The Beethoven Companion

edited by Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune

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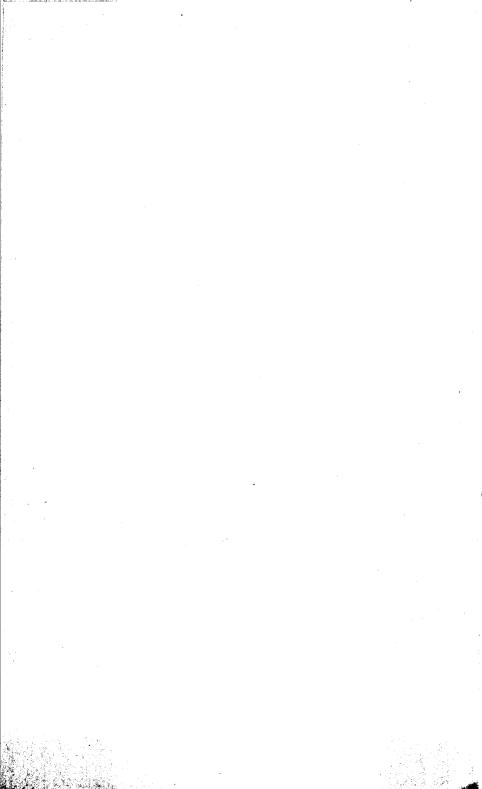
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Extracts in Chapter 14 have been taken from the following books:

Hector Berlioz, trans. Edwin Evans, 'A critical study of Beethoven's nine symphonies', from A travers chants, Reeves, 1913 reprint 1958.

Felix Mendelssohn, Letters, ed. G. Selden-Goth, Paul Elek, 1946. L. B. Plantinga, Schumann as critic, Yale University Press, 1967. Jacques Barzun, Pleasures of Music, Michael Joseph, 1952.

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PREFACE

Modern statistical methods could no doubt calculate whether more words have been written about Beethoven than any other composer; they are scarcely necessary to realize that he has provoked more varied comment of all shades and kinds than anyone else (though Mozart must be a close competitor). The list only begins with the musicologist and music critic: novelists and politicians, philosophers and poets have all added to the riot of words, using a sometimes mythical figure for their own ends. In spite of a literature which already presents a formidable challenge to the bibliographer, it is safe to say that there will be no halt to its growth.

It therefore comes as a surprise, if not a shock, to find how much remains to be done if a complete picture of the musician is to emerge. Though it is difficult to believe that Beethoven's day-by-day existence can provide many surprises for the researcher, and the continuing publication and analysis of the sketchbooks clearly give us a considerable insight into his methods of work, the accuracy of the published texts of his music still needs to be investigated (a recent edition of the Violin Concerto has shown how much we are inclined to accept as eccentricity when in another composer we should suspect corrupt sources); and we also need a much expanded knowledge of the musical background of the early decades of the nineteenth century, which still await the thorough treatment that we take for granted in the study of early epochs. And to this we should

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add a study of the methods of performance current in Beethoven's time; in this respect, tradition is still a bad master, and the clearing away of its varnish might well yield surprises.

This process will take time and labour and is certainly beyond the scope of a centennial tribute. Even so, we hope that the essays in this Beethoven companion will add some facets of interest to both scholar and music-lover. There has been no attempt to discuss every work of Beethoven, nor to achieve a balance based on the relative importance of each genre: for example, there are no chapters devoted to the chamber music for wind instruments (except that with piano, too), nor to the non-operatic stage music; and the piano music is treated at greater length than music for other media. Nevertheless we have attempted to cover at reasonable length some aspect of every major field in which he worked; to remind an age that is ready to accept new sonorities that Beethoven's own first study, the piano, was an instrument far different from that which we may too readily assume he knew; and finally, to accept with humility that our views on Beethoven's significance and intentions are by no means sacrosanct and are not likely to be particularly novel. Though there are new facts to be found and new attitudes to be awakened, one essential truth of which the study of Beethoven's œuvre continually reminds us is that music is too important to be left to the musician. He, like every great composer, is beyond the coterie and for humanity.

DENIS ARNOLD
NIGEL FORTUNE

September 1969

ABBREVIATIONS

- AMZ Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung
- HV Willy Hess, Verzeichnis der nicht in der Gesamtausgabe veröffentlichten Werke Ludwig van Beethovens (Wiesbaden, 1957)
- KH Georg Kinsky (ed. Hans Halm), Das Werk Beethovens: thematisch-bibliographisches Verzeichnis (Munich and Duisburg, 1955)
- LA The Letters of Beethoven, coll., trans., and ed. with an introduction, appendixes, notes and indexes by Emily Anderson, 3 vols. (London, 1961)
- NB Gustav Nottebohm, Beethoveniana: Aufsätze und Mittheilungen (Leipzig, 1872)
- NZB idem, Zweite Beethoveniana: nachgelassene Aussätze (Leipzig, 1887)
- SB Anton Felix Schindler, Beethoven as I knew him, ed. Donald W. MacArdle, trans. Constance S. Jolly (London, 1966)
- TF Thayer's Life of Beethoven, rev. and ed. Elliot Forbes, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1967)
- WoO denotes a work by Beethoven without an opus number (= Werk ohne Opuszahl, in KH above)