

中央音乐学院图书馆藏书

书号

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总记
登号

BK303628

A classical oil painting portrait of Ludwig van Beethoven. He is shown from the chest up, looking slightly to the right with a serious expression. He has long, wavy brown hair and is wearing a dark coat over a white cravat tied in a knot.

BEETHOVEN

WILLIAM KINDERMAN

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BEETHOVEN



William Kinderman

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

1995

Oxford University Press, Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6DP

Oxford New York

Athens Auckland Bangkok Bombay

Calcutta Cape Town Dar es Salaam Delhi

Florence Hong Kong Istanbul Karachi

Kuala Lumpur Madras Madrid Melbourne

Mexico City Nairobi Paris Singapore

Taipei Tokyo Toronto

and associated companies in

Berlin Ibadan

Oxford is a trade mark of Oxford University Press

Published in the United States

by Oxford University Press Inc., New York

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Data available

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Kinderman, William.

Beethoven / William Kinderman.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

1. Beethoven, Ludwig van, 1770-1827—Criticism and interpretation.

I. Title.

ML 410.B4K56 1995 780'.92—dc20 94-4813

ISBN 0-19-816521-8

(California University Press)

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Set by Hope Services (Abingdon) Ltd.

Printed in Great Britain

on acid-free paper by

Butler and Tanner Ltd.,

Frome, Somerset

*For Eva,
and for
Daniel and Laura*

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book examines the main lines of Beethoven's creative development, from his formative years at Bonn to the last string quartets written near the end of his life. The investigation is set in the context of Beethoven's biography, but gives priority to representative musical works in the major genres: the piano sonata and variation set; the duo sonata, trio, string quartet, and other types of chamber music; the concerto, overture, and symphony; and the forms of vocal music such as the art song, opera, cantata, and sacred mass. Not to be overlooked is Beethoven's contribution to patriotic programme music, of which the 'Battle Symphony' *Wellingtons Sieg* is the best-known example.

Beethoven scholarship has never been more active than in recent years, and I have attempted to absorb some new research findings into a relatively comprehensive critical context. Primary sources such as Beethoven's conversation books and his diary from 1812-18 have become available in reliable editions, and the vast legacy of his musical sketchbooks has begun to be explored in rich detail. A more convincing psychological portrait of Beethoven has emerged, in part through re-examination of the conventional heroic myths that attached themselves to the composer in the nineteenth century. The falsifications of unreliable but influential witnesses, particularly Anton Schindler, have been exposed. And some recent analytical studies have shown healthy signs of a shift towards a more integrated approach that avoids sacrificing artistic sensibility to systematic method. Analysis at its best is not an end in itself but a means to an end: it enables us to hear more in the music. In this sense, an analysis resembles an inward performance; it depends vitally on our imagination of the sound, and it needs to be verified by the reader: how does it feel?

Since the primary focus of the present study is aesthetic rather than biographical, some familiarity with the musical works has to be presupposed in the analytical discussions. The reader is invited to use the book in several ways: as an analytical guide to individual pieces, which can readily be located in the text by consulting the Index of Beethoven's Compositions; as a study placing these pieces into the context of Beethoven's life and his response to philosophical and political currents of his time; and as a reassessment of Beethoven's creative development and his cultural importance. Other relevant topics recur throughout the book like ever new variations on a theme: Beethoven's verbal and musical humour, for instance, is explored in chapters 2, 3, 8, 9, and 12, whereas his evolving treatment of narrative design is discussed in chapters 3-5, 9-10, and 12, among others.

The introductory chapter, 'Overture', sets out the main philosophical and aesthetic argument. Like Beethoven's second and third *Leonore* overtures, this one presents important themes that are later exemplified in detail. Readers with little interest in philosophy are urged to begin with chapter 1 and return later to the introduction. Like the 'overture', some of the later chapters are relatively self-sufficient essays as well as stations in the larger chronological narrative. Many threads connecting the chapters derive from the subject itself; the numerous comparisons between the musical works discussed, for instance, manifest the deep continuity in Beethoven's creative development. The problem of Beethoven's 'creative periods' is addressed in part through the chapter organization; the issue of periodization is discussed in chapter 8. The emphasis given in this book to Beethoven's later music reflects the growing recognition now accorded to works whose early performances often provoked scepticism if not disfavour.

* * *

The research and writing of this book has taken a decade, and the project could not have been completed without the support of several institutions. I am grateful to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation for their generous and indispensable assistance at different times during the last seven years. During 1986-7 I worked at the Beethoven-Archiv at Bonn; since 1990 my time has been divided almost equally between the Hochschule der Künste, Berlin, and the University of Victoria, Canada. The sustained writing was begun in Berlin in 1992, largely completed at Victoria in early 1993, and finished and revised in Berlin that summer with the assistance of a grant from the German Academic Exchange Service.

Several archives and libraries kindly provided illustrative material for this volume. These include the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin; Hochschule der Künste, Berlin; Beethoven-Archiv, Bonn; Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna; Historisches Museum, Vienna; and the McPherson Library, University of Victoria. Thanks are also due to the private owner in Brussels of the little-known Beethoven portrait by Waldmüller from 1823 that preceded his famous picture for Breitkopf and Härtel (see Plate 21). Helmut Hell and Hans-Günter Klein kindly allowed me access to manuscripts in the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz at Berlin, and Sieghard Brandenburg and Michael Ladenburger offered helpful assistance at the Beethoven-Archiv at Bonn.

I am grateful to the following individuals for offering helpful comments during my work on the book: Vilhjálmur Árnason, Michael Benedikt, Elmar Budde, Barry Cooper, John Daverio, Werner Grünzweig, Sylvia Imeson,

Pierre Jasmin, Paul Kling, John Kongsgaard, Kevin Korsyn, Harald Krebs, Gary Le Tourneau, and Albrecht Riethmüller. Our music librarian at Victoria, Sandra Acker, deserves credit for her resourceful acquisition of Beethoven materials. I am thankful as well for the stimulating input of the students in several courses on Beethoven that I have taught at the University of Victoria, the University of British Columbia, and the Hochschule der Künste, Berlin.

Special thanks go to Hans-Werner Küthen, who generously shared material on Beethoven's puns. Sieghard Brandenburg made a number of factual corrections and valuable suggestions for the improvement of my working draft, as well as drawing my attention to the source of Plate 13 and transcribing Beethoven's inscription. My student assistant, Lynn Matheson, helped diligently with the preparation of the typescript and music examples, Malcolm Gerratt, formerly of J. M. Dent, offered much encouragement for the project, and Julia Kellerman has skilfully seen it through to publication.

My profoundest gratitude is to Alfred Brendel and Maynard Solomon, both of whom read the entire typescript and offered valuable detailed comments and critique. They are, of course, in no way responsible for remaining infelicities.

To my wife, Eva Solar-Kinderman, I am indebted in a hundred ways. Not only her work as research assistant, but her musical insight as pianist and her mastery of languages have contributed to the book. One small example of her input is the new clarification of Beethoven's puns on the name of his friend Zmeskall as 'dearest dirt hauler' in chapter 2; Jürgen May and Johann Knobloch are also to be thanked for their careful subsequent research into this rare instance of Beethoven's plays on words relating to the Czech language. I should beg forgiveness here from family and friends for my own numerous bad puns made during the writing of this book—I have become infected by Beethoven's example.

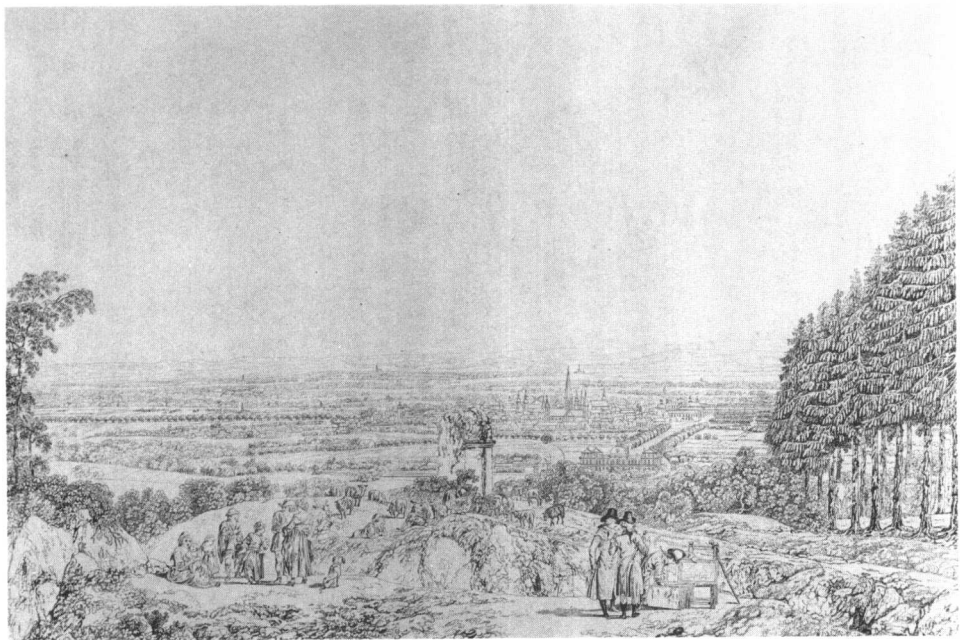
Portions of this book have appeared in different forms in *19th Century Music*, *Zu Beethoven*, *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music*,¹ and *Beethoven Forum*. Chapter 10 intersects with my published studies of *Beethoven's Diabelli Variations* and of the Ninth Symphony in *Beethoven's Compositional Process*, and the discussion of the last sonatas and the quartet op. 127 overlaps with my contributions to *Beethoven: Interpretationen seiner Werke*.² I am grateful to the editors and publishers for their permission to republish these materials.

¹ From my essay 'Beethoven'. Excerpted and adapted with permission of Schirmer Books, an imprint of Macmillan Publishing Company, from *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music*, edited by R. Larry Todd. Copyright © 1990 by Schirmer Books.

² Ed. Carl Dahlhaus, Albrecht Riethmüller, and Alexander Ringer (Laaber: Laaber Verlag, 1994).

Most of the music examples are taken from the standard collected edition, *Beethovens Werke: Vollständige kritische durchgesehene Gesamtausgabe*, 25 vols (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Hartel, 1862–5; 1888); examples 79–84 and 94–5 were first published in my article 'Beethoven's Symbol for the Deity in the *Missa solemnis* and the Ninth Symphony', *19th Century Music*, ix (1985), pp. 102–18. I have had the benefit of coordinating work on this book with three ongoing recording projects for Philips Classics Productions: the symphonies, conducted by Colin Davis; the quartets, performed by the Guarneri Quartet; and the piano sonatas, played by Alfred Brendel; and I rehearsed some ideas contained in the book in a three-day workshop with Brendel on Beethoven held at Carnegie Hall in May 1993. The experience of writing notes for these distinguished performers has helped me in my attempt to convey a sense of engagement with this remarkable music.

Berlin
July 1994



1 View of Bonn from the Kreuzberg. Copper engraving by Johann Ziegler based on Lorenz Janscha, 1798.

2 Christian Gottlob Neefe, unsigned painting.

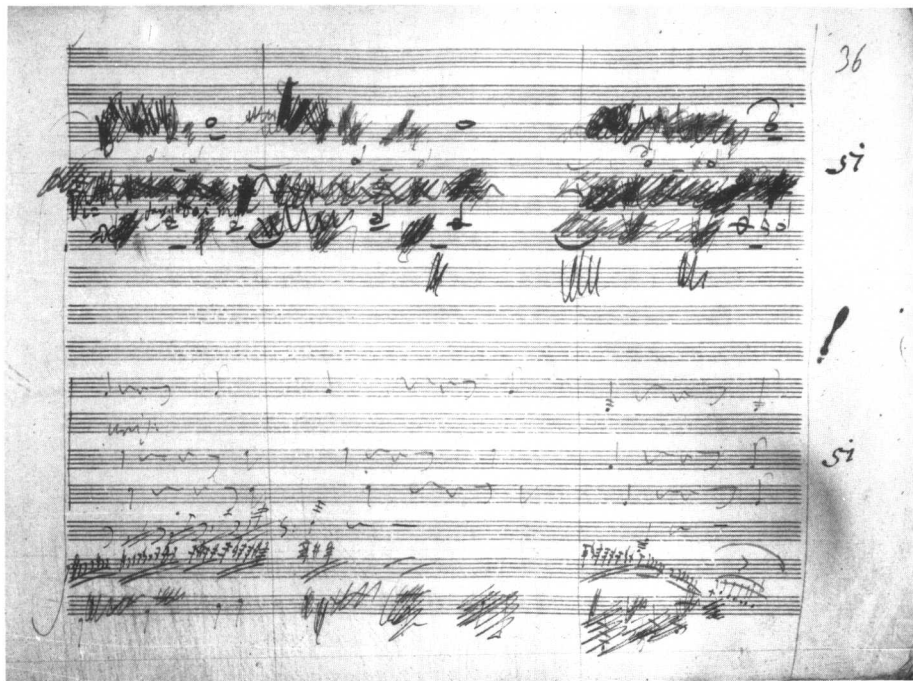


- 3 Engraving by Johann Neidl, after a drawing of Beethoven by Gandolph Ernst Stainhauser von Treuberg of 1800 (Vienna: Giovanni Cappi, 1801).



- 4 Vienna: Graben, towards Kohlmarkt. Coloured engraving by C. Schütz. Around 1800 Beethoven lived nearby in the Tiefer Graben.





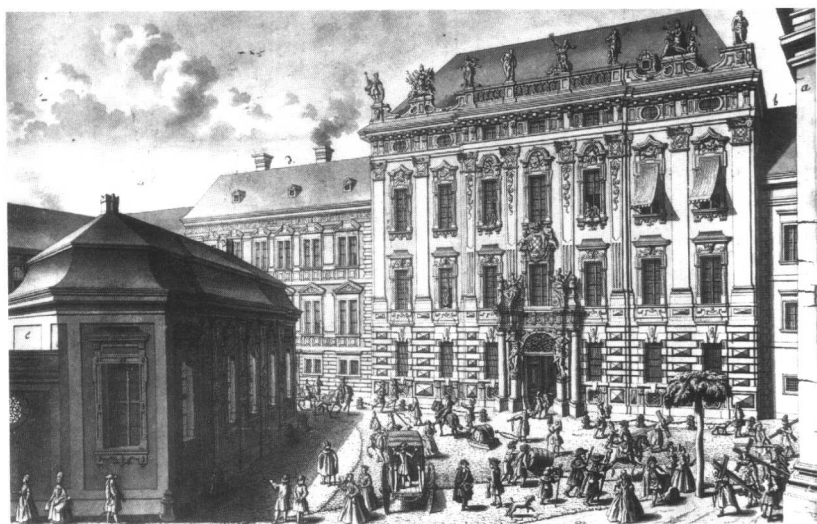
- 5 Autograph score of the Third Piano Concerto in C Minor op. 37, first movement, last bars of the development. This heavily revised MS shows two main layers of writing, in brown and black ink. (Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, Beethoven mus. autogr. 14, fol. 36^r).

- 6 Ludwig van Beethoven, 1803. Miniature on ivory by Christian Hornemann.





- 7 A page from the Mendelssohn 15 Sketchbook containing sketches for the finale of the last act of *Fidelio* in the 1805 version, now no. 18. Beethoven wrote 'Corus' at the top, and continued with the text 'Wer ein holdes Weib errungen...' drawn from Schiller's *An die Freude*, lines that also appear in the finale of the Ninth Symphony. The first two entries on the sketchleaf are transcribed by Nottebohm, *Zweite Beethoveniana*, p. 445. (Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung, Berlin, Mus. ms. autogr. Mendelssohn-Stiftung 15, p. 251).



- 8 The Palais Kinsky in Vienna, an der Freyung. Drawing by Salomon Kleiner.

DREY GESAENGE

von Goethe

mit Begleitung des Pianoforte

in Musik gesetzt

und

Ihrer Durchlaucht

der Frau Fürstin von Kinsky, geb. Gräfin v. Kerpen

zugewendet

von

Ludwig. Beethoven.

at. Hoch.

Eigentum der Verleger

Bey Breitkopf & Härtel in Leipzig.

Minne von Goethe
 die für die Beethoven
 gegeben alle den Beethoven
 von Beethoven

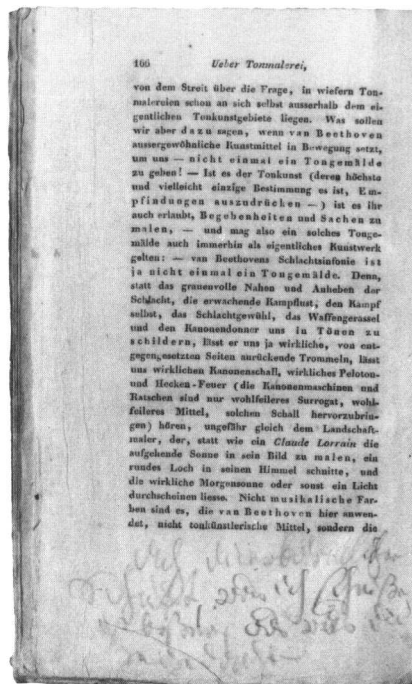
- 9 Title page of the first edition of the three Goethe songs op. 83 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1811), dedicated to Princess Caroline Kinsky. Beethoven inscribed this copy to Antonie Brentano.

- 10 Miniature on ivory, presumably of Antonie Brentano, previously believed to be of Marie Erdödy.





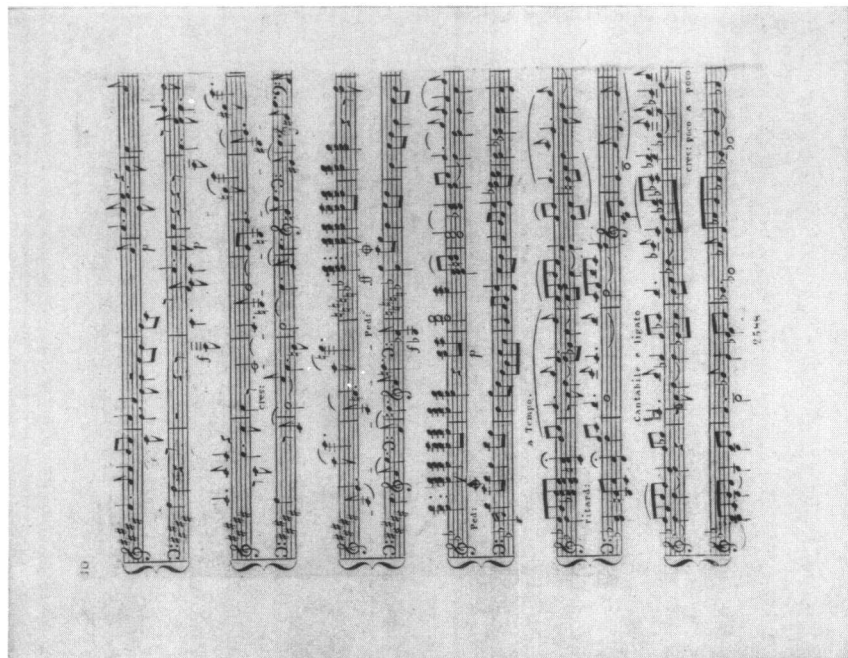
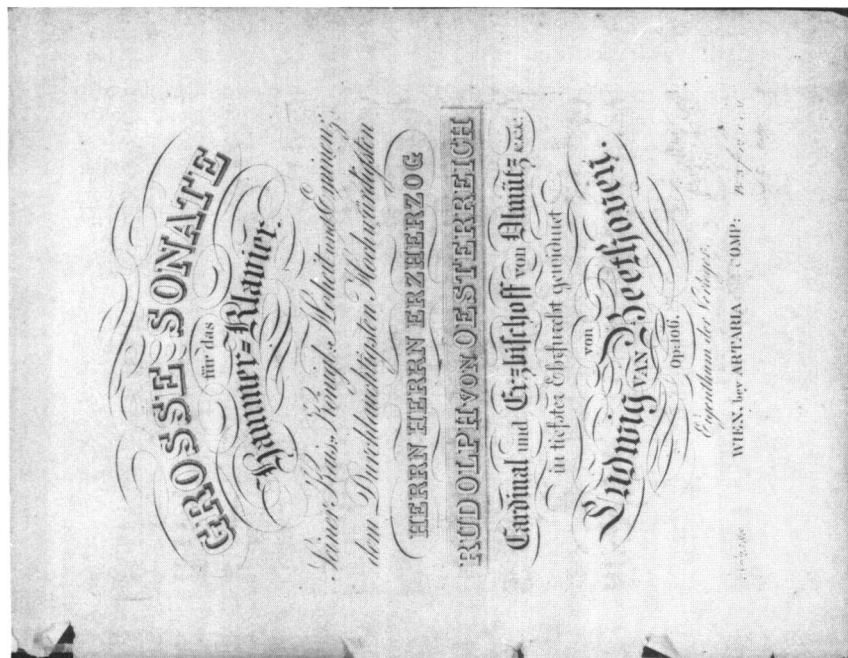
11 Bronze bust of Beethoven, aged 42, by Franz Klein, 1812, based on a plaster cast of the composer's face.



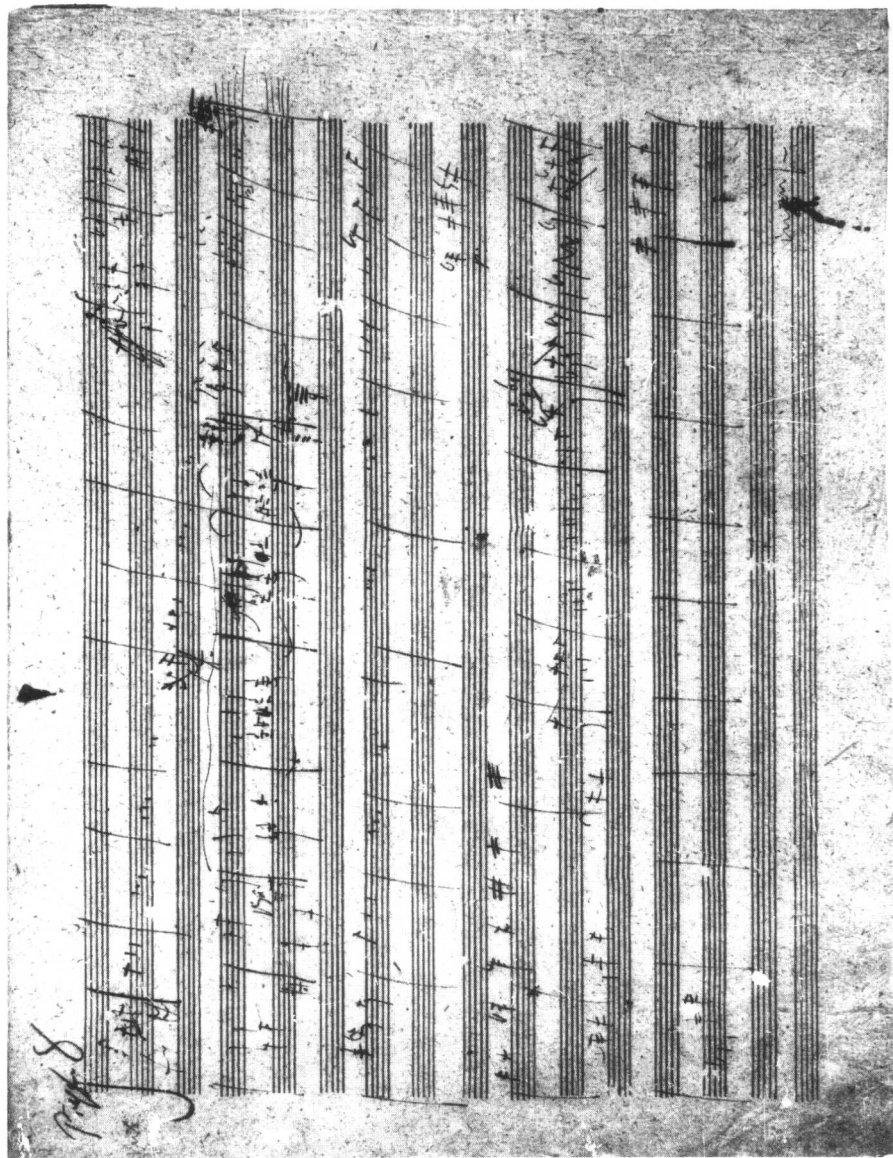
13 Beethoven's response to a negative critique of *Wellingtons Sieg* by Gottfried Weber in his copy of the music journal *Cäcilia* of August 1825: 'ach du erbärmlicher Schuft, was ich scheisse, ist besser, als wie du je gedacht' ('ah you pitiful scoundrel, my shit is better than [anything] you have ever thought').

12 Title page of the piano arrangement of *Wellingtons Sieg* prepared by Beethoven (Vienna: Steiner & Co., 1816).





14-15 The first edition of Beethoven's *Hammerklavier* Sonata op. 106, issued in September 1819; title page and p. 10, showing the start of the recapitulation of the first movement.



16 Beethoven's draft of 1819 for Variation 10 (no. 8 in the draft) of the Diabelli Variations. Beethoven first entered the turn figure from Diabelli's waltz before rejecting that embellishment of the upbeat. (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS 77A, fol. 2v).



12 Andante molto cantabile et espressivo.
Gesangsvoll mit innigster Empfindung.

molto voce

cresc. *sf* *molto voce*

VAR. I.
molto espressivo.

molto voce *cresc.*

17–18 The first edition (November 1821) of the Piano Sonata in E major op. 109, dedicated to Maximiliane Brentano, daughter of Franz and Antonie Brentano: title page and p. 12, showing the theme and first variation of the finale.