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Publisher: Routledge
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Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41
Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK

Proceedings of the Musical Association

Publication details, including
instructions for authors and
subscription information:
[http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/
rma18](http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rma18)

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Published online: 28 Jan 2009.

To cite this article: SIR George Grove C.B., D.C.L., &c. (1894) A
FEW WORDS ON THE SUCCESSIVE EDITIONS OF BEETHOVEN'S NINTH
SYMPHONY, Proceedings of the Musical Association, 21:1, 65-75, DOI:
[10.1093/jrma/21.1.65](http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/jrma/21.1.65)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/jrma/21.1.65>

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FEBRUARY 12, 1895.

W. H. CUMMINGS, ESQ., VICE-PRESIDENT,

IN THE CHAIR.

*A FEW WORDS ON THE SUCCESSIVE EDITIONS
OF BEETHOVEN'S NINTH SYMPHONY.*

BY SIR GEORGE GROVE, C.B., D.C.L., &c.

My remarks this evening are not to be taken as those of a musician, to which character I cannot pretend. I simply desire to call your attention to a matter of fact—to the alterations which have been made in the score of the Ninth Symphony in the successive publications of the last thirty years.

The original editions of all the Symphonies were issued with Beethoven's own approval; and, "errors excepted," are to be taken as correct. In one case, that of the redundant bars in the *Scherzo* of the C minor, he wrote to the publishers shortly after the publication, correcting the mistake; but, for some reason, his letter was not acted upon, and indeed seems not to have been noticed till more than thirty years later, when the mistake was otherwise discovered. However, I do not wish to go into this. I will confine myself now, not to weary you, to one or two instances of alterations made, without Beethoven's knowledge and consent—indeed, since his death—in his Ninth Symphony.

The Ninth Symphony was first performed (in MS.) at Vienna, on May 7, 1824; the second performance being that of our own Philharmonic Society, March 11, 1825. The score of the work was published by Schott and Sons, in the well-known folio edition, at the end of 1826, or beginning of 1827. This is numbered 2322, the parts being 2321. That

66 *Successive Editions of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.*

Beethoven saw the proofs of this edition is evident from references to them in his letters to the publishers before publication. The edition must therefore be accepted as so far having had his approval, except in the case of one or two additional indications which he requested should be made but which were not attended to. These I will notice later. In 1867 a new edition of octavo size was published by the same house of Schott and Sons; and then, as I learn from headquarters, the plates of the folio were melted down. It would seem that this octavo edition was intended to be in all respects, except its size, a fac-simile of the folio. It is numbered with the same stock number, 2322, as the folio; and the title-page contains the same words, with the addition of the branches of the firm which had come into existence since 1826. In the body of the work, however, there is more than one important difference.

1. At page 66 of the first folio, in the *Scherzo*, where the time changes to four crotchets in a bar, there is engraved above the score *Presto*, — 116, which agrees exactly with the list of metronome marks in Beethoven's two letters to Schott and to Moscheles. The former letter is given in Nohl's Collection of Beethoven's Letters (ii., p. 291), the latter in Moscheles's version of Schindler's Biography of Beethoven (ii., 71). The original of the latter was exhibited in the Loan Collection at the Albert Hall in 1885. In the octavo, however, a serious alteration has been made at this place; the minim has been changed into a semibreve, thus exactly doubling the speed! The metronome mark above the score now stands thus, *Presto*, — 116. True, the tail of the minim in the folio is very faint, but the rest of the note is unquestionably a minim, and not a semibreve; and also the direction is repeated—engraved *below* the score as well as *above* it; and *there* the tail is perfectly distinct. In the octavo, however, the metronome mark has been omitted below the score, and the word *Presto* alone given. This, then, is one instance of a serious change made in the reprint (a reprint by the original publishers, mark you!) and made without a word of comment or warning.

2. I now pass to another instance of a different nature; which, though making no change in the music, sets at naught a very characteristic and individual act of Beethoven's. At page 207 of the first folio, in the first bar of the page, twelve bars before the beginning of the famous cadence for the solo voices, at the words "Was die Mode streng getheilt," Beethoven, excited with the subject, and indulging his usual love of plain-speaking, has changed Schiller's word *streng* or "strictly," into *frech* or "insolently"—namely, from "that which fashion *strictly* parts" into "that which fashion

rudely parts." Surely so characteristic and personal a touch of the great composer's might have been suffered to remain! But no! in the octavo, and in subsequent editions, the word *streng* has been restored, and here again without a word to show that any alteration has been made. Had Beethoven been a second-rate composer, we might have challenged his changing a word in his text; but Beethoven was *not* second-rate. He was first-rate. He held the same rank in music as Schiller in poetry, if not a higher rank. He had been thirty-five years before the world, and was acknowledged by all as the greatest composer of his day. But we need not argue thus. The alteration was Beethoven's own, and ought to stand; though it should be accompanied by a note. His shoulders are quite broad enough to bear the responsibility. How different, how far inferior, are the methods of music publishers in this case to those of the editors and publishers of books! I won't speak of such an edition as the Cambridge Shakespeare, in which all the various editions are collated and balanced with the most pious care; nor of the pains which are being taken to give the public the exact contents of Pepys's Memoirs. I will mention a book which I often read, the "Memoirs of the Duc de St. Simon," of the reign of Louis XIV. (Paris: Hachette, 1873-77), printed from the original MS. St. Simon, though a man of enormous ability, writing at a time (say 1700) when spelling and grammar were not so rigidly fixed as they now are, occasionally made faults both in grammar and in spelling. These are all corrected in the text, but the original reading is carefully given at the foot of the page. If therefore any reader thinks St. Simon's slips characteristic or interesting, he can see them there exactly for himself. I confess that that seems to me the proper method of editing a classic.

3. While we are at this place in the *Finale*, I should like to mention that the double bar, which in the first folio Beethoven has placed at the change of the *signature* to five sharps (p. 209), is in the octavo introduced four bars earlier—a slight matter, no doubt, but one which, I submit, should have been either let alone or called specific attention to.

4. There is one more matter that I must notice. Beethoven, as is known, was a tyrant over his copyists. He *would* have his slightest directions as to phrasing, bowing, *piano* and *forte*, *sfz*, exact place and duration of *crescendos*, &c., strictly followed. Several of his letters on this subject have fortunately been preserved, and they are full of amusement and instruction (*e.g.*, Nohl, i., 309; ii., 262). He knew exactly what he meant, and his intention was that the public should know it too. It is quite touching in his autograph scores to

see the care which he takes about such things; writing in the indications at each line, all down the page, and in specially clear letters. One of the things which he chiefly insisted on was the difference between dashes (*Striche*) and dots (*Punkte*) above notes. In a letter to the copyist he says (Nohl, i., 310): "When I put a *dot* above a note you must not put a *dash*, or the reverse. Dashes and dots are *not* the same thing." In the Seventh Symphony, all through the *Allegretto*, he corrected the copyist, who had used only dots, by marking the second and third notes of the chief phrase with dashes, the fourth and fifth with dots, and so on. And this he has most emphatically marked in the autograph preserved in the Mendelssohn House at Berlin. In the Ninth Symphony he has not altered his mind on this special point, as almost any page of the first folio will show; and it is therefore more than strange to find in Schott's octavo one constant level of dots!

And there is another thing yet to mention—namely, that the octavo has been followed, as far as I can see, in these changes—in every one of them—by the great folio edition of Breitkopf and Härtel, which bears on its front the words "Critically correct edition," and that in this matter of dots and dashes the same alteration has been made all through the other eight Symphonies; and as that edition has acquired a large amount of authority in the musical world very much mischief must be done by its incorrectness.

5. So far I have mentioned the treatment with which Beethoven has met since his death. But I am afraid that a similar spirit manifested itself even during his life. Not to wander out of the Ninth Symphony, I can quote a touching instance of the indifference shown to his strongest injunctions. Our feeling towards him is one of such utter veneration, such an unqualified desire to do anything he asked—if he could fortunately be here to ask us!—that it is hard to suppose that he could ever have made any request without its being at once obeyed! But I fear it was not so during his life. The matter is this. In the first folio the *Scherzo* of the Ninth Symphony is, according to the usual custom, only printed once, with a mark of *Da Capo* after the Trio—or rather there *should* have been such a mark. But when the proofs came into his hands he at once detected its absence (see page 73). He therefore at once writes to the publisher, on September 20, 1826, fully three months before the publication (Nohl, ii., 290), calling attention to the fact. The request was, however, evidently not attended to, for on January 27, 1827, he again writes reiterating his wish in more detail (Nohl, ii., 297). This too was neglected, since there is no direction at all in the original folio score! (p. 73).

It is of no consequence now, as in the octavo the *Scherzo* is reprinted at length, as well as in the second folio—that of Breitkopf and Härtel; but the incident touched me, and I could not help mentioning it.

I have now finished my remarks, which, I hope, have been as interesting to you to hear as they have been to me to make. You will perhaps expect me to wind up with a Resolution, or in some other way to bring the matter to a point. But I prefer to ask the distinguished musicians present to state their views on the subject, and then we can let the matter simmer for a little.

What I myself should like to see would be an edition of these great works as *Beethoven left them*. Let apparent errors or omissions—such as that in the No. 7 Symphony, which Mr. Silas brought forward last year, or that in the first movement of the Pastoral Symphony, which Robert Schumann detected—let these be set out in foot-notes, or some other form, which should make evident what the circumstances were. And when alterations have been made on Beethoven's own authority, such as the two redundant bars in the *Scherzo* of the C minor Symphony, let there be a note also. But let us keep clear of the “curse of emendation.”

One matter occurs to me as I correct my proof—the dedications of his works, and the remarks which he occasionally prefixed to the first editions. Those who are intimate with the literary details of Beethoven's music tell us that the personages to whom he dedicated his pieces were always interesting or remarkable, and therefore they surely might be named at the head of the page, especially as that would only be following his own first edition. As to the prefaces, surely so interesting a note as that given in the original edition of the three String Trios (Op. 9) should not be suppressed.

Beethoven was so extraordinarily careful—so fastidious—in all matters relating to his text that this is due to him. If a conductor should say, “I cannot make a difference of execution between dashes and dots,” be it so; but give us the power of seeing, by looking at the printed score, that the difference was intended by the composer.

Above all, let us hope that so vital a difference as that of ♩ — 116 and ♩ — 116, in the Trio of the Ninth Symphony, will be corrected at once, and our excellent horn-players saved from the scramble which they have too often lately been forced to make of the passage. I make no accusations against any one, but I think I have given facts to show you that the existing modern editions of Beethoven's Symphonies are not satisfactory. The new edition of Schubert's Songs,

edited by Mr. Mandyczewski, of Vienna, for Messrs. Breitkopf and Härtel, and now in course of publication, shows how perfectly such a thing can be carried out.

I am very much obliged to you for the patience with which you have listened to me, and I hope to hear many useful remarks from you.

DISCUSSION.

THE CHAIRMAN.—We are very much indebted to Sir George Grove for the very interesting paper he has read to us. It is really a serious matter, as he has shown us, and I have no doubt we shall get some valuable opinions upon the subject he has so ably discoursed upon. It seems to me that he is perfectly right that we should know what Beethoven himself did write, and perhaps the best way of ascertaining that would be to carry out a scheme which Sir George himself suggested, that the original manuscripts should be published in fac-simile. I sent in my name as a subscriber for the proposed fac-simile, and I had hoped that by this time I should have had an instalment. Every student would then be able to see for himself what Beethoven wrote. I do not quite feel so irritated as Sir George over the double bar matter. Of course there should be, as he says, a note that Beethoven had the double bar four bars later, and there is not the least doubt that wherever the author has presumably been improved upon (a very doubtful matter), the editor should let us know this, so that we could think about it for ourselves. My first duty is to ask you to give a hearty vote of thanks to Sir George for his admirable paper. (The vote was passed unanimously.)

MR. GOLDSCHMIDT.—I think our Chairman has much better right than myself to refer to the copy in possession of the Philharmonic Society, not only because he has been so long connected with that Society, but also because he does so much for it. I shall confine my remarks to the Ninth Symphony, to which Sir George Grove has referred. I have seen the original autograph of this work in Berlin, but have not studied it; the Philharmonic Society's copy, however, I *have* studied, and more particularly lately, by Sir George's wish, and I consider it to be a most remarkable copy. It came, as I understand, into the Society's possession within a year of its first performance at Vienna, which took place in March, 1824, while it was first played in London in May,

1825. Our copy seems to me, for various reasons, to be most authentic. Firstly: All the marks to which our lecturer has referred are contained in it, and are inserted against almost every stave, either below or above. The marks of expression are not shown merely at the head of certain portions of the score, such as wood-wind, brass, voices, or strings, but they are put into every line. Further: Beethoven himself has marked every movement of the Symphony. He has marked in his own writing the different movements, as "*Erster Satz*," "*Zweiter Satz*," &c., and the title-page also is in his writing. I need not tell those acquainted with Beethoven's writing that it is rather illegible; yet as these four entries are written by him and are in German characters, this fact of itself gives to the score an authenticity which I should say no other score, except the autograph, could lay claim to. Moreover, he evidently has himself overhauled the entire score. It, however, must have presented one great difficulty to the conductors of that period, which finds its literal expression in the score itself. This difficulty occurs in the last movement, the words of which are entirely written in German character and in rather a crabbed hand, and in those days, I assume, the German language was not as much cultivated here as it is now. Indeed, an English translation is attached to it.

Sir GEORGE GROVE.—At the first Philharmonic performance it was sung in Italian.

Mr. GOLDSCHMIDT.—Doubtless our Philharmonic score has been severely handled, apart from these doggerel translations. It contains, in various handwritings, black double-bars, red marks, and all sorts of inscriptions. In the *Scherzo* movement referred to by Sir George there is an instruction in strange Italian, written by the Vienna copyist, regarding the return to the beginning of the movement (Philharmonic Score, p. 123). I had better read Signor Visetti's translation of what he terms "pigeon" Italian. "At the repetition of the minor after the major, one begins from $\S$ and takes the last time the second part, and after this pause the *Coda*." Then there is the mark referred to by Sir George, which is not found in the Philharmonic score, while the Italian instruction just mentioned has remained standing, and, in addition, all kinds of trivial marks inserted from time to time by the various conductors. In conclusion, I should like to mention that I have had the good fortune to meet the famous Austrian singer, Madame Unger-Sabatier, who sang the soprano part at the first performance at Vienna, and who died at Florence in 1877. She spoke to me of that event with enthusiasm, and mentioned with great emotion how Beethoven, owing to his deafness, did not hear the plaudits of the audience, so that she had to assist in

turning him round to bow his acknowledgments. This incident is, I think, mentioned in Grove's "Dictionary of Music."

Sir GEORGE GROVE.—I sat by her side in the gallery of the Crystal Palace, and she told me the same story.

Dr. VINCENT.—In the edition which I have here—it is the first edition—there is no metronome mark at all on page 66.

Sir GEORGE.—It must be an older impression. This is very curious. Beethoven must have put in the metronome mark afterwards.

Mr. EDWARDS.—Do the Philharmonic records show that the Symphony was done in Italian and not in English?

The CHAIRMAN.—I have been looking through the early records of the Philharmonic Society, but have not traced any reference in the letters or minutes to the words;* but they were sung in Italian, I am quite prepared to believe, for I find that although they are not written everywhere in the score, they are occasionally written in pencil. Undoubtedly in 1825 there were not many people in London who knew much German. The words were not printed in the programme books. Mr. Goldschmidt has spoken about that score which we treasure so much. It is most interesting, for many marks are in Beethoven's own handwriting. True, it is in a cover which is not handsome; but I am such a thorough antiquary that I would never like to take away any bit of history from it by putting on another cover. Even the various remarks that have been put in by Costa and other conductors to guide them I would not rub out. I hope this score will not be tampered with in any way, except to have a handsome case made for it—gold would not be too good—but I would not take away one iota from leaf or cover.

Sir GEORGE GROVE.—I started some time ago about getting the autographs photographed. Unfortunately, I have not been able to get Breitkopf and Härtel to advance in it. They authorised me to make a public statement, and get the Queen and the Prince of Wales's subscriptions, and then they dropped it, owing, I apprehend, to difficulties in obtaining the loan of the autographs and in the then imperfect state of the photographic process. Of course, the autographs are not always the last copies that were made. Beethoven's own autographs were copied by copyists, and altered by him again. One of the most interesting autographs I ever saw is the manuscript of the Seventh Symphony, which is in Berlin in the Mendelssohn house. When Mendelssohn was a young man, he called on André the publisher, and began playing this Symphony from memory. André said: "I cannot understand that Symphony, because I saw the manner in which it

* Since the date of this Meeting I have discovered that the words were translated, for the Society, into Italian, by Signor Pagliardini.

was composed. Beethoven would leave a gap of two pages or so, and then go on afterwards, and afterwards fill the others up. I never can believe in music done that way." Beethoven's autograph of Symphony No. 7, in Mendelssohn's own house at Berlin, shows that very thing in it all through—here a blank page, two there, and so on. If that were photographed it would be enormously interesting, but I do not think it would bear very much on the early state of the text. Still, I wish we had all those things. I can only say I have been very much obliged to you for the way in which you have listened to me.

MR. EDWARDS.—There is no first edition in the British Museum of the Ninth Symphony.

MR. SHEDLOCK.—You referred to the two redundant bars in that C minor Symphony. The printed letter of Beethoven, and the opinion expressed by Mendelssohn, I believe, do not entirely set the matter at rest.

SIR GEORGE GROVE.—No. Mendelssohn convinced himself by his own instinct that these two bars were redundant.

MR. SHEDLOCK.—Yes, but the matter was not quite settled.

SIR GEORGE GROVE.—No, it was not. Schindler was still strong in favour of the redundant bars, and so was Berlioz.

MR. SHEDLOCK.—But did not the uncertainty arise from the fact that there were band parts which Beethoven had himself corrected in which the two redundant bars were left?

SIR GEORGE GROVE.—I do not know, but Schindler says he had heard the Symphony played in Beethoven's presence with the two redundant bars.

THE CHAIRMAN.—Don't you think, Sir George, that as Beethoven did not very often send his score to the copyists, but used to send his parts, and copyists had to make score from parts, that was very likely how the redundant parts went in, as he did not send his score to the copyists?

MR. EDWARDS.—Beethoven was subject to the tinkering of publishers. In his lifetime his publishers went and put other words. I don't know whether that was the first edition or not. We have not a copy in the British Museum. Unfortunately, many of those first editions are not accessible. People despise them, but they are most valuable. I have been trying to see a first edition in German of Mendelssohn's organ fugues. I happened to see one, and it is most interesting to find that on the dedication page is written, "To Thomas Attwood with reverence and gratitude," which is not printed in the English edition or modern reprints.

SIR GEORGE GROVE.—Beethoven had certainly plenty of trouble with his publishers. There is one letter in which, referring to the three Sonatas in G, D minor, and E flat (Op. 31), he says that he is quite hoarse with stamping and swearing over the proofs. Writing to Hofmeister in 1802,

about the proofs of the six quartets (Op. 18), he uses these words: "Herr — has just published my quartets, perfectly full of blunders and errata; they swarm like fish in the sea. I declare my skin is literally full of the stabs and scratches of this dreadful edition."

Mr. GOLDSCHMIDT.—I had the good fortune to collate all Mozart's autographs in England (except the quartets) for the Breitkopf and Härtel Centenary Edition, and in one of the four-hand sonatas I feel certain I found not less than 200 mistakes and omissions in the current editions.

Mr. GOLDSCHMIDT.—At the Inaugural Meeting of the Session, Sir John Stainer, our President, put questions to me in reference to the chorales introduced by Mendelssohn in his Organ Sonatas, which I could not answer on the spur of the moment, certainly not correctly, but which, by leave of our Chairman, I should like to do to-day; for, since that time, I have had on loan, from Mr. Arthur O'Leary, the autograph of the sonatas, and have examined the chorales regarding which our President did me the honour to question me. I have carefully compared the printed "Peters'" copy now in use with the original autographs of Mendelssohn—all throughout in his writing except the third sonata.

This is in a copyist's writing, but marked by Mendelssohn himself (just as the Ninth Symphony, owned by the Philharmonic Society, was, I think, overhauled by Beethoven). This Sonata contains six bars of Mendelssohn's own writing. I am bound to say that the printed "Peters'" edition is not in accordance with the autograph. Regarding the chorales introduced, I find there are four embodied in the six sonatas. In the first sonata, in F minor, Mendelssohn himself has given in the autograph the name of the chorale, which for some reason the publisher has omitted. Mendelssohn gives the chorale as "Was mein Gott will" ("What God ordains," &c.). I have looked it up and find it dating from the sixteenth century. Originally a French song, it was annexed by the German Church. It is an eight-lined tune, and as such has been used in its entirety by Sebastian Bach seven times (viz., in six cantatas and once in the "St. Matthew Passion"). Mendelssohn, however, has utilised here the first four lines only. The second sonata has no chorale, the third contains the pathetic "Aus tiefer Noth" and is used here by Mendelssohn in its original form. It was published in the first hymn-book of the Reformation, in Luther's time (1524). The fifth sonata contains a tune on which, regarding its origin, Sir John Stainer laid particular stress and which,

so far, I have in vain tried to trace. It is five-lined, a metre not often met with in German hymnody, and my own impression is that it is Mendelssohn's own composition.

In the sixth sonata, in D minor, Mendelssohn has used the famous six-lined chorale, "Our Father, which art in Heaven," which was first published in 1540, and is, I think, justly ascribed to Luther. Bach has used it a good deal and Mendelssohn has introduced it here into every one of the six movements of the sonata excepting the *Finale* in D major. He has retained its pure original form and has worked it out with such marvellous resources of contrapuntal and artistic skill, that the sonata leaves on one's mind the impression of having been one of his latest compositions for the organ, and, if I may be allowed to express an opinion, as being more like the greatest works of Sebastian Bach than anything else from his pen.