Submitted Manuscript. Please do not cite this version. Marten Noorduin, 'Transcending Slowness in Beethoven's Late Style', in *Manchester Beethoven Studies*, ed. Barry Cooper and Matthew Pilcher (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2023), pp. 214-43.

7: Transcending Slowness in Beethoven's Late Style

Marten Noorduin

A central aspect of Beethoven's late works, both in the scholarly literature and in recorded musical practice of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, is the extreme slowness of the adagio sections. This has become such an ingrained part of musical culture that even the rise of the historically informed performance movement since the 1980s, which profoundly affected the tempos of slow music in a wide variety of repertoire, had little effect on the slow movements of Beethoven's late style. Scholarship has generally attributed the slowness in the late works to the composer, but this chapter argues that the evidence for this is circumstantial and selectively chosen. It furthermore shows that these extremely slow speeds are instead the product of the reception history of this repertoire, and explores the erroneous transmission of the historical evidence involved, as well as the changing role of the concept of deafness in relation to this repertoire. Finally, it concludes that notwithstanding the oft-repeated claims of revisionism by scholars and musicians, the nineteenth-century 'cult of the classical adagio' continues, albeit tacitly, to shape our conception of Beethoven's late style.

It is no overstatement that the works linked to Beethoven's late style – the Ninth Symphony and the *Missa solemnis*, as well as the last six string quartets, two cello sonatas, five piano sonatas and seventeen bagatelles – occupy an exceptional status within Western music: arguably no other repertoire is simultaneously considered to be so profoundly esoteric while also constituting a compositional zenith. Theodor Adorno claimed that in comparison to Beethoven's early works, 'the late works maintain the superiority of their mystery' and famously considered the Missa solemnis an 'alienating masterpiece',[1] while more recently, Edward Said heard in Beethoven's late works not 'harmony and resolution … but intransigence, difficulty, and unresolved contradiction'.[2] Similar views are expressed by performing musicians, for whom this late style offers a whole range of new challenges, both technical and musical, in comparison to Beethoven's earlier output.[3]

Early versions of this chapter were given at a symposium organised by the Nederlandse Strijkkwartet Academie on 26 March 2021 and a meeting of the Performance Analysis Group at the University of Aberdeen on 1 October 2021. I would like to thank the organisers and participants of those events for their input and engagement, as well as Annelies Andries, Anhad Arora, Tom Beghin, Dorian Brady, Clive Brown, Erica Buurman, Nir Cohen-Shalit, Barry Cooper, Jonathan Del Mar, Siân Derry, Julia Dokter, Daniel Elphick, Richard Gillies, Job ter Haar, Patrick Jordan, Marten Krijgsman, Heinz von Loesch, Natasha Loges, Markus Pawlik, Artur Pereira, Neal Peres Da Costa, Matthew Pilcher, Stephan Schönlau, John Snijders and Emily Worthington for their valuable feedback on early versions of this chapter. All translations are the present author's unless otherwise stated.

[1] Theodor W. Adorno, 'Late Style in Beethoven' and 'Alienated Masterpiece: The *Missa solemnis*', in *Essays on Music*, ed. Richard Leppert, trans. Susan H. Gillespie (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 564–8, at 565, and 569–83, respectively.

[2] Edward W. Said, *On Late Style* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006), 7.

[3] See among others Lewis Lockwood and the Juilliard String Quartet (Joel Smirnoff, Ronald Copes, Samuel Rhodes, Joel Krosnick), *Inside Beethoven's Quartets: History, Interpretation, Performance* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); Igor Levitt and Anselm Cybinski, *32 × _Beethoven* (BR-Klassik, podcast, 2020), https://www.ardaudiothek.de/sendung/der-klavierpodcast-mit-igor-levit-und-anselm-cybinski/70468432/ (accessed 16 Aug. 2022); András Schiff, *Beethoven Lecture-Recitals* (Wigmore Hall, podcast, 2004–06), https://wigmore-hall.org.uk/podcasts/andras-schiff-beethoven-

There are several adagios in the late works in which this perspective has almost universally resulted in an extremely slow tempo in performance, with the third movement of the String Quartet Op. 132, the 'Heiliger Dankgesang', the most notable example. With very few exceptions, all ensembles play this Molto adagio as slowly as possible, around 𝅗𝅥 = 15. In an influential essay of 1982, Sieghard Brandenburg argued that this extreme slowness fully conforms to the descriptions of chorale singing from the early nineteenth century: the schoolmaster Johann Ernst Häuser proposed in 1834 to accelerate the speed of the chorale in minims to 𝅗𝅥 = 30, which suggests that it must have been slower before, and a report from Baden in south Germany states that the chorales were taken at a tempo as slow as approximately 𝅗𝅥 = 15.[4] Whether Beethoven meant to emulate that tradition in terms of tempo is unsure, but since Brandenburg's essay a strong consensus has formed around this issue: John Paul Ito describes the tempo as 'glacial', and 'even unsingable';[5] Michiko Theurer and Kevin Korsyn both consider it 'extremely slow';[6] Daniel K. L. Chua writes that 'time no longer ticks with the purposeful linearity of 1825 but is made static and amorphous';[7] and Julian Johnson hears a 'radical emptiness' in this movement's slowness.[8] While these descriptions may be true for many performances of this music from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, most authors imply or state outright that the slow tempo was part of Beethoven's design and that it would have been performed at that speed during the composer's lifetime, despite only citing Brandenburg's much more ambiguous and somewhat selectively chosen historical evidence on this point.

There are also two slow sections in the late piano sonatas as well as one in a late cello sonata that are universally taken at a very slow speed, despite none of them having a tempo indication or a programmatic connection that would suggest this. These are the opening sections of the third movements of the Piano Sonatas Opp. 101 and 110 and the second movement of the Cello Sonata Op. 102 No. 2, which are unanimously played at around ♪= 60 or significantly more slowly. Furthermore, there are several other slow movements in the late works that are often played at very slow tempi: the slow movement of the Ninth Symphony, for instance, is often still played between 𝅗𝅥 = 30 and 50, an appreciably slower tempo than Beethoven's metronome mark of 𝅗𝅥 = 60.[9] As Felix Diergarten has recently argued in the case of the second movement of the Piano Sonata Op. 111, such changes can have a profound effect on

---

lecture-recitals (accessed 12 Aug. 2022); Robert Kapilow and the St Lawrence String Quartet, 'From Sickness to Health: Beethoven's Heiliger Dankgesang', Stanford School of Medicine Medcast Lecture Series, Stanford University, 30 Oct. 2007, recording at https://youtu.be/4c-R544gF8s (accessed 12 Aug. 2021).

[4] Sieghard Brandenburg, 'The Historical Background to the "Heiliger Dankgesang" in Beethoven's A-minor Quartet Op. 132', in *Beethoven Studies 3*, ed. Alan Tyson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 161–91, at 174.

[5] John Paul Ito, 'Spiritual Narratives in Beethoven's Quartet, Op. 132', *The Journal of Musicology*, 30 (2013), 330–68, at 335.

[6] Michiko Theurer, 'Playing with Time: The *Heiliger Dankgesang* and the Evolution of Narrative Liberation in Op. 132', *The Journal of Musicological Research*, 32/2–3 (2013), 248–65, at 251; Kevin Korsyn, 'J. W. N. Sullivan and the Heiliger Dankgesang: Questions of Meaning in Late Beethoven', *BF*, 2 (1993), 133–74, at 170.

[7] Daniel K. L. Chua, *The Galitzin Quartets of Beethoven: Opp. 127, 132, 130* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 138.

[8] Julian Johnson, 'The Blasphemy of Talking Beethoven in 2020: Listening Again to the Heiliger Dankgesang', Society for Musicology in Ireland Plenary 2020, keynote lecture, recording at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8JQtXCeVvq0 (accessed 31 Jan. 2021).

[9] Marten Noorduin, 'Why Do We Need Another Recording of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony?', *Nineteenth-Century Music Review*, 18/3 (Dec. 2021), 601–9.

the perceived goal or climax of the movement.[10] (Throughout this chapter, whenever I use metronome marks to refer to the speed of a performance, I refer to the tempo taken in the principal material at the start of the movement. As Beethoven's tempi in general and his slow tempi in particular were to an extent flexible, particularly in slow tempi after about a dozen or so bars, the speed of the principal material at the start of slow sections is of the greatest interest.[11])

These extremely slow tempi are often explained by invoking some exceptional quality of the music, with the assumption that the slow speed invokes transcendence.[12] This association between extreme slowness and transcendence is deeply engrained and was a focal point of the 'cult of the classical adagio' surrounding Richard Wagner,[13] but since the 1980s the historically informed performance movement has challenged this link by performing slow music faster than had hitherto been common in recorded performances. This challenge has been and often still is accompanied by an explicit pushback against Wagner's influence,[14] but since the extremely slow tempi under discussion in this chapter have evidently survived this challenge with ease, even in performances by historically informed ensembles, a reconsideration of the historical evidence for this 'transcending slowness' is long overdue.

Focusing on the slow movements of Opp. 101, 102 No. 2, 110 and 132,[15] this chapter traces the origins of extreme slowness in late Beethoven by considering the general principles of Beethoven's tempi as well as the afterlives of each of these works. It furthermore offers an explanation for why these tempi are so engrained in our musical culture by assessing the increasing influence of Beethoven's biography on performance practice.

---

[10] Felix Diergarten, 'Ein Strom allgemeinsten Jubels und Frohlockens: Ein neuer Blick auf Beethovens Arietta-Variationen aus Op. 111', *Musik & Ästhetik*, 24/96 (2020), 14–29.

[11] See Noorduin, 'Why Do We Need Another Recording of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony?', 604–9.

[12] Robert S. Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), 88–9.

[13] Margaret Notley, 'Late-Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music and the Cult of the Classical Adagio', *19th-Century Music*, 23/1 (1999), 33–61.

[14] See among many others Sandra Rosenblum, 'Two Sets of Unexplored Metronome Marks for Beethoven's Piano Sonatas', *Early Music*, 16/1 (1988), 58–71; Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), esp. 202–23; Howard Reich, 'An Alternative View of Beethoven's Symphonies: John Eliot Gardiner Turns Back the Calendar', *Chicago Tribune*, 7 Feb. 2020, https://www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/music/howard-reich/ct-ent-gardiner-beethoven-reich-0209-20200207-4qqh2qu4vra55iytm7mkyr6t3u-story.html (accessed 6 Oct. 2021). Occasionally, the culprit is identified as 'the Romantic cantabile tradition', as in Julian Haylock, 'Quatuor Mosaïques: Beethoven – The Late Quartets', *The Strad*, 30 Jan. 2018, https://www.thestrad.com/reviews/quatuor-mosaiques-beethoven-the-late-quartets/7500.article (accessed 10 Oct. 2021).

[15] These sections form a representative sample of the issue of slowness in late Beethoven, particularly in duple metres, where the effect discussed in this chapter is most pronounced. The only other 'late' sections marked slower than Andante are found in the Ninth Symphony; the 'Hammerklavier' Sonata, Op. 106; a few adagios in the often overlooked Variations on National Airs for flute and piano Opp. 105 and 107; the first movement of the Piano Sonata Op. 109; the 'Klagender Gesang' in the Piano Sonata Op. 110; the second movement of the Piano Sonata Op. 111; Variations 14 and 31 of the 'Diabelli' Variations, Op. 120; the second movement of the String Quartet Op. 127; the 'Cavatina' in the String Quartet Op. 130; the first and sixth movements of the String Quartet Op. 131; the third movement of the String Quartet Op. 135; and the Kyrie, Credo and Agnus Dei of the *Missa solemnis*. The first two of these are relatively straightforward on account on the presence of metronome marks and are discussed later in this chapter; in the other works the role of slowness is broadly similar to that encountered in the case studies discussed in this chapter.

Slowness and Beethoven's tempo indications

Unsurprisingly, Beethoven and many of his contemporaries were concerned with communicating and understanding musical tempi. The evidence for this appears in various forms, the first of which is the discussions in the musical treatises by C. P. E. Bach and J. P. Kirnberger that Beethoven used in his teaching of Carl Czerny and Archduke Rudolph. Bach's Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen, which approaches the topic from the perspective of a performer, contains the following short advice for performers in choosing the tempo:

> The pace of a composition, which is usually indicated by several well-known Italian expressions, is based on its general content as well as on the fastest notes and passages contained in it. Due consideration of these factors will prevent an allegro from being rushed and an adagio from being dragged.[16]

The three elements that imply tempo for a performer – Italian expression, range of note values and 'general content' – are also present in Kirnberger's *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes in der Musik*, which approaches the topic from the perspective of the composer. Consequently, the discussion is somewhat more explicit regarding the third element:

> [The aspiring composer] must have a correct feeling for the natural tempo of every metre, or for what is called *tempo giusto*. … Regarding metre, those having larger values, like alla breve, 3/2 and 6/4 metre, have a heavier and slower tempo than those of smaller values, like 2/4, 3/4 and 6/8, and these in turn are less lively than 3/8 or 6/16 metre. … Regarding note values, dance pieces involving semiquavers and demisemiquavers have a slower tempo than those that tolerate only quavers and at most semiquavers as the fastest note values in the same metre. … Thus the *tempo giusto* is determined by the metre and the longer and shorter note values of a composition. Once the young composer has a feeling for this, he will soon understand to what degree the adjectives *largo*, *adagio*, *andante*, *allegro* and *presto*, and their modifications *larghetto*, *andantino*, *allegretto* and *prestissimo* add or take away from the fast or slow motion of the natural tempo.[17]

[16] Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, trans. and ed. William J. Mitchell (London: Cassell, 1951), 151.

[17] Johann Philipp Kirnberger, *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes in der Musik* (Berlin and Königsberg: Decker and Hartung, 1776), vol. 2, 106–7. Original: 'Ferner muß er sich ein richtiges Gefühl von der natürlichen Bewegung jeder Taktart erworben haben, oder von dem was *Tempo giusto* ist. … In Ansehung der Taktart sind die größeren Zeiten, als der Allabreve, der 3/2 und der 6/4 Takt von schwerer und langsamerer Bewegung, als die kürzerer Zeiten, als der 2/4, 3/4 und 6/8 Takt, und diese sind weniger Lebhaft, als der 3/8 und 6/16 Takt. … In Ansehung der Notengattungen haben die Tanzstücke, worin Sechzehnthel und Zweiunddreißigtheile vorkommen, eine langsamere Taktbewegung, als solche, die bey der Taktart nur Achtel, höchstens Sechzehntel, als die geschwindesten Notengattungen vertragen. … Also wird das *Tempo giusto* durch die Taktart und durch die längeren und kurzeren Notengattungen eines Stücks bestimmt. Hat der junge Tonsetzer erst dieses ins Gefühl, den begreift er bald, wie viel die Beywörter *largo*, *adagio*, *andante*, *allegro*, *presto*, und ihre Modificationen als *larghetto*, *andantino*, *allegretto*, *prestissimo*, der naturlichen Taktbewegung an Geschwindigheit oder Langsamheit zusetzen oder abnehmen.'

In short, these treatises, which were commonly used and discussed until well after Beethoven's death,[18] suggest that both composers and performers should consider the tempo indications, range of note values and metre in order to indicate or determine the tempo of a piece of music.

The second kind of evidence for Beethoven's concern for tempo is the collection of statements by himself and others on the tempo of his pieces. The autograph of the first version of the unpublished song *Klage*, WoO 113, of 1790 contains the earliest known instance of this. Here, Beethoven tried to work out which combination of note values, metre and Italian tempo indications best expressed the right tempo in the second half, which was meant to be slower than the first half.[19] The autograph of the second version shows how closely Beethoven followed Kirnberger's comments: he added the tempo indication 'Sehr langsam und traurig' to the second part, while simultaneously changing the metre from 2/4 to 𝅵 and doubling all the note values.[20] This was far from the only occasion on which Beethoven was unsure how to indicate the tempo. According to Gerhard Wegeler, during an early run-through of the Piano Trio Op. 1 No. 2 the cellist Antonín Kraft recommended changing the metre of the finale from 𝅵 to 2/4, presumably on account of the tempo.[21] The young Ignaz Schuppanzigh, who would play a central role in the early performances of many of Beethoven's late works, was probably the violinist on this occasion. Also present were the violist Franz Weiss and possibly the cellist Joseph Linke,[22] who together with Schuppanzigh would premiere the late quartets. By that time, more than thirty years later, they were presumably intimately aware of how Beethoven thought about tempo, something which will be relevant later in this chapter.

Furthermore, Beethoven also occasionally changed his mind about tempo, even later in his career. In 1812, he wrote to Breitkopf & Härtel, the publishers of his Mass in C, stating that he had indicated the tempo of the Gloria too quickly by mistake. In order to correct this, he wanted to adjust the metre from 𝅵 to 𝅴 and change the tempo indication from 'Allegro con brio' to 'Allegro' in order to slow it down,[23] instructions which the publisher ignored.[24] All of this goes to show that Beethoven was rather particular about indicating the tempo of his compositions, but that until 1815 the convoluted conventions often made clear communication difficult. It is therefore no surprise that he publicly welcomed early attempts to create a proto-metronome,[25] and was an early user of the metronome when it became available in 1815.

---

[18] See, for instance, J. Feski, 'Etwas über Theorieen der Musik', *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 3/37 (6 Nov. 1835), 145–7; and Anon., '(C) Theorie der Musik, insbesondre Harmonielehre und Contrapunkt', *Eutonia*, 1/1 (1829), 66–86.

[19] *Lieder und Gesänge mit Klavierbegeleitung*, ed. Helga Lühning (NA, XII/1; Munich: Henle, 1990), *Kritischer Bericht*, 79–80.

[20] For a detailed discussion of this source, see Marten Noorduin, 'The Metronome Marks for Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in Context', *Early Music*, 49/1 (2021), 129–45, at 133–5.

[21] Joseph Kerman, ed., *Ludwig van Beethoven: Autograph Miscellany from circa 1786 to 1799 (the Kafka Sketchbook)*, 2 vols (London: British Museum, 1970), vol. 2, 5. Folio 86r is available online at www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_29801_fs001r (accessed 12 Aug. 2021). According to Wegeler the movement was originally in 4/4, a notation that Beethoven never used (instead he used 𝅴), so it seems most likely that he misremembered the time signature. The sketches show parts of the finale with note values twice as large as the published version. See WR (1988), 32.

[22] Wegeler seems unsure here, and most contemporary descriptions do not place Linke in Vienna until 1808. See Anon., 'Wien. Musikal. Chronik des 1sten Quartals', *AMZ*, 5 July 1837, cols 439–40, at 440.

[23] BB-586.

[24] Marten Noorduin,'Beethoven's Tempo Indications' (PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 2016), 240–1.

[25] Anon., 'Mälzels Chronometer', *Wiener allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, 1/41 (13 Oct. 1813), 625–8.

Beethoven's metronome marks, which indicate the intended pulses with unprecedented precision, form the third kind of evidence for his concern with tempo. His earliest metronome marks, perhaps the first ever written, are found on the corrected copy of the cantata *Meeresstille und glückliche Fahrt* used for the first performance on 25 December 1815,[26] shortly after the metronome had been patented.[27] The next year was characterised by declining productivity,[28] and Beethoven finished only two major works: the song cycle *An die ferne Geliebte* and the first 'late' piano sonata, Op. 101, published by Sigmund Anton Steiner, does not have a metronome mark, probably because of the limited availability of the invention: the earliest discussions of the metronome in the musical press date from 30 January 1817,[29] around the same time that the sonata appeared. Soon after, however, Steiner helped Beethoven publish metronome marks for the symphonies and string quartets he had written hitherto, as well as for his very popular Septet. These were published in two separate booklets,[30] with the metronome marks for the symphonies reprinted the following year in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (hereafter *AMZ*).[31] The next major work Beethoven completed, the Piano Sonata Op. 106, also contained metronome marks, as did a number of smaller compositions around this time.[32] The Ninth Symphony was given metronome marks too, and there is evidence from his correspondence that Beethoven intended to provide metronome marks for almost every work written after 1818,[33] and that he considered these speeds vital for the success of his music.[34]

Unsurprisingly for someone as interested in tempo as Beethoven, his metronome marks fall into a pattern that mostly corresponds to Kirnberger's description, as several authors have demonstrated.[35] Generally, movements with the same metre, range of note values and tempo indications have very similar speeds, regardless of other factors such as genre, size of the ensemble and the implied size of the hall, or even musical character: the first movement of the *Eroica* Symphony is marked 'Allegro con brio' and in 3/4 and contains note values ranging from crotchets to semiquavers, and it moves at a similar speed to the first movement of the String Quartet Op. 18 No. 1 (𝅗𝅥. = 60 and 54, respectively), which has the same tempo

[26] Corrected copy of the Cantata Op. 112, BNba, BH 85; 'Wien', *WZ*, 6 Jan. 1816, 21.
[27] 'Specification of the Patent granted to John Maelzel … [for] the Metronome or Musical Time Keeper, Dated December 5, 1815', *The Repertory of Arts, Manufactures, and Agriculture*, 2nd series, 193 (June 1818), 7–13.
[28] See Barry Cooper, 'Declining Productivity (1815–1817)', in *Beethoven*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 254–79.
[29] F. S. Kandler, 'Rückblicke auf die Chronometer und Herrn Mälzels neueste Chronometerfabrik in London', *AMZÖ*, 30 Jan. 1817, 33–6.
[30] A copy of the string quartet booklet survives in NYp, Drexel 3613. *Bestimmung des musikalischen Zeitmasses nach Mälzel's Metronom, zweite Lieferung: Sämmtliche Quartetten von dem Author selbst bezeichnet* (Vienna: S. A. Steiner, *c.* 1818).
[31] 'Die Tempo's sämmtlicher Sätze aller Symphonien des Hrn L. v. Beethoven, vom Verf. selbst nach Maelzels Metronom bestimmt', *AMZ*, 17 Dec. 1817, cols 873–4.
[32] For a full list, see Noorduin, 'Beethoven's Tempo Indications', 297–301.
[33] This includes the Piano Sonatas Opp. 109, 110 and 111 (BB-1476), at least one of the late quartets (BB-2110), the *Missa solemnis* (BB-2244) and various other works.
[34] See BB-2244.
[35] Rudolf Kolisch, 'Tempo and Character in Beethoven's Music', parts 1 and 2, trans. A. Mendel, *The Musical Quarterly*, 29 (1943), 169–87 and 291–312; Sandra P. Rosenblum, *Performance Practices in Classic Piano Music: Their Principles and Applications* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988), 339–40; and Clive Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice 1750–1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 298–302.

indication (Allegro con brio) and a comparable range of note values. The same is true for slow movements, but in those cases only the note values that appear near the beginning correlate with the tempo. For instance, the Adagio ma non troppo second movement of the String Quartet Op. 74 and the short Poco Adagio in 3/8 in the last movement of the String Quartet Op. 18 No. 6 both have semiquavers as the smallest note value at the start and have similar metronome marks (♪= 72 and 69, respectively), despite the former containing demisemiquaver and even hemidemisemiquaver figuration later in the movement.

In comparison to many recorded performances, particularly those since *c*. 1950, Beethoven's metronome marks often indicate extremely fast speeds, to the point that some of the fast movements have been considered 'impossible'.[36] The most frequently cited example is the ♩ = 138 for the first movement of the Piano Sonata Op. 106, which nevertheless has been attained several times in performance.[37] The speeds for the slow movements are also fleeter than those in many recordings, particularly those from before the 1980s, and generally invite a rather nimble performance. In recent years, both the historically informed performance movement and players on modern instruments have experimented with these speeds.[38]

'The altered taste of the time'

As Mark Evan Bonds has argued, the years immediately after Beethoven's death were associated with the emergence of a paradigm of subjective expression, during which instrumental music in general and Beethoven's in particular came to be heard as an expression of the composer's biography.[39] In particular the publication of the Heiligenstadt Testament in October 1827, which provided insight into the composer's struggle against his encroaching deafness, proved a popular lens through which the unusual qualities of some of his works could be considered and explained away.[40]

Around the same time, the ways in which Beethoven's music was being performed were also being reconsidered. Although by no means the only actor in this

[36] See, among others, Sture Forsén, Harry B. Gray, L. K. Olof Lindgren and Shirley B. Gray, 'Was Something Wrong with Beethoven's Metronome?', *Notices of the AMS [American Mathematical Society]*, 60/9 (Oct. 2013), 1146–53, and even more recently, Almudena Martin-Castro and Iñaki Ucar, 'Conductors' Tempo Choices Shed Light over Beethoven's Metronome', *PLOS ONE*, 15/12 (2020), https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0243616 (accessed 12 Aug. 2021). For a counterargument against this position, see Clive Brown, 'Historical Performance, Metronome Marks and Tempo in Beethoven's Symphonies', *Early Music*, 19/2 (1991), 247–58, esp. 249.

[37] For instance, *Beethoven – Klaviersonaten 1*, Stephan Möller (Z-Mix, B00367Q04O, recorded 1991, 2009) and *Ludwig van Beethoven – Piano Sonatas Vol. 10*, Michael Korstick (Oehm Classics, 4260034866638, reissue of recordings of 2003 and 2005, 2012). For a recording of a live performance, see Minkyu Kim, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0WEebNfvVlQ (accessed 17 May 2020). Of course, none of these recordings necessarily represents what Beethoven might have had in mind or expected, and they are mentioned here merely to indicate that the speed is entirely practicable, at least on instruments with double escapement. See also Heinz von Loesch and Fabian Brinkmann, 'Tempomessungen in Klaviersonaten Ludwig van Beethovens', Interpretationsforschungsprojekt des Staatlichen Instituts für Musikforschung Preußischer Kulturbesitz und des Fachgebiets Audiokommunikation der Technischen Universität Berlin, https://www.simpk.de/forschung/themen/interpretationsforschung/tempomessungen-in-klaviersonaten-ludwig-van-beethovens.html (accessed 8 Jan. 2021).

[38] See Noorduin, 'Why Do We Need Another Recording of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony?', 601–2.

[39] Mark Evan Bonds, *The Beethoven Syndrome: Hearing Music as Autobiography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 9–10.

[40] For instance, Anon., 'Soirées musicales de MM. Bohrer frères: Dans les salons de M. Pape', *Revue musicale*, 2nd series, 1 (1830), 212–15, at 213.

change, Anton Schindler was probably most responsible for this, and exhaustive research has demonstrated that many of his later statements about the music were based on fabricated evidence to support his own musical preferences. A brief discussion of the most important of Schindler's fabrications will show that many of these point towards slower tempi.

One of Schindler's earliest writings appears in the three musical supplements of the *Wiener Theaterzeitung* published in 1831, the second of which contains a short article on Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. Here, Schindler claimed that at a performance of the symphony towards the end of Beethoven's life he thought that the speed taken was too fast, and accordingly wanted to change the tempo indication from 'Allegretto' to 'Andante quasi Allegretto'.[41] Schindler's 1840 biography repeated the story,[42] adding that during the winter of 1825–26 Beethoven considered quite a few of the metronome marks in his symphonies too fast, and supposedly thought that many of them were not even his own.[43] Although Schindler was challenged on some of the details in his biography by other witnesses,[44] he soon came up with a new story: in 1844 he published a canon that Beethoven supposedly composed and which allegedly indicated the correct speed for the second movement of the Eighth Symphony, from which it takes its theme.[45] This canon, which Schindler clearly falsified,[46] was reprinted several times with the metronome mark ♪= 72;[47] the corresponding symphony movement is marked ♪= 88, which Schindler's canon implies is erroneous. Although this story too was deemed suspect by some contemporaries,[48] it did not stop the canon from being included in the first complete edition of Beethoven's works and even receiving the catalogue number WoO 162 in 1955.[49]

Perhaps Schindler's most widespread story involving Beethoven and metronome indications concerns the Ninth Symphony. In his biography of Beethoven of 1840, Schindler claimed that Beethoven had provided two sets of speeds, one for the publisher Schott and one for the Philharmonic Society in London, and that they differed significantly for all tempi, with some marks being faster and others slower. This supposedly resulted in Beethoven crying out, 'No more metronome! Those who feel the music properly do not need it, and to those who don't it will do no good anyway; they will run away with the orchestra.'[50] This statement too came under fire from Schindler's contemporaries, particularly because Beethoven had made a rather enthusiastic statement in support of the metronome in December 1826 in a letter to Schott in which he wrote:

---

[41] Anton Schindler, 'Etwas über Beethovens 7. Sinfonie in A dur', *Musikalische Nachrichten*, 2 (5 April 1831; supplement of the *Wiener Theaterzeitung*), 5.
[42] Anton Schindler, *Biographie von Ludwig van Beethoven* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1840), 210–11.
[43] *Ibid*., 212–13.
[44] Louis Spohr, 'Das Schreiben des Hrn Schindler', *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 7/45 (2 Dec. 1840), 180.
[45] Anton Schindler, 'Notiz zu Beethoven's achter Sinfonie', *Musikalisch-kritisches Repertorium aller neuen Erscheinungen im Gebiete der Tonkunst*, 1/2 (Feb. 1844), 55.
[46] Standley Howell, 'Beethoven's Maelzel Canon: Another Schindler Forgery?', *The Musical Times*, 120/1642 (Dec. 1979), 987–90; Kathryn John, 'Das Allegretto-Thema in Op. 93, auf seine Skizzen befragt', in *Zu Beethoven, II: Aufsätze und Dokumente*, ed. Harry Goldschmidt (Berlin: Neue Musik, 1984), 172–84.
[47] Anton Schindler, 'Das Allegretto scherzando in Beethoven's achter Sinfonie betreffend', *Niederrheinische Musik-Zeitung für Kunstfreunde und Künstler*, 9 Dec. 1854, 385–8, at 386.
[48] N-I, 126–37.
[49] KH, 670–1. The most recent catalogue lists it among the 'doubtful and spurious' works.
[50] Original: 'Gar kein Metronom! Wer richtiges Gefühl hat, braucht ihn nicht, und wer das nicht hat, dem nützt er nichts, der läuft doch mit dem ganzen Orchester davon!' Schindler, *Biographie*, 220.

> The *metronome marks* will follow soon. Wait for them. In our century these are surely needed. I also have letters from *Berlin*, which say that the first performance of the [Ninth] *Symphony* was received with enthusiastic applause, which I largely attribute to the metronome marks. We almost cannot have *Tempo ordinario* any more, in which one has to rely on the ideas of the freer *Genius*.[51]

After such a warm endorsement, a rapid change of heart seems downright implausible. Furthermore, the metronome marks to which Schindler refers were sent to London on 18 March 1827, shortly before Beethoven's death. The letter, which is written in Schindler's hand, has survived, and the accompanying list of metronome marks is practically identical to the one published by Schott, in contrast to what Schindler later deceptively claimed.[52] Despite the criticism Schindler received, several important nineteenth-century authors repeated his story without suspicion.[53] Presumably, being able to dismiss Beethoven's metronome marks in favour of slower tempi had a higher priority.

Editorial metronome marks from the nineteenth century for Beethoven's works also show a trend towards slowing down some movements.[54] As I have argued elsewhere, the debate around these marks has been marred by some incorrect assumptions, which have partially obscured the fact that Czerny's later marks often indicate significantly slower tempi than his earlier ones.[55] In his piano school of 1846, Czerny directly addressed this fact indirectly by stating:

> [Beethoven's] performance depended on his constantly varying frame of mind, and even if it were possible exactly to describe his style of playing, it would not always serve us as a model (in regard to the present otherwise cultivated purity and clearness in difficulties); and even the mental conception acquires a different value through the altered taste of the time, and must occasionally be expressed by other means than were then demanded.[56]

Simply put, although Czerny studied a number of piano sonatas with Beethoven, of which Op. 101 and possibly Op. 106 were the only late ones,[57] his best-known edition clearly changed many aspects of Beethoven's performance practice, including the speed. Czerny was nevertheless reluctant to change Beethoven's own metronome marks for the Piano Sonata Op. 106. These were reproduced unchanged, with the simple advice that the player engage in 'attentive practice' in order to attain the speed

---

[51] BB-2244.
[52] Noorduin, 'The Metronome Marks for Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in Context'; Schindler, *Biographie*, 220.
[53] See, for instance, Wilhelm von Lenz, *Beethoven: Eine Kunststudie*, part 1: *Das Leben des Meisters* (Kassel: Ernst Balde, 1855), 41; Adolf Bernhard Marx, *Ludwig van Beethoven: Leben und Schaffen* (Berlin: Otto Janke, 1863), vol. 2, 188.
[54] See, for instance, Clive Brown and Neal Peres Da Costa, *Beethoven: Sonatas for Pianoforte, Performing Practice Commentary*, expanded edn (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2021).
[55] Marten Noorduin, 'Re-examining Czerny's and Moscheles's Metronome Marks for Beethoven's Piano Sonatas', *Nineteenth-Century Music Review*, 15/2 (Aug. 2018), 209–35.
[56] Carl Czerny, *On the Proper Performance of All Beethoven's Works for the Piano*, ed. Paul Badura-Skoda (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1970), 22. The quoted passage was first published in 1846 in the Viennese edition, but several passages contained in Badura-Skoda's edition come from 1852.
[57] N-I, 136.

of ♩ = 138 in the first movement.[58] Here, however, he found few supporters: Moscheles thought that that speed could not 'be made to suit the character of the movement', and recommended ♩ = 116 instead in 1841;[59] although Franz Liszt's edition of the piece reproduced the original speed for the first movement, he changed the mark for the Adagio sostenuto third movement from ♪= 92 to 84 in 1869;[60] and Hans von Bülow's 1875 edition even advocated taking a slower tempo for both movements.[61] So over time influential nineteenth-century editors of Beethoven's music abandoned some of the metronome marks in favour of slower speeds, the effects of which can also be detected in many twentieth-century editions that include performance commentary.[62]

None of this means that 'the altered taste of the time' constituted a widespread endorsement of slower tempi at the expense of fast ones across the board, as there continued to be very fast editorial metronome marks in Czerny's and Moscheles's later editions, such as the 88 and 84 respectively for a full bar in the final Prestissimo of the Piano Sonata Op. 53.[63] Furthermore, the Viennese pianist Joseph Fischhof suggested in 1847 that the improvements in technique allowed both ensembles and pianists to take tempi even faster than those taken by Beethoven, particularly in fast movements,[64] and several others also continued to advocate very fast speeds for Beethoven's music.[65] Instead, the primary change was that it had become technically possible and in some circles musically acceptable to perform some movements much more slowly than before. The next section discusses four examples in which this can be seen in detail.

Emerging outside status

As Czerny studied the Piano Sonata Op. 101 with Beethoven,[66] his testimony concerning the tempo of the slow movement for this sonata is of special interest and importance. Czerny's editorial metronome marks for the Adagio ma non troppo con affetto/Langsam und sehnsuchtsvoll section are universally listed in the literature as between ♪= 54 and 60, and broadly correspond to the fastest speeds taken in recorded interpretations since the invention of the medium, although many pianists take the movement even more slowly.

Despite this, some have suspected Czerny's range of being rather on the slow side: Barry Cooper has stated that 'the phrase "ma non troppo" [in the tempo indication] is important, for there is a danger of starting too slowly, and the chords in

---

[58] Czerny, *On the Proper Performance*, 54.
[59] Anton Schindler, *The Life of Beethoven*, ed. and trans. Ignaz Moscheles (London: Henry Colburn, 1841), vol. 2, 252.
[60] Franz Liszt, ed, *Sonaten für das Pianoforte Solo von Ludwig van Beethoven* (Wolfenbüttel: L. Holle, *c*. 1869), xxix, 2 and 16. The other anomalous metronome mark, ♪instead of ♪= 76, is presumably a misprint.
[61] Hans von Bülow, ed., *[Beethovens] Sonaten und andere Werke für das Pianoforte von Ludwig van Beethoven* (Leipzig: J. G. Cotta, c. 1875), v, 23 and 42. The editor explicitly attributes the differences between his and Czerny's metronome marks to the relatively small tone of early Viennese pianos, which presumably along with the associated comparatively rapid decay in sound encourages faster tempi. The influence of organological developments, however, is small in comparison to the impact of the ideological changes described later in this chapter.
[62] See, for instance, Alfredo Casella, ed., *Beethoven: Sonate per pianoforte* (Milan: Edizione Ricordi, 1920), iii, 90, 107, 127.
[63] See Noorduin, 'Re-examining Czerny's and Moscheles's Metronome Marks', 228–35.
[64] Joseph Fischhof, 'Einige Gedanken über die Auffassung von Instrumentalcompositionen in Hinsicht des Zeitmaaßes, namentlich bei Beethoven'schen Werken', *Cäcilia*, 26/102 (1847), 84–98.
[65] See, among others, George Grove, *Beethoven and his Nine Symphonies* (London: Novello, 1896).
[66] N-I, 136. See also Artur Pereira, *Beethoven's Dedications: Stories behind the Tributes* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021), 317–19.

bars 5–6 will sound disjointed if you take them much slower than Czerny's 54–60'.[67] Furthermore, although movements with similar characteristics are rare, the fact that andantes with quavers and some semiquavers (the demisemiquavers are all written-out ornaments) generally move at a speed of around ♪= 120 should be enough to indicate that something is wrong with Czerny's metronome marks for the slow movement of Op. 101:[68] in no other case in Beethoven's music is the speed of an Adagio ma non troppo twice as slow as that of an Andante with similar characteristics.[69]

A reconsideration of the evidence shows that scepticism is justified. Both Sandra Rosenblum and Herbert Seifert have listed the speeds in the two states of the Haslinger edition,[70] for which Czerny provided the metronome marks, as ♪= 54 and 58; these readings have spread to all of the work that built on theirs, including my own.[71] However, the actual speeds in the Haslinger edition are ♩ = 54 and 58 (see Figs 7.1a and 7.1b), twice as fast as they have been transmitted in the scholarly literature. Although these markings may seem excessively fast, especially to most modern ears, there are reasons to believe that these speeds are closer to what Beethoven may have had in mind. Firstly, as these are slightly slower than Beethoven's speeds for andantes with similar characteristics, the speeds ♩ = 54 and 58 are more consistent with Beethoven's other metronome marks. Secondly, the fact that the speeds in the two imprints of the Haslinger edition are very similar but not identical renders implausible the conjecture that these marks are the product of a misprinted note value. Thirdly, much like other metronome marks for slow movements in late Beethoven (such as the above-mentioned third movement of Op. 106) or other metronome marks from the early nineteenth century in general, these speeds may seem too fast at first,[72] but with judicious use of tempo flexibility, particularly from bar 9 onwards,[73] the suggested range can be closely approximated. Czerny's speed in his piano school is a much slower ♪= 60 (Fig. 7.1c), and it may be that the change of note value between the editions is largely responsible for the confusion in the literature.

Ignaz Moscheles was probably the one to influence Czerny to make this radical change. Unlike Czerny, who retained a fairly close connection to Beethoven to the point that he was still taking lessons when the late sonatas were composed, Moscheles had left Vienna in 1816, only to return briefly to give a recital on Beethoven's piano in

[67] Barry Cooper, ed., *Beethoven: The 35 Piano Sonatas, Commentaries* (London: ABRSM, 2007), vol. 3, 34.
[68] Noorduin, 'Beethoven's Tempo Indications', 97–105 and 145–52.
[69] *Ibid*.
[70] The original idea of a complete edition of Beethoven's works goes back to August 1810, but only in 1828 did Tobias Haslinger succeed in publishing the first volumes. As Beethoven had died the year before, Haslinger turned to three of the composer's closest associates to provide editorial metronome marks: Carl Czerny, Ignaz Schuppanzigh and Karl Holz. As the last two were violinists, it seems most likely that it was Czerny who was responsible for the piano works. See Otto Erich Deutsch, 'Beethovens gesammelte Werke: Des Meisters Plan und Haslingers Ausgabe', *Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft*, 13/2 (Nov. 1930), 60–79.
[71] Sandra Rosenblum, 'Two Sets of Unexplored Metronome Marks for Beethoven's Piano Sonatas'; Herbert Seifert, 'Czernys und Moscheles' Metronomisierungen von Beethovens Werken für Klavier', *Studien zur Musikwissenschaft*, 34 (1983), 61–83; Elissa Miller-Kay, 'The Virtuosity of Interpretation: The Performance History of Beethoven's Piano Sonatas in London, 1800–1880' (PhD thesis, New York University, 2016), 310; Noorduin, 'Re-examining Czerny's and Moscheles's Metronome Marks', 233; Noorduin, 'Beethoven's Tempo Indications', 311.
[72] See also Marten Noorduin, 'Czerny's "Impossible" Metronome Marks', *The Musical Times*, 125 (Winter 2013), 19–46.
[73] For a detailed examination of tempo flexibility in slow movements with heterogeneous note values, see Noorduin, 'Beethoven's Tempo Indications', 72–4 as well as 85–168.

1823. By this point, however, he had to use conversation books to communicate with Beethoven, and there is no evidence that Moscheles ever had the opportunity to be instructed on the late works.[74] Furthermore, as his English edition of Schindler's biography shows, he had few occasions overall to hear Beethoven explain or perform his own compositions.[75] The speed that Moscheles included in his London edition of the piano sonatas for the slow movement of Op. 101, ♪= 60, is therefore probably a product of his own artistic practice. Either way, Czerny, who went to visit Moscheles in London in the late 1830s and probably discussed his interpretation of Beethoven,[76] seems to have preferred his colleague's slower speed for the third movement of this sonata over the faster one he had previously given himself in the Haslinger edition, as his speed in the piano school from 1846 matches the one in Moscheles's Cramer edition exactly.[77] Furthermore, Czerny's 1846 publication also contains elongated slurs not present in the earlier editions and a description – 'very legato and with intense feeling'[78] – that contradicts the much more fleet-footed character implied in both Haslinger editions.

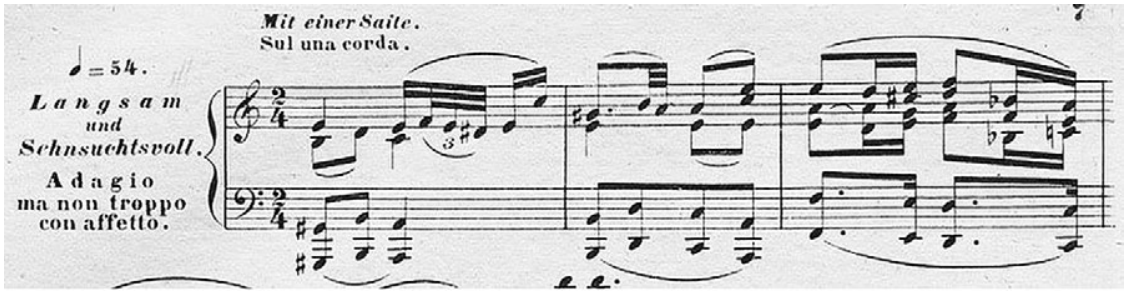

Fig. 7.1a Czerny's first editorial metronome mark in the third movement of the *Sonate (in A-dur) für das Pianoforte … 101stes Werk* (Vienna: Tobias Haslinger, c. 1831–33 (first state).

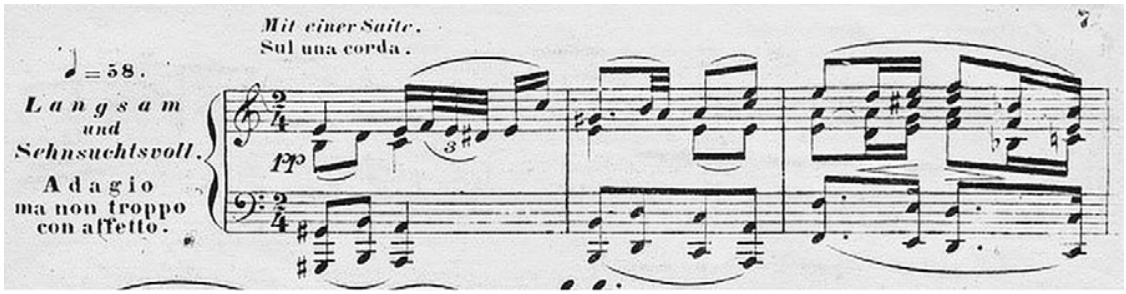

Fig. 7.1b Czerny's second editorial metronome mark in the third movement of the *Sonate (in A-dur) für das Pianoforte … 101stes Werk* (Vienna: Tobias Haslinger, c. 1833–35 (second state).

[74] Tom Beghin, 'Three Builders, Two Pianos, One Pianist: The Told and Untold Story of Ignaz Moscheles's Concert on 15 December 1823', *19th-Century Music*, 24/2 (2000), 115–48.
[75] Schindler, *Life of Beethoven*, vol. 2, 252.
[76] Charlotte Moscheles, ed., *Recent Music and Musicians as Described in the Diaries and Correspondence of Ignaz Moscheles*, trans. A. D. Coleridge (New York: Henry Holt, 1879), 239.
[77] Overall, the only significant difference between Czerny's On the Proper Performance and Moscheles's Cramer edition of Op. 101 is the speed for the march in the second movement (𝅗𝅥 = 76 and ♩ = 132, respectively); in the first movement Czerny adjusted his ♩. = 80 in the Haslinger edition to ♩. = 72, halfway to Moscheles's ♩. = 66. See the discussion of Czerny's and Moscheles's mutual influence in Noorduin, 'Re-examining Czerny's and Moscheles's Metronome Marks', 218–26.
[78] Czerny, *On the Proper Performance*, 53.

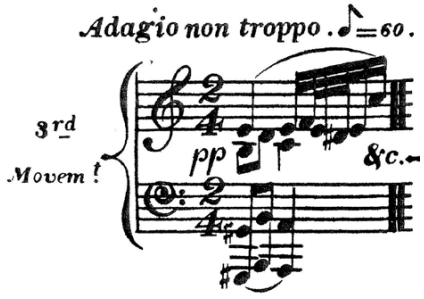

Fig. 7.1c Czerny, *On the Proper Performance of All Beethoven's Works for the Piano*, 63.

How did it come about that Czerny changed his mind so radically in a decade, particularly when he was aware of how Beethoven wanted this to be played? Part of the answer may be found in Czerny's own memoirs from 1852, in which he speculated about 'when Beethoven's deafness began to have a *disturbing effect* on his compositions' (emphasis added).[79] 1817 was the year in which Czerny claimed that this began, and he listed seventeen works that were affected by it, including the Piano Sonata Op. 101 and the Cello Sonata Op. 102 No. 2.[80] Furthermore, Czerny listed five other works, the Piano Sonatas Opp. 109–11, the Overture Op. 124 and the Ninth Symphony, which were supposedly sketched when Beethoven could still hear. Obviously, these speculations are contradicted by manuscript studies: the Cello Sonata Op. 102 No. 2 and Piano Sonata Op. 101, for instance, were clearly finished in 1815 and 1816 respectively, and the five works supposedly sketched when Beethoven could still hear all date from after 1819, when he had to use conversation books. But Czerny's invocation of Beethoven's deafness might be an excuse to justify changes to the instructions that Czerny remembered from his lessons in order to adapt it to a prevailing and 'proper' performance style, as George Barth and James Parakilas have also argued.[81] One of the disturbing effects that Czerny may have had in mind is found in bar 6 of the third movement of Op. 101, where the resolution to a climactic high *f4* is withheld until twenty-two bars later, as Cooper has pointed out.[82] Halving the tempo therefore not only fundamentally changes the character and flow of the music, but also de-fangs long-range harmonic tensions, thereby severing these delicate connections.

That is not to say that the general slowing-down of slow movements in Beethoven's late works can be completely attributed to Moscheles and Schindler, with Czerny being an unwilling victim of peer pressure. There is at least one moderately slow Adagio that already had a very slow speed in the first state of the Haslinger edition, albeit in a work that Czerny did not study with Beethoven: the short Adagio ma non troppo in marked ♪= 66 at the start of the third movement of the Piano Sonata Op. 110 (Fig. 7.2a); all subsequent editions by Czerny retain the same speed.[83] This harmonically complex three-bar introduction to the recitative contains crotchets and

[79] *Ibid*., 10.
[80] *Ibid*., 10–11. These are Opp. 101, 102, 105, 106, 107, 112, 119, 120, 123, 126, 127, 130, 131, 132, 133, 135 and 137.
[81] See James Parakilas, 'Playing Beethoven his Way: Czerny and the Canonization of Performance Practice' and George Barth, 'Czerny and Musical Authority: Locating the "Primary Vessel" of the Musical Tradition', in *Beyond 'The Art of Finger Dexterity': Reassessing Carl Czerny*, ed. David Gramit (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2008), 108–24 and 125–38, respectively.
[82] Cooper, ed., *Beethoven: The 35 Piano Sonatas, Commentaries*, vol. 3, 34.
[83] Noorduin, 'Re-examining Czerny's and Moscheles's Metronome Marks', 219 and 234.

quavers as the most common note values, with a characteristic double-dotted opening that gives the section an air of a French overture. Outside the single demisemiquaver in the first bar, the only note values in this section are minims, crotchets and quavers. In Beethoven's other works with metronome marks in this metre with similar characteristics, this combination typically results in a speed twice as fast as what Czerny has indicated here: the third movement of the Ninth Symphony, admittedly an Adagio molto e cantabile, so somewhat slower than the tempo in Op. 110, is marked ♩ = 60 (Fig. 7.2b); the song *Gesang der Mönche*, WoO 104 – Ziemlich langsam, and with a similar dotted rhythm to the piano sonata – is marked ♪= 126 (Fig. 7.2c). So it is most likely that Czerny's editorial speed is about half of what Beethoven had in mind. Incidentally, Moscheles, who also marked this section ♪= 66, may have been the one who copied from Czerny this time, as I have suggested elsewhere.[84]

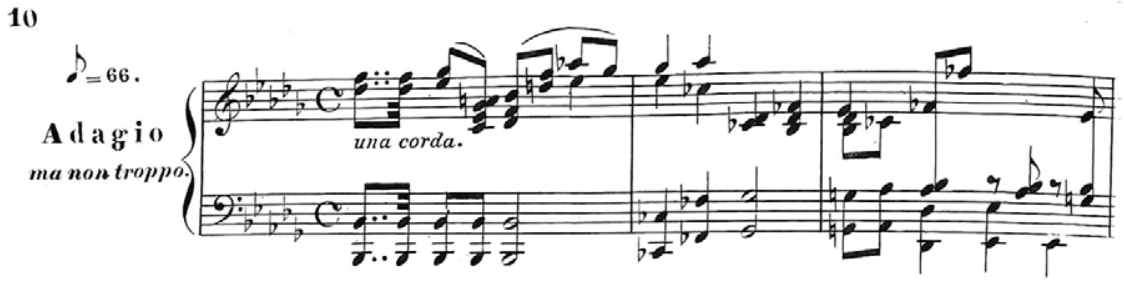

Fig. 7.2a Czerny's editorial metronome mark in the third movement of the *Sonate (in As-dur) für das Pianoforte … 110tes Werk* (Vienna: Tobias Haslinger, c. 1831–33 (first state).

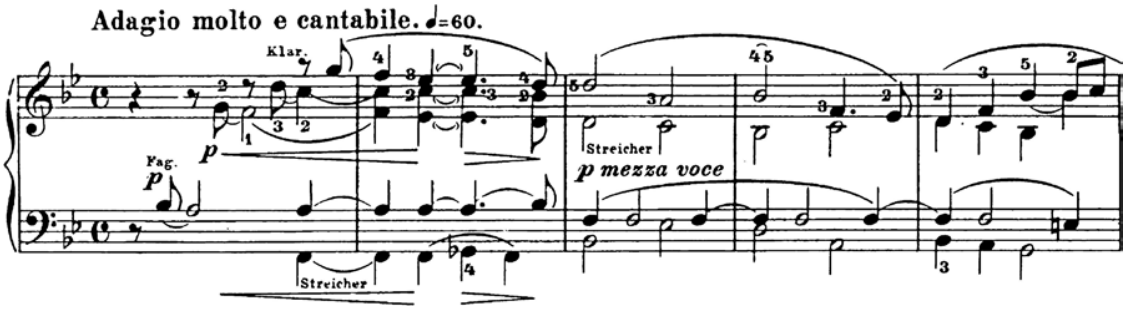

Fig. 7.2b Beethoven's metronome mark in the third movement of the Ninth Symphony. Frans Liszt, arr. *Beethoven: Symphonie No. 9*, ed. José Vianna da Motta, *Franz Liszt: Musikalische Werke*, iv/2–3 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1922).

[84] *Ibid*., 221–2.

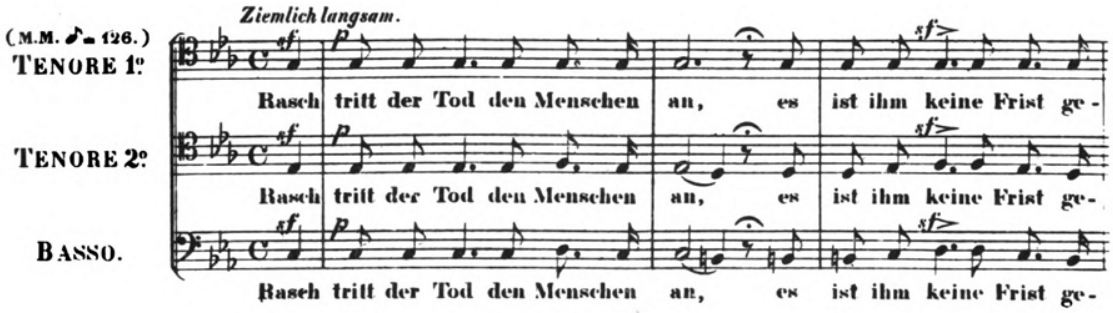

Fig. 7.2c *Gesang der Mönche*, WoO 104, in *Sammlung von Musikstücken alter und neuer Zeit als Zulage zur neuen Zeitschrift für Musik*, vol. 6 (June 1839) (reprint from Scarsdale, NY: Annemarie Schnase, 1963).

A third and final case that involves the piano is found in the Cello Sonata Op. 102 No. 2, a work written a few months before Op. 101, in early August 1815.[85] It is the first example of a fully fleshed-out slow movement both in Beethoven's late style and in any of his works in the genre,[86] and it furthermore may be the first published cello sonata in history with an extended slow movement, although there were certainly models for Beethoven to emulate.[87] It may have been premiered by Joseph Linke and Czerny at a concert given in Beethoven's presence on 18 February 1816 (the date given in the diary of one of the attendees), although the report could have also referred to Op. 102 No. 1.[88] Unfortunately, any specialist insight that Czerny might have had was not recorded early enough to avoid being affected by the encroaching newer and slower performance style, since, unlike the Piano Sonatas Opp. 101 and 110, the cello sonatas were not included in the first Haslinger edition.[89] Accordingly, the earliest edition with a metronome mark is the Cramer edition by Moscheles, the same edition that contains the excessively slow speeds in Opp. 101 and 110 discussed above.

It is therefore no surprise that the editorial metronome marks available are rather slow: both Moscheles and Czerny suggest ♪= 60.[90] In Czerny's piano school, the movement is described as 'very slow and legato, and with deep, pathetic feeling', despite there being no indication for extreme slowness in the score. This is at least in part explained by Czerny's description of the sonata, which according to him

> belongs to the last period of Beethoven's career, in which he no longer embellished his ideas by the ordinary effects of the pianoforte (as passages and the like,) but ordered the construction of the work in its simple grandeur; so that the player must the more endeavour to impart to each thought, as well as to each note, its full significance.[91]

Note that this description of the sonata does not claim to rely on any knowledge of what Beethoven had in mind or did in performance, unlike some other descriptions in

[85] The date appears on the corrected copy of the Cello Sonata Op. 102 No. 2, BNba, HCB Mh 57.
[86] Lewis Lockwood, 'Beethoven's Emergence from Crisis: The Cello Sonatas of Op. 102 (1815)', *The Journal of Musicology*, 16/3 (Summer 1998), 301–22.
[87] For instance, Anton Liste, *Grande sonate pour le piano forte avec accompagnement de basson ou violoncelle obligé … Op. 3* (Zürich: Nägeli, *c*. 1811).
[88] Joseph Schmidt-Görg, 'Das Wiener Tagebuch des Mannheimer Hofkapellmeisters Michael Frey', *BeJb*, 6 (1965–68 [1969]), 129–204, at 182.
[89] Deutsch, 'Beethovens gesammelte Werke', 76.
[90] Noorduin, 'Beethoven's Tempo Indications', 318.
[91] Czerny, *On the Proper Performance*, 79.

the same publication,[92] but rather on a more recent conception of how the late works should be performed. Furthermore, the emphasis on giving each individual note its full significance at the expense of long-range connections (as shown in the case of Op. 101) is the defining characteristic of the new performance style, one that in turn causes the extremely slow tempi.

The evidence in the score, however, does not indicate any kind of extreme slowness, as it is only marked 'Adagio con molto sentimento d'affetto' and in 2/4, with quavers at the beginning and smaller note values later (Fig. 7.3). On the basis on the above discussion of the earliest marks for the third movement of Op. 101 (Figs. 7.1a and 7.1b) – which has the same metre, approximate range of note values at the start, similar turns in the piano part and a somewhat faster tempo indication – one would expect a speed somewhat, but not much, slower than the speed that Czerny gave to Op. 101 in his early edition (♩ = 54 or ♪= 108), so perhaps around ♪= 88 or thereabouts. All recorded interpretations that I am aware of take a speed in the range of ♪= 44–52 or slower still,[93] so here too a performance tradition has developed that has halved the tempo that Beethoven probably had in mind.

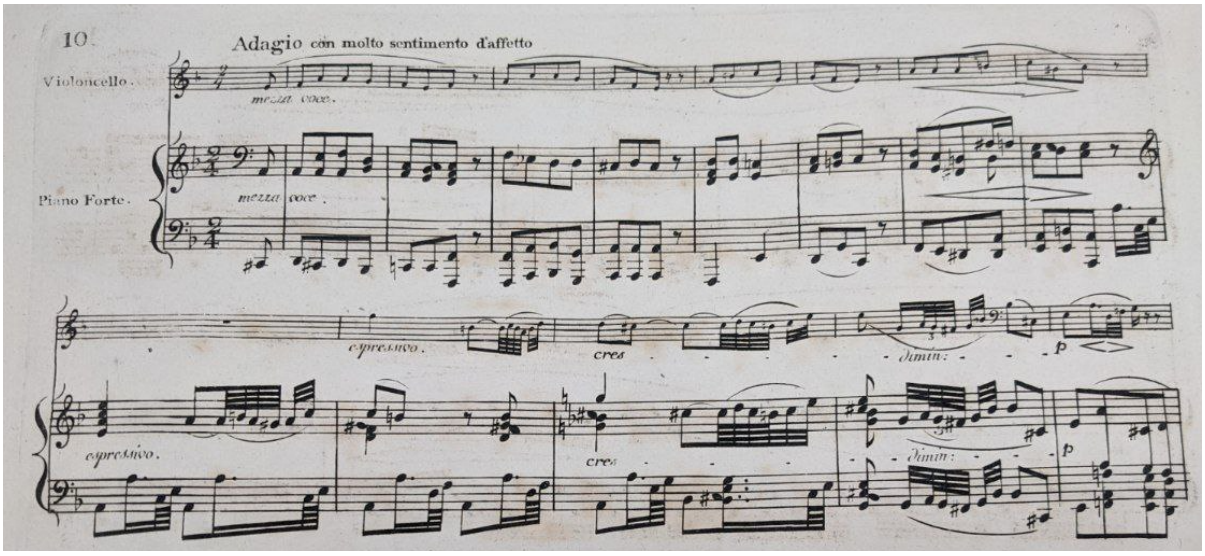

Fig. 7.3 Second movement of Op. 102 No. 2. *Deux Sonates pour le Pianoforte et Violoncell Op. 102* (Bonn: N. Simrock, 1817).

So there are at least three cases from shortly after Beethoven's death in which some of his closest associates used various justifications to take moderately slow music from Beethoven's late period and radically slow it down, thereby shifting the focus to the individual harmonies at the expense of the musical line. The results of these decisions were almost universally adopted, and virtually all subsequent editions of these works with editorial speeds contain marks close to Czerny's and Moscheles's slowest speeds, or even slower.[94] Furthermore, reviewers had started to give the music an almost

[92] For example, on Op. 26. *Ibid.*, 38.
[93] For instance, Malcolm Bilson and Anner Bylsma, *Beethoven: Fortepiano and Cello Sonatas, Volume II* (Elektra Nonesuch, 7559-79236-2 CD, 1991) start the movement around ♪= 46, with slightly faster speeds later.
[94] Miller-Kay, 'The Virtuosity of Interpretation', 310. Although there are no known editions of the Cello Sonata Op. 102 No. 2 with metronome marks other than the ones mentioned here, the fact that several later editions break Beethoven's longer slurs into smaller ones suggests a tempo close to that suggested

otherworldly connotation, with one reviewer stating in 1857 that 'if music could paint silence, this *adagio* [in Op. 101] might stand for the silence of the universe'.[95] Such descriptions, which have been echoed in many discussions,[96] were both caused and further reinforced by the extremely slow tempi that the most recent editions had began to recommend.

In most current discussions of the late piano sonatas, the extreme slowness of the adagios in Opp. 101 and 110 stays largely in the background, in part because of their relative brevity and status as introductory sections within their respective structures, whereas in the Cello Sonata Op. 102 No. 2 the fugue in the last movement has served as a lightning rod, attracting almost all of the critical attention at the expense of the slow movement.[97] But this is not true for all of the late works. Especially in the case of the third movement of the String Quartet Op. 132, an extreme slowness, with speeds of around ♩ = 15 and slower, has become so prominent a feature of many discussions that it has turned into a central aspect of late style in performance. Although Beethoven's late quartets have, with good reason, often been perceived as breaking from a previously established style, in some sense they were also the continuation and culmination of a decades-long relationship with Ignaz Schuppanzigh. As John Gingerich has observed, Beethoven apparently never attempted to compose a string quartet without Schuppanzigh's collaboration,[98] and the two worked together on much chamber and orchestral repertoire, including the aforementioned Piano Trios Op. 1, the Septet and several symphonies and overtures. By the time that Schuppanzigh somewhat forwardly proposed in 1823 that they 'compose a new quartet together',[99] they had clearly developed a very close working relationship. A similarly lengthy but perhaps less prominent collaboration existed with the violist Franz Weiss, who had played with Schuppanzigh since 1794 and who would take up the same role in the late quartets. The cellist Joseph Linke had played with Schuppanzigh since at least 1808 in the ensemble that played the three quartets Op. 59 commissioned by Prince Razumovsky, but may have met Beethoven long before that.[100] The least established and only newcomer to the quartet was Karl Holz, whom Schuppanzigh introduced as his student, and who was the only member of the ensemble without a long-standing connection to Beethoven.

So how did this quartet approach the 'Heiliger Dankgesang'? The first public performance of the String Quartet Op. 132 took place on 6 November 1825 during a concert organised for the benefit of Linke,[101] but there had been several private performances in September during which Beethoven conducted the ensemble. Present were the publisher Maurice Schlesinger from Paris, the critic Adolph Bernhard Marx

---

by Moscheles, or even slower still. See, for instance, Carl Hüllweck, ed., *Sonaten für Pianoforte und Violoncell von Ludwig von Beethoven* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1891).

[95] Anon., review of Beethoven's Op. 101, *The Musical World*, 28 March 1857, 200–2, at 201.

[96] See, for instance, Donald Francis Tovey, ed., *Beethoven: Complete Pianoforte Sonatas* (London: ABRSM, 1932), vol. 3, 114, where the movement is described as 'one of the most pathetic and mysterious things in all music'.

[97] The exception that proves the rule (and which ties this movement to the slow movements of Opp. 101 and 132) is the extensive discussion in Marc D. Moskovitz and R. Larry Todd, '"Most Remarkable and Strange": The Sonata in D major Op. 102 No. 2 (1815)', in *Beethoven's Cello: Five Revolutionary Sonatas and their World* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2017), 146–69, at 159.

[98] John M. Gingerich, 'Ignaz Schuppanzigh and Beethoven's Late Quartets', *The Musical Quarterly*, 93 (2010), 450–513, at 450.

[99] *Ibid*., 450.

[100] WR (1988), 32.

[101] Gingerich, 'Ignaz Schuppanzigh', 482.

from Berlin and the English conductor George Smart, all of whom wrote about the quartet afterwards. None of their descriptions mentions the extreme slowness of the slow movement that would become a defining feature of many later discussions, and given the players' experiences with similar music by Beethoven, this is a rather notable absence.[102] Furthermore, although it is possible that they were familiar with the slow Protestant chorale tradition that has often been linked to the tempo of this movement, it seems unlikely that this was their only frame of reference. The Englishman Smart, for instance, was probably more familiar with the British hymn tradition that indicated speeds of around 𝅗𝅥 = 60 or ♩ = 30 for similar music with chords in minims,[103] and in view of his well-documented interest in the tempo of Beethoven's symphonies he would have probably noted an unusually slow tempo in the string quartet. Thus there is no evidence for an extremely slow tempo at the first performances.

The notation of the 'Heiliger Dankgesang' can give some indication of the tempo that may have been taken. As can be seen in Fig. 7.4a, it is marked 'Molto adagio' in 𝄴 and contains only crotchets and minims at the start. There are three other adagio moltos in Beethoven's oeuvre with metronome marks, all of which have smaller note values than the section in the quartet: the opening Adagio molto of the First Symphony, which contains quavers and semiquavers as the smallest common note values and has a metronome mark of ♪= 88; the Molto adagio second movement of the String Quartet Op. 59 No. 2, marked ♩ = 60, which has a somewhat similar chorale theme in minims but smaller note values in the first violin (Fig. 7.4b); and the previously seen Adagio molto e cantabile from the Ninth Symphony (Fig. 7.2b). All of these had been played by members of the quartet at one time or another,[104] and on the basis of the similarity between the 'Heiliger Dankgesang' and the slow movements of the Ninth Symphony and the String Quartet Op. 59 No. 2 (Exx. 7.4a, 7.2b and 7.4b respectively), a speed of around ♩ = 60 would be expected, as Rudolf Kolisch argued as early as 1943.[105] Whether that was the approximate speed taken at these early performances is of course impossible to say, but it seems likely that a speed very far away from this would have elicited commentary from both the players and the audience.

[102] Smart described the quartet as 'most chromatic [with] a slow movement entitled "Praise for the recovery of an invalid"'; Marx wrote that 'Beethoven had not been aiming at antiquarianism or bookish learning, but had been led merely by the intuition of the artist'; Schlesinger 'saw fit to tread only at the very edge of this music, if at all'. Hugh Bertram Cox, and C. L. E. Cox, eds, *Leaves from the Journals of Sir George Smart* (London: Longmans, Green, 1903), 109; Marx, Ludwig van Beethoven, 328–9; Fabio Morabito, 'Rehearsing the Social: Beethoven's Late Quartets in Paris, 1825–1829', *The Journal of Musicology*, 37/3 (2020), 349–82, at 362.

[103] See, for instance, James Davie, ed., *The Chorister, Being a Choice Collection of the Most Admired Psalm and Hymn Tunes, Ancient and Modern* (Aberdeen: J. Davie, 1823), 23, 24, 27, 31, 39, etc.

[104] Schuppanzigh was probably at least present at the premiere of the First Symphony, as it also involved the Septet, Op. 20, which he had premiered with notable success some months earlier. The only review of this event, however, is ambiguous on this matter. Anon., ['review of Beethoven's *Akademie*'], *AMZ*, 15 Oct. 1800, cols 49–50; Barry Cooper, *Beethoven*, 93.

[105] Kolisch, 'Tempo and Character in Beethoven's Music', 306.

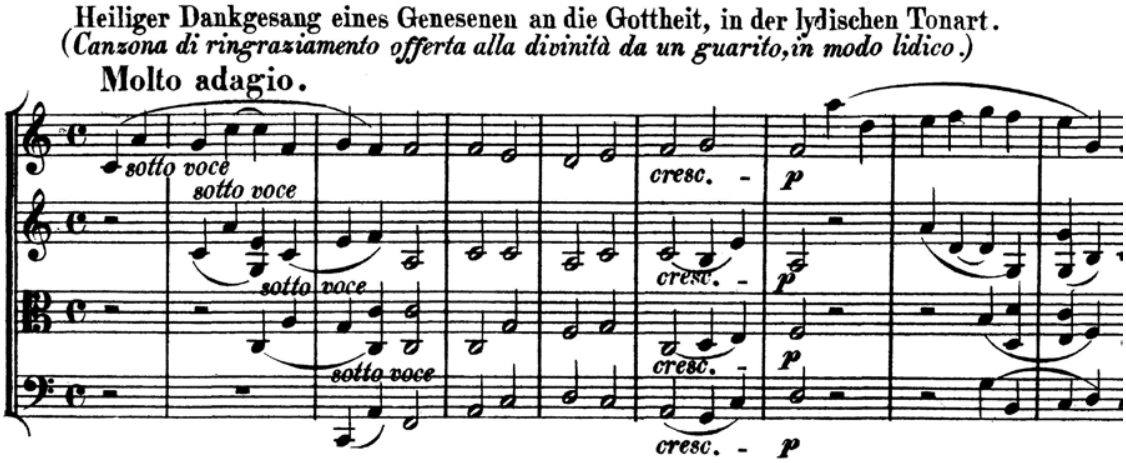

Fig. 7.4a 'Heiliger Dankgesang', Op. 132/ii. GA.

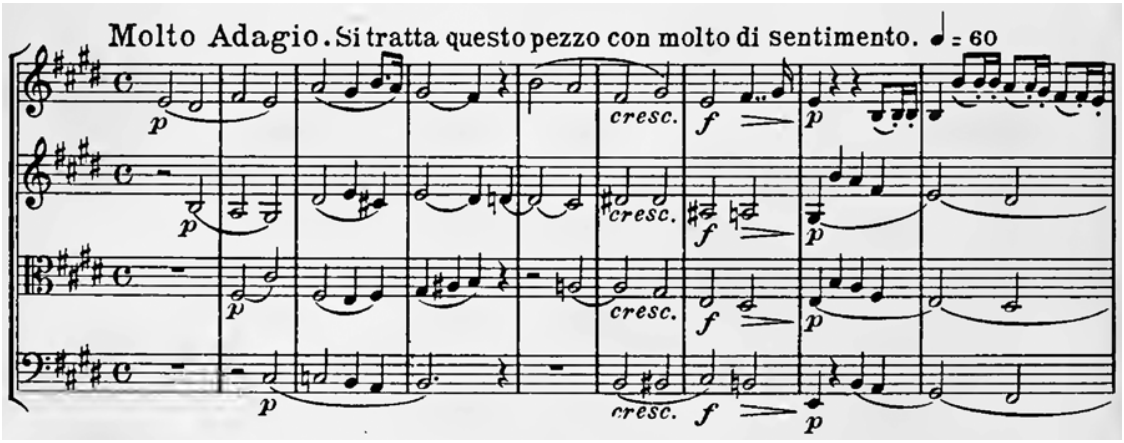

Fig. 7.4b String Quartet Op. 59 No. 2/ii, with Beethoven's metronome mark from 1817. *String Quartet in E minor, Opus 59 No. 2* (Leipzig and Vienna: Ernst Eulenburg, 1911).

Unlike the String Quartet Op. 127, which had a rather difficult premiere and reception, the String Quartet Op. 132 was received enthusiastically, and Schuppanzigh repeated it two weeks later in a subscription concert.[106] In many other places too, the earliest performances were positively received: as Christina Bashford has shown, the 'Heiliger Dankgesang' in particular elicited very eloquent praise from the press when it was first performed in the United Kingdom, most of which focused on the music's perceived direct expression without obtuseness or difficulties. One example standing for many comes from the *Post* in 1836, which suggested that 'cold indeed must the heart be who could not sympathise with the calm, holy, grateful, and yet joyous feelings of the composer'.[107] In later years, however, reviews considered the piece far less accessible, and often stressed the extended length and lack of focus: the French critic Henri Blanchard described the very same piece in 1849 as 'intolerably long, [and] without unity of thought'.[108] When read between the lines, this description suggests that the

[106] Gingerich, 'Ignaz Schuppanzigh', 481.
[107] Christina Bashford, 'The Late Beethoven Quartets and the London Press, 1836–ca. 1850', *The Musical Quarterly*, 84 (2000), 84–122, at 106.
[108] Henri Blanchard, 'Silves musicales', *La revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, 16/7 (18 Feb. 1849), 52–3. Original: 'cela est intolérablement long, [et] sans unité de pensée'.

slow tempi that Czerny and Moscheles had proposed for the piano sonatas may have influenced the late string quartets by this point.

The earliest instance of a text that unambiguously describes an extremely slow tempo for the 'Heiliger Dankgesang' is found in the fifth volume of Wilhelm von Lenz's *Beethoven: Eine Kunststudie*, published in 1860, which includes a lengthy section on the late string quartets, supposedly based on testimony by Karl Holz, who had passed away in 1858.[109] The metronome mark that Lenz lists for the 'Heiliger Dankgesang' is ♪= 58, more than twice as slow as one would expect based on Beethoven's speeds for comparable movements. (In view of the fact that the list contains several clearly misprinted metronome marks,[110] it is possible that this metronome mark was somehow incorrectly transmitted in a less obvious way, and that the note value should have been a crotchet.) It seems therefore most likely that, much like Moscheles's and Czerny's later metronome marks for the adagios in the late piano sonatas discussed above, this mark does not express the speed taken thirty years before Holz passed away, but is rather a product of a later performance trend, perhaps more closely related to the slow Protestant chorale singing that Brandenburg identified. Much as in the case of Op. 101, playing this chorale tune extremely slowly also obscures an essential feature: the fact that it is in the Lydian mode. In practical terms, this means that the piece is written in F major, but with B♮s instead of B♭s on the fourth degree. At the speed which Lenz lists, the tension between the B♮ and F is removed, and the listener will probably hear these sections as being in C major with a somewhat perplexing focus on the fourth degree. In short, as with the Adagio ma non troppo in Op. 101, one of the identifying and possibly troubling characteristics is obscured by a slower tempo.

This means that when in 1869 Richard Wagner wrote *Über das Dirigiren*, which has often been identified as the most persuasive articulation of this idea of extreme slowness, he was building on a trend that had been developing for almost four decades in which slowness in Beethoven was increasingly associated with transcendence. But where Czerny was reluctant to change slow movements with Beethoven's own metronome marks, Wagner was, in his own words, courageous enough to do so, as this well-known passage shows:

> The sustained tone regulates the *Tempo Adagio*: here the rhythm is as if it were dissolved in pure tone, the tone *per se* suffices for musical expression. In a certain sense it may be said of the pure Adagio that it cannot be taken too slow. … None of our conductors are courageous enough to take an Adagio in this manner; they always begin by looking for some bit of figuration, and arrange their tempo to match. I am, perhaps, the only conductor who has ventured to take the Adagio section of the Ninth Symphony at the pace proper to its peculiar character. This character is distinctly contrasted with that of the alternating *Andante* in triple time; but our conductors invariably contrive to

[109] Wilhelm von Lenz, *Beethoven: Eine Kunst-Studie*, part 5: *Kritischer Katalog sämmtlicher Werke Beethovens mit Analysen derselben* (Hamburg: Hofmann & Campe, 1860), 225.
[110] Emil Platen, 'Zeitgenössische Hinweise zur Aufführungspraxis der letzten Streichquartette Beethovens', in *Beiträge '76–78: Beethoven-Kolloquium 1977. Dokumentation und Aufführungspraxis*, ed. Rudolf Klein (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1978), 100–7.

> obliterate the difference, leaving only the rhythmical change between square and triple time.[111]

Wagner's denunciation of Beethoven's metronome marks, which indicate an almost identical crotchet pulse between the Molto adagio in **c** and the Andante in 3/4 in the third movement of the Ninth Symphony, simultaneously favours an extremely slow pulse in the former that heightens the contrast between the different sections. The influence of this vision in the long term is hard to overstate, and although there were dissenters well into the twentieth century such as Felix Weingartner who explicitly distanced themselves from Wagner in this regard,[112] virtually everyone advocated a significantly slower tempo for Beethoven's late slow movements than would be expected on the basis of the composer's metronome marks.[113] The only disagreement was about whether Beethoven's late slow music should sound merely somewhat slower than his metronome marks indicate, or as slow as possible.

Institutional slowness

Why then was much of Beethoven's slow music, particularly in his late works, slowed down so much during the course of the nineteenth century? Although the complexity of the music was undoubtedly a factor, the true answer probably lies in the changing view of Beethoven's biography in the nineteenth century in combination with the increasing emphasis on particular musical values at odds with the characteristics of the slow movements in late Beethoven.

As K. M. Knittel has demonstrated in detail, by the 1870s a remarkable change of consensus had occurred regarding the state of Beethoven's late works.[114] Whereas earlier critics considered many aspects of the late style to be suffering from defects that were surely caused by his deafness and that hence the works from the middle style were superior, by this point the late works had begun to overtake them. Symptomatic of this change was Franz Liszt, who, although he had expressed a contrary opinion in previous decades, now considered the late works to be the confirmation of Beethoven's status as a 'god'.[115] So when Richard Wagner published an influential biographical essay on Beethoven in 1870, he considered Beethoven's lack of hearing not an impediment on his compositional practice, but an asset that protected him from the mundane things of the world and which resulted in a more inward-looking style.[116] Although it had not become any easier to make analytical or musical sense of the late works, their idiosyncrasy could now be considered a positive feature. One example can be found in Theodor Helm's 1885 book on the string quartets, which considered the ninths between the two violins in bar 189 of the 'Heiliger Dankgesang' (deal-breakers for critics of previous generations!) to be 'drastic and bittersweet' and caused by 'the

[111] Richard Wagner, *On Conducting*, trans. Edward Dannreuther (London: William Reeves, 1887), 34–5; translation of *Über das Dirigiren* (Leipzig: C. F. Kahnt, 1869).
[112] Felix Weingartner, *On the Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies*, trans. Jessie Crosland (New York: E. F. Kalmus, 1906), 166.
[113] See, for instance, Tovey, ed., *Beethoven: Complete Pianoforte Sonatas*, vol. 3, 114; Artur Schnabel, ed., *Beethoven: 32 sonate per pianoforte* (Milan: Edizioni Curci, 1949), vol. 3, 102.
[114] K. M. Knittel, 'Wagner, Deafness, and the Reception of Beethoven's Late Style', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 101/1 (Spring 1998), 49–82.
[115] *Ibid*., 49.
[116] *Ibid*., 66–8.

wonderful lack of concern for harmonic irregularities shown by the master, swept away as he is by the melodic current of his thoughts'.[117]

Around the same time, as Scott Burnham has shown in his important book *Beethoven Hero*, influential theorists such as Hugo Riemann and Heinrich Schenker created theoretical frameworks that both were based on and subsequently reinforced the musical values found in Beethoven's heroic style.[118] Over time these ossified into institutional values, creating a circular relationship, to the extent that being musically educated constituted being educated into these values. Burnham identified these as 'thematic/motivic development, end-orientation and unequivocal closure, form as process, and the inexorable presence of line'.[119] Many commentators have observed that Beethoven's late works do not share these properties to the same extent as his earlier compositions, and are therefore difficult to account for within this dominant framework. This is in part the reason why many of Beethoven's late works, including the fast movements, invoke a kind of timelessness and transcendence.[120]

The slow movements under discussion in this chapter in particular, which have comparatively little motivic development and presence of line and in the case of the piano sonatas are open-ended with an ambiguous form, clearly depart from the institutional values that Burnham describes. This gave them an exceptional status, both in the developing view of Beethoven's biography at the time and in the dominant theoretical framework within which this music was approached. This outsider status in turn resulted in these late slow movements often being played according to values that are the direct opposite of the above-mentioned institutional values: the tempo is taken so slowly that there is hardly any detectable thematic or motivic development, and little to no end-orientation and unequivocal closure, the development of the form is largely obscured, and there is no presence of line. I suspect that the influence of nineteenth-century writers who proposed extremely slow but historically anachronistic tempi – particularly Czerny, Moscheles and Holz, although Schindler's and Wagner's influence is also not to be underestimated – is an important but unacknowledged factor which has had a significant effect on our musical culture as a whole.[121] Symptomatic is that although since the 1990s many scholars have sought to reposition Beethoven and other canonical composers back into the social and musical practices of their time,[122] this extreme slowness remains a dominant presence in the performance practices of the early twenty-first century. This indicates that notwithstanding these attempts to change

---

[117] Theodor Helm, *Beethoven's Streichquartette* (Leipzig: E. W. Fritsch, 1885), 275. Translation adapted from Knittel, 'Wagner, Deafness', 69.
[118] Scott Burnham, *Beethoven Hero* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 66–111.
[119] *Ibid*., 110–11.
[120] For two contrasting articulations of this idea, see Benedict Taylor, *The Melody of our Time: Music and Temporality in the Romantic Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, online), ch. 2, 'Time and Transcendence in Beethoven's Late Piano Sonatas'; and Birgit Loges, '"So träumte mir, ich reiste … nach Indien": Temporality and Mythology in Op. 127/I', in *The String Quartets of Beethoven*, ed. William Kinderman (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 168–213.
[121] Many recent performances of Brahms and at least one important piece by J. S. Bach, for instance, are played at much slower tempi than the historical evidence suggests that the composers had in mind. See Michael Musgrave and Bernhard D. Sherman, eds, *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Daniel R. Melamed, 'How did J. S. Bach's "Aus Liebe will mein Heiland sterben," BWV 244/49, Get to Be So Slow?', *19th-Century Music*, 43/1 (2019), 3–16.
[122] See, for instance, Tia DeNora, *Beethoven and the Construction of Genius: Musical Politics in Vienna, 1792–1803* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), as well as many of the authors mentioned in nn. 3 to 8 above.

the way we view Beethoven, the above-mentioned institutionalised values continue to grant Beethoven's late works an exceptional status, and the way we play and hear this music has not fundamentally changed at all.

None of that is to say that these values cannot be challenged, or that the historically informed performance movement, which has often claimed to engage with historical practices, is necessarily best equipped to do so. Already in 1952 the Végh Quartet, almost certainly influenced by the writings of Kolisch, recorded the 'Heiliger Dankgesang' with the Adagio molto at a speed close to the metronome mark of the Adagio molto in the Ninth Symphony.[123] To my ears, this recording makes concessions neither to the depth or complexity of the music nor to its spiritual qualities, brings out the otherworldly quality of the Lydian mode and is on the whole much more unified while still sounding suitably slow. In many more recent recordings, including the Végh Quartet's stereo recording from the early 1970s,[124] the extremely slow tempo partly or completely obscures these qualities.

With the possibility in mind that a fleeter tempo in Beethoven's late slow movements may help bring out qualities essential to this music, I shared early versions of this chapter with several professional musicians. I am deeply indebted and grateful to Lucas Blondeel and Kathrin Sutor, who agreed to record the slow movements of the Piano Sonata Op. 101 and the Cello Sonata Op. 102 No. 2 on historical instruments and in a performance style that avoids the slowness that has thus far been a defining feature of this repertoire in recordings. Their performances, which demonstrate the creative potential of the work discussed in this chapter, can be accessed on the website of Manchester University Press.[125]

Finally, the extremely slow tempi generally found in current performances of slow movements of Beethoven's late works did exist in the early nineteenth century. As Brandenburg has shown in the case of chorales, extremely slow tempi were a part of musical life in the German-speaking lands, albeit in highly specific circumstances. However, the almost universal consent in the literature about slowness in late Beethoven rests on shaky foundations. Rather than being an essential part of Beethoven's conception, which the surviving evidence does not support, this slowness emerged out of a number of factors after Beethoven's death. Most prominently, the compositional qualities of these late works have given them perpetual exceptional status, even to the composer's associates who edited them. This in turn caused these editors to slow down radically the editorial metronome marks for the slow movements in subsequent editions, and the influence of the subsequent re-assessment of late Beethoven by Wagner and Liszt has further reinforced this tendency. A greater awareness of the causes of this slowness will not only allow scholars to understand Beethoven's late style better and re-consider the baggage of the mid- to late nineteenth century; it will also allow performers to make artistic decisions that are both radically new and historically justified.

---

[123] Végh Quartet, *Beethoven: The Complete Quartets* (Music & Arts, 1084 CD, 2001) (reissue of recordings from 1952). The tempo in the Adagio molto varies from approximately 54 to 74 crotchets per minute.

[124] Végh Quartet, *Beethoven: The Complete Quartets* (Naive Classique (Indigo), B000051ZPV, 2013) (reissue of recordings from the 1970s). The tempo in the Adagio molto varies from approximately 40 to 50 crotchets per minute.

[125] See https://www.manchesterhive.com/beethoven-audio. These performances were recorded on 7 January 2022 at the Kammermusiksaal Friedenau in Berlin, using a Hammerflügel built around 1825 by Joseph Böhm. The recording engineer is Shintaro Sugiura.