight abroad, to breathe the stimulating atmosphere of fresh fame and new successes, assisted materially in upholding both his courage and elasticity of mind during the trying circumstances in which he was placed after the year 1815. But more than this, the associations which connected him with England, whose men, according to his own expression, "are mostly capital fellows" (*tüchtige Kerle*), exercised an immediate influence upon his work, and this in a most important and noble direction. For was it not a matter of necessity in carrying out his favoured project that he should hasten the production of some new and striking com-

positions? He, of whom Zelter had once written to Goethe that "his mother must have been a man," would not he, when coming to England, have to measure himself as a man with men, and, as an artist, with a composer of whom his own opinion is said to have been expressed thus: "Handel is the unapproached master of all masters. Go and learn from him how to produce with simple means such mighty effects." In the spring of 1816 his C minor Symphony had received a splendid rendering in London, and we can thus the more easily interpret the drift of a note which just at that time occurs in his diary: "Operas and everything else to be laid aside, writing only after your own fashion." His fashion, however, was instrumental music, above all, the symphony, in which art-form he was about to achieve the highest standard of perfection. We are approaching the last mighty symphonic twin-pair, the Ninth and the Tenth, and this brings our subject to the final conclusion.

The Ninth Symphony had, as we have seen, already for some years stood within the periphery of the powerfully creative imagination of the artist, while sketches of its first movement exist as far back as the year 1816. Mighty, tragic pathos is its chief characteristic; it is the strife against fate in its all-embracing magnitude; it is the terrible resistance offered by the individual will against an unalterable necessity which is here represented—a subject quite in keeping with the character of a people which had produced a Shakespeare. Taking into account the fact that ever since the year 1813, when the intention of visiting England for the purpose of producing his latest compositions first enters into his serious consideration, this eventuality continues from year to year to take a firmer hold upon his imagination, it becomes the more probable that the expression of manful vigour and of serious contemplation of life imparted to the Symphony should be in part intended to appeal to the character of the nation upon which his thoughts were directed. We shall see, moreover, that Beethoven himself was fully conscious of this, permitting this element to have full play upon his artistic inspirations; nay, even especial orchestral advantages, which a performance in London would have offered him, exercised a distinct influence upon the elaboration of the Ninth. Through the exertions mainly of his friends Ries, Neate, and the music-publisher Smart, it had at last been brought about that the composer received an official invitation on the part of the Philharmonic Society to come to London, and to bring with him some new works. "My dearest Beethoven," says Ries (like Neate, one of the directors of the Society), in a letter dated July 7, 1817, "the Society, who prefers your compositions to any others, desires to give you a proof of respect and gratitude for the numerous delightful moments which your extraordinarily genial (*genialisch*) works have afforded us. . . . Friends will receive you with open arms, and as an earnest of our intentions I have been commissioned to offer you the sum of 300 guineas under the following conditions: "which were, that he should come to London and write *two* great symphonies, two such works at least being invariably performed at the Society's concerts. Beethoven, in his reply dated July 9, considers the offer "very flattering," asking only that he should receive a portion of the sum tendered in advance, since he should "at once commence the composition of these great symphonies," and adding in conclusion, "Would that I could fly there instead of this letter." A postscript, moreover, contains the assurance that he should "use all his efforts" in order to "acquit himself in the most worthy manner of the honouring request coming to him from such a select artistic body."

"Notwithstanding his earnest intentions," the journey was not undertaken; indeed, it would have been barely possible for the hopelessly deaf master to accomplish it. "And yet," continues the so-called "Fischhof'sche" manuscript, "the wish had taken firm root in his soul, while his longing to see it fulfilled was constantly kept alive by his friend Ries. *He had persuaded himself that nowhere should his stupendous genius, which anticipated the progress of many centuries, meet with adequate recognition except in Great Britain.* He believed that the spirit of his compositions would be nowhere better understood. Hence the quite natural predilection for that country, the offspring of his just self-esteem. The distinction conferred upon him by the British nation he valued more highly than that which the rest of Europe together had to offer him; for they had always understood him best—they in whose country art is not the plaything of fashion." Now, although the copyist of this document (the Viennese musician, Fischhof) has added the sign of a query to the last-quoted paragraph, seeing that such a blissful state of things never existed even in England; yet this ideal conception of the "proud English," however exaggerated as regarded his special art, was nevertheless destined to exercise a very decided influence upon Beethoven's work. Indeed, the author of the biographical manuscript from which we are quoting (the composer's friend, Zmeskall) here inserts the personal remark that Beethoven's individuality, in its especial peculiarities, had much in common with the English national character, while "his self-consciousness may also have contributed to his liking for the nation, since they so readily acknowledged his genius."

And now, what has become of the second of these two great symphonic works, for the conception of which, as we have just seen, the master had received the desired impulses and the concrete impressions? For, as regards the first of the two—the mighty Ninth—it lives and proclaims its existence year after year the whole world over, and I will only add that the idea of the majestic bass recitatives of the Finale originated in Beethoven's acquaintance with the great contra-bassist Dragonetti, who was the leader of the basses at the Philharmonic Concerts. Of the Tenth Symphony itself we have, however, the following traces, which, imperfect though they be, will nevertheless indicate clearly enough the leading idea and character of the work. Consulting Schindler again, in his report to Moscheles already alluded to, we come across the following passage: "But, my dear friend, if Beethoven should really be able to write this Tenth Symphony, I fear the generation has yet to be born which would be capable of understanding it." No wonder, however, that, to quote Faust's words, "all hope should leave this simpleton," seeing that the *famulus* in question has to the end of his life failed truly to appreciate the genius of his master. Nevertheless, he has succeeded in retaining for us the impression made upon his mind by the vision of the tone-picture which on this occasion Beethoven unfolded before him, and which will enable us to arrive at a conclusion as to the grandeur of its intended design. "In the confusion of his domestic arrangements," continues Schindler, "it was impossible to convey to paper all that he said, and the more so since he continually referred to gigantic plans he meant yet to carry out, but which he would never once pause to explain." The music to "Faust" is again mentioned, touching upon which Beethoven is said to have exclaimed, "That shall be something!" (*Das soll was geben.*) Our informant concludes with the appropriate exclamation: "A thousand

pities that during this overflow of his imagination, when his conversation would assume a poetic fluency such as I but rarely witnessed in his normal state of health, some intelligent listeners, or better still shorthand writers, were not present! The benefit conferred by such instruction upon art would have been immense!" Turning now to this remarkable plan of the Tenth Symphony itself, we rely upon the following note from the year 1818, which, after the above manifold references and allusions, we are justified in associating with the projected work we treat of. The memorandum says: "*Adagio cantique*, hymn-like song, in a symphony written in the old modes (Lord God, we praise Thee, Hallelujah), either separate or as introduction to a Fugue. Perhaps in this manner the entire *second Symphony* to be characterised, in which case the voices would appear in the last movement, or already in the Adagio. The orchestral violins, &c., will in the last movement be increased tenfold; or else the Adagio will in the last movement be repeated, when the voices will only gradually enter. The text to be Greek *mythos*, *cantique ecclésiastique*; in the Allegro, 'Feast of Bacchus.'" Not the introduction of the human voice, even though in this instance it had been already intended in the Adagio, was the "entirely new idea" to which we have heard Breuning make allusion; for already the Ninth Symphony had included it, nay even the Choral Fantasia. Nor was it the direct interconnection of the different movements, important though it be for the further development of the poetic capabilities inherent in the Sonata form, but ceasing to be merely latent since Beethoven. But important in the highest degree is the ethic significance of the work which might, likewise, appropriately be called "The Victory of the Cross," because the most profound Greek *mythos*, the Mysteries of Dionysos (containing in itself already the germs of religious regeneration) was by this *cantique ecclésiastique*, by the religion of divine grace and love, to be superseded or rather fulfilled and sanctified; and this reconciliation and union of old and new world ideas—a theme which occupies the minds of all modern poets and thinkers—was to have been artistically illustrated in symphonic language: beyond doubt "an entirely new idea," an idea which in the directness and concreteness of the poetic intention foreshadowed an enormous augmentation of the dramatic power of which the organism of the Symphony admitted. The religious disposition of the composer's mind had long since been prepared by bitterest sufferings and purest spiritual elevations. His soul was irresistibly drawn towards "the Eternal, the All-powerful, the Infinite," and, far more profoundly than in the "Missa Solemnis;" this fact is proclaimed by the Ninth Symphony, in the words "Ihr stürzt nieder Millionen, Ahnest du den Schöpfer, Welt?" and in the joy of an all-embracing love which is the result of a similarly exalted state of mind. And were not the English known to be particularly orthodox in matters concerning the Christian faith and doctrine? What, then, could be more natural than that he should select a subject which would appeal directly to the comprehension of the people for whom this tone-picture was intended, and which would at the same time afford him an opportunity of solving after "his fashion" a problem of the highest ethical import. More circumstantial evidence with regard to the foregoing æsthetic and psychological observations will be found in my "Beethoven's Leben;" we must be content here to add merely a few historical gleanings having reference to this "second Symphony," the pendant to the Ninth.

With regard to the key, Beethoven's friend Holz (who during these last years of the composer's life

was on specially intimate terms with him) gives the following account: "The Tenth Symphony commences with an Andante in E flat, $\frac{3}{4}$ time, assigned to wind instruments, and changes suddenly into a stormy Allegro representing the Feast of Bacchus." The latter, of which the sketches are extant, has $\frac{3}{4}$ time and the key of C major, while Holz mentions C minor as being the key of the entire conception, a supposition which is also borne out by the subsequent sketches. When, in the year 1824, after the brilliant performance of the Ninth Symphony, the old project of the composer's visiting England had again revived, the "Tenth" was at once thought of. Neate had again written, assuring him that his talents were more appreciated in England than in any other country, adding that Beethoven would indeed become a happy man if he could make up his mind to visit a country where he would meet with none but friends, and where the fame of the "great Beethoven" surpassed that of any other composer. The Philharmonic Society, the writer continues, was anxious to renew their former offer, while expecting a second Symphony, the first of the two (namely the "Ninth") having already been received. Thus the old plan was again discussed, and the sketches for the composition in question (now in the possession of the Berlin Library) again looked over. When on his death-bed the master once more asked to see these sketches, they were handed to him by Schindler, and it was on this occasion that the latter was made acquainted with the general design of the work. Subsequently Schindler communicated what he knew about the subject to "Hirschbach's Musikalisch-Kritisches Repertorium" (Leipzig, 1842), and it was then, for the first time, that the world obtained some positive information concerning the Tenth Symphony. The *motive* of the Scherzo, C minor, $\frac{3}{4}$, is the first of the sketches; then follows a *motive* B, A, C, H (the latter being the B of the German scale), originally appertaining to a long-projected overture in honour of the "arch-father of harmony," Sebastian Bach; this is followed by the jubilant theme in $\frac{3}{4}$ time, the Feast of Bacchus, which is superscribed "Finale of the first movement." Next comes a notation, " $\frac{3}{4}$, A flat major," referring, according to Schindler, to the Adagio; but neither an "old mode," nor a *Te Deum* laudamus, nor Hallelujah, can be discovered. Finally, to the word "Fugue," the sketches contain a *motive* in C minor, $\frac{3}{4}$, resembling the second portion of the theme of the Fugue in E major from the second part of Bach's "Wohltemperirte Clavier," evidently the Finale of the work, since, as we have heard, the Adagio was to have culminated in a Fugue.

Thus everything is found together which constitutes a "great" Symphony, and the idea thus shadowed forth is indeed as worthy of the genius of Beethoven as it is of the "magnanimity of the generous men" who had bespoken the work, and who had been instrumental in conveying to the dying man the last ray of hope and comfort. Here too, then, the twin-character of Beethoven's Symphonies has been *de facto* maintained, although, unfortunately for our art, we do not possess the measure which would enable us to form a final opinion upon this last conception, since it was never actually matured. Nevertheless, it will be admitted that the "poetic idea," or rather the spiritual design of the "Tenth Symphony," renders it to the fullest extent equal to its companion, the "Ninth," and we recognise in it at the same time the first step to a mighty development of the Symphony itself, and to the participation of musical art in the solution of the highest problems of modern life and culture.

THE LITERATURE OF NATIONAL MUSIC.

BY CARL ENGEL.

(Continued from page 14.)

TREATISES.

In our survey of the collections of national songs, we have already become acquainted with several treatises which are published as introductory to the collections. It remains now to notice the most important treatises relating to national music which have been brought out independently of any collection. Let us turn first to Asia.

Sir William Jones's essay "On the Musical Modes of the Hindus," written in the year 1784, and subsequently much enlarged by the author, is printed in "Asiatic Researches" (Calcutta, 1792; vol. iii., p. 55); in "Dissertations and Miscellaneous Pieces relating to the History and Antiquities, &c., of Asia" (London, 1796; 8vo, vol. iii.); and in "The Works of Sir William Jones" (London, 1799; 4to, vol. i., p. 413). A German translation of this essay, by F. H. von Dalberg (Erfurt, 1802; 4to), contains some additional accounts respecting the music of uncivilised nations. "An Essay on the Music of Hindustan," by Sir William Ouseley, is printed in "Oriental Collections," &c. (London, 1797; 4to, vol. i., p. 70). Augustus Willard's "Treatise on the Music of Hindustan" (Calcutta, 1834; 8vo), contains many statements respecting the history of music in general which may be supposed to be well-known to any one who intends to study the music of the Hindus. However, among the unnecessary statements the author occasionally and sometimes incidentally mentions facts referring to the popular songs and tunes of Hindustan which deserve the careful attention of the student. The most interesting chapters in the book are those which treat of the *Rags* and *Ragines*, of musical instruments, of vocal compositions, and of the peculiar manners and customs of the Hindus to which allusions are made in their popular songs.

An elaborate treatise on the music of the Chinese, written by the Jesuit missionary Amiot, and illustrated with fine engravings of musical instruments, forms the sixth volume of "Mémoires concernant l'histoire, les sciences, les arts, les mœurs, les usages, &c., des Chinois, par les Missionnaires de Pékin" (Paris, 1780; 4to). It is rather unfortunate for musical students that some of the most interesting treatises on the art are incorporated in voluminous and expensive publications, and are not procurable separately, except by some chance which rarely occurs. Amiot is said to have sent to Paris several manuscripts of essays on Chinese music, besides that which has been printed. Adrien de la Fage, in his "Histoire générale de la Musique" (Paris, 1844; vol. i., p. 10), states that they are unaccountably lost; and he deplores the loss of Amiot's translation of a treatise on music written by Ly-Koang-ti, a learned Chinese who lived in the eighteenth century. The Abbé Arnaud published an abridgment of this treatise in the "Variétés littéraires, ou Recueil des Pièces tant originales que traduites" (Paris, 1768). Moreover, the treatise was published in a Spanish translation, at Madrid, in the year 1779. Adrien de la Fage doubts this. He says that no one has seen the Spanish translation, and that all his inquiries about it have been unsuccessful. F. J. Fétis is of the same opinion. He says ("Biographie universelle des Musiciens," vol. i., p. 90): "Lichtenthal indique ('Bibliogr. della Musica,' t. iii., p. 43) d'après un article du 'Journal Encyclop.' (Mars, 1780; t. ii., part 3, p. 543) une version espagnole de la traduction française du traité de musique de Ly-Koang-ti, par le père Amiot, sous ce titre 'Memoria sobre la Musica de los Chineses; Madrid, imprinta de Bablo y Texero,