UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Los Angeles

Tempo and Character in Beethoven's Symphony No. 3, Op. 55 (*Eroica*): A Performer's Guide

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Musical Arts
in Music

by

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2018

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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University of California, Los Angeles, 2018
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines historical issues, performance practice, and practical application components of character/spirit, tempo, and tempo rubato in Beethoven's Symphony No. 3, Op. 55 (*Eroica*). An important goal of this research is the connection between theoretical analysis and its practical application.

The three chapters of this dissertation address, in turn, three central performance elements related to the Symphony: character/spirit, tempo, and tempo rubato. Each section first provides an historical overview of the topic and identifies the range of issues that a performer might face. Then it addresses each issue from different perspectives – that of Beethoven himself, his students and followers, his antagonists, contemporaneous musicians and musicians of later generations. This study also attempts to connect the past with modern-day beliefs and practices by tracing the development of major performance paradigms from Beethoven's time to the beginning of the 21st century.

After the theoretical-historical overview, the second half of chapters 2 and 3 attempts to address in detail, examples that a performer may encounter while working on the score, and provides recommendations grounded in performance and musicological knowledge for possible ways of addressing these issues.

This research was done by a practicing orchestral conductor (no comma) and aims to serve as a performer's reference guide. My hope is that this study will help stimulate further theoretical and practical research leading to informed, stylistically aware, and interesting interpretations of Beethoven's *Eroica* - a revolutionary, potent, and timeless work.

The dissertation of Maksym Kuzin is approved.

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2018

This dissertation is dedicated to my father, Yuriy Kuzin, for passing on his outstanding analytical capacity of a chess-master,

and

to my mother, Tetiana Kuzina, for instilling a natural curiosity and an interest in the core subjects of character and spirit.

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Acknowledgments

I would like to express my immense gratitude to:

My professional and life mentor, a UCLA professor who possesses a rare combination of qualities - being a great musician and a kind, outstanding and supportive man. Neal Stulberg, thank you for believing in me and helping me climb this DMA “mountain” and beyond;

My beautiful and talented wife Victoria Kuzina, for showing unbelievable patience, support, encouragement and practical help while, at the same time, raising our new-born son Michael;

My beautiful, talented, and smart daughter Margaryta Kuzina, for being such a great and continuous inspiration during my years at UCLA;

UCLA Distinguished Professor and renowned Beethoven scholar, Robert Winter, for his vision and overall guidance of my DMA research and my UCLA path in general;

My very special Los Angeles friend, Olenka Krupa Griffies, who helped me immensely and graciously by proofreading the text and staying awake long hours to help meet my deadline.

Maxim Kuzin

Ukrainian-born conductor Maxim Kuzin leads orchestras at the University of California, Santa Barbara and Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa. Before arriving in the United States in 2014, Mr. Kuzin held concurrent positions in Ukraine as Music Director of the Reinhold Glier Kyiv Institute of Music's Symphony and Chamber Orchestras and Head of the Opera Preparation Department of Dnipro Glinka Conservatory of Music. He had also led the Krivoy Rog Music Theatre and "Ricochet" New Music Ensemble of the National Composers Union of Ukraine, and worked as a conductor at the President's National Orchestra of Ukraine, the Kiev National Operetta Theatre, and Opera Theatre of the National Tchaikovsky Music Academy of Ukraine. Mr. Kuzin has toured Ukraine, Russia, and Georgia and guest conducted orchestras in Eastern Europe and in the United States including the National Symphony Orchestras of Ukraine (Kyiv) and Georgia (Tbilisi), Vladivostok Philharmonic Orchestra (Russia), UCLA Philharmonia, UCLA Symphony, National Philharmonic Orchestra of Ukraine, National Radio Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine, among others.

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CHAPTER 1

Spirit, Character, and Expressive Performance as Regarded by Beethoven and Other Composers in the 19th and 20th Centuries

They want music, and they want it for what they have learned it can be –
a communication of a spiritual state that existed in the composer,
expounded by a performer who is capable of dealing with that spirit.
Nobody is going to reach this audience until he understands
that basic fact and learns to respect its immense knowledgeability.[1]

When analyzing the *Eroica*, modern musicologists and performers tend to address practical issues such as tempo, rubato, articulation, phrasing, dynamics, balances and the like. But Beethoven's contemporaries also spoke about a spiritual dimension to the *Eroica*, and Beethoven himself was aware of the special spiritual qualities of the symphony. Therefore, before addressing the details of style and tempo in this work, I will discuss Beethoven's spiritual views as a human and an artist, which were of such great importance to the composer. I will then present some observations by other composers about the importance of spirit and character in music, and will try to relate issues of spirit and character to tempo, phrasing, and accentuation in performances by Beethoven and his contemporaries. Finally, I will show how the "expressive" performance paradigm actualized by Beethoven and developed by Wagner in his theory of Melos came into conflict with "virtuosic" performance ideals.

[1] Alan Rich, *New York Magazine,* (August 21, 1972).

Beethoven's Spiritual Views

Beethoven's spiritual credo is evident in his memorandum books, where he would write down quotes or phrases that reflected his beliefs. One of them from 1796 states: "Courage! In spite of all bodily weaknesses, my spirit shall rule. You have lived for 25 years. This year must determine the complete man. Nothing must remain undone."[2]

As reported by Bettina von Arnim, a writer, novelist, composer, and a close friend of Beethoven and Goethe, in a May 28, 1810 letter to Goethe, Beethoven wrote that music has a sacred mission which "has a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy".[3] She also stated that Beethoven thought that his music is "the wine which inspires one to new generative processes" and that he is "the Bacchus who presses out this glorious wine for mankind and makes them spiritually drunken."[4]

[2] In fact, Beethoven's age could be 27 at that time as Beethoven miscounted his birth year by two years. Cited in Alexander Wheelock Thayer, *The Life of Ludwig van Beethoven,* (New York: The Beethoven Association, 1921), 191.

[3] Bettina von Arnim, Letter to Goethe, May 28, 1810. Trans. Clifford R. Backman.

[4] "When I open my eyes I must sigh, for what I see is contrary to my religion and I must despise the world which does not know that music is a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy, the wine which inspires one to new generative processes, and I am the Bacchus who presses out this glorious wine for mankind and makes them spiritually drunken. When they again become sober they have drawn from the sea all that they brought with them, all that they can bring with them to dry land. I have not a single friend; I must live alone. But well I know that God is nearer to me than to other artists; I associate with him without fear; I have always recognized and understood him and have no fear for my music - it can meet no evil fate. Those who understand it must be freed by it from all the miseries which the others drag about with themselves." Bettina von Arnim, Letter to Goethe, May 28, 1810. Trans. Clifford R. Backman.

Beethoven also believed that an artist's nobility was based not in social origin, status, or blood, but on spiritual and intellectual qualities, conferred by an otherworldly power.[5] So great was the sense of his mission that in September 1824 -- only two and a half years before his death -- he wrote,

> Apollo and the Muses do not yet intend me to become the prey of the bony Scytheman, as I have yet much to do for you, and much to bequeath which my spirit dictates, and calls on me to complete, before I depart hence for the Elysian fields; for I feel as if I had written scarcely more than a few notes of music.[6]

These spiritual concerns were so important to him that they sometimes overshadowed practical performance considerations. When Schuppanzigh, the first violinist of Count Razumovsky's private string quartet and Beethoven's teacher, complained to the composer about the difficulty of a passage in one of the "Razumovsky" Quartets, Beethoven was said to have responded, "Does he believe that I think of a wretched fiddle when the spirit speaks to me?"[7] The composer's dismissal of technical considerations, as expressed in the above quote, may help explain some of the radically fast metronome markings we encounter in his works.

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[5] "Kings and princes can indeed create professors and privy-councilors, and confer titles and decorations, but they cannot make great men, - spirits that soar above the base turmoil of this world. There their powers fail, and this it is that forces them to respect us. When two persons like Goethe and myself meet, these grandees cannot fail to perceive what such as we consider great." From Beethoven's August 15, 1812 letter to Bettina von Arnim (#93), cited in Grace Wallace, *Beethoven's Letters*, vol. 1. Gutenberg Project, 2004. http://www.gutenberg.org/files/13065/13065-h/13065-h.htm

[6] Beethoven's letter to Schott, Mayence, September 17, 1824 (#391), cited in Grace Wallace, *Beethoven's Letters*, vol. 2. Gutenberg Project, 2004. http://www.gutenberg.org/files/13272/13272-h/13272-h.htm

[7] Carl Czerny, *The Art of Playing the Ancient and Modern Pianoforte Works, A Supplement to the Royal Pianoforte School, Op. 500,* trans. John Bishop (London, 1846), 68.

On the Importance of Spirit and Character in Music

Beethoven is not alone in his view of spirit and character as important performance components. A musical theorist, teacher, and Beethoven scholar and contemporary Adolph Marx (1795-1866), who produced one of the 19th-century's most influential four-volume books on a theory of composition, talked about the importance of delivering this important but elusive component of any performance – a "spirit". He stated,

> The musical executant, or the director of a grand performance, must indeed endeavor to conceive and represent as faithfully and earnestly as possible the spirit of the composition; … But all ultimately depends upon his [the musical executant's or director's] own animus and the degree to which the work identifies itself with his feelings; for from his own inspired conception alone can it be rendered with animation and effect; while, if performed according to mere abstract and mechanical rules, it remains inanimate and unanimating.[8]

Franz Liszt (1811-1886), when speaking about the juxtaposition of the "letter" of a performance (maintenance of the time) to its "spirit" (sense of expression) unequivocally stated that "the letter killeth the spirit, a thing to which I will never subscribe, however specious in their hypocritical impartiality may be the attacks to which I am exposed."[9]

In his *Über das Dirigieren (On Conducting),* Richard Wagner (1813-1883) complained about conductors who "look upon music as a singularly abstract sort of thing, an amalgam of grammar, arithmetic, and digital gymnastics;—to be an adept in which may fit a man for a mastership at a

[8] Adolf Bernhard Marx, Universal School of Music, translated from the Fifth Edition of the Original German by A. H. Wehrhan (London: Robert Cocks and Co., 1853), 85.

[9] Franz Liszt, Letters of Franz Liszt, collected and edited by La Mara, translated by Constance Bache, Volume II (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1894), 176-77.

conservatory or a musical gymnasium; but it does not follow from this that he will be able to put life and soul into a musical performance."[10]

Hugo Wolf (1860-1903), when reviewing the performance of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 5 played by Eugen d'Albert, wrote that "his technic is complete, his touch round and soft, his conception, however, governed more by the score markings than by any imaginative grasp of the spiritual substance of this wonderful work."[11]

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971), when asked, "What, to a composer, is most important about a recorded performance?" answered, "The spirit, of course, the same as in any performance ... Next to the spirit come the two chief questions of the flesh: tempo and balance."[12]

Correlation Between the Spirit in Music, and Tempo, Phrasing, and Accentuation

Composers and performers have long tied the issue of spirited and expressive performances with a good choice of tempo, phrasing, and accentuation.

In terms of tempo, Beethoven stated:

> As far as these four principal tempi are concerned, which incidentally do not possess anywhere near the truth or importance of the four principal winds, we would gladly do without them. But the words that indicate the character of the

[10] Richard Wagner, *Über das Dirigieren (On Conducting)*, trans. Edward Dannreuther in *A Treatise on Style in the Execution of Classical Music* (The Project Gutenberg Etext, October, 2003).

[11] Hugo Wolf, "Of Glinka— and d'Albert," *Wiener Salonblatt*. January 11, 1885. Translated by Pleasants, 103.

[12] Igor Stravinsky, *Dialogues*, originally published as *Dialogues and a Diary* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, 1963; reprint, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), 122 (page references are to reprint edition).

> piece are a different matter. These we cannot abandon, since the tempo is really more the body of a piece, while these terms refer to its very spirit."[13]

This quote from 1817 (the year when Beethoven specified metronome speeds for the *Eroica*) illustrates Beethoven's views about the worth of the Italian tempo terms. Specifically, Beethoven attributes the main Italian tempo indications (*adagio, andante, allegro, and presto*) and their variants (*grave, largo, andantino, allegretto, prestissimo,* etc.), to the "body" of a musical composition, movement or section, while explaining that modifiers such as *molto, con brio, assai, giusto, ma non troppo* etc. define its "spirit."

Once Beethoven adopted Maelzel's new invention, the metronome, he thought that he had found a more precise means of designating tempo and considered the idea of abandoning the Italian terms. According to Schindler, though, Beethoven had other methods of conveying his ideas about tempo. For passages that might seem confusing to a performer, Beethoven "sometimes … recommended putting appropriate words to a perplexing passage and singing it, or listening to a good violinist or wind player play it."[14]

A few decades later, Wagner further developed Beethoven's approach and taught that the ability of a melody to be "well sung implies that the true tempo [and thus a true spirit or character] had been found."[15] He called this melodic aspect a 'Melos' and maintained that "the right

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[13] Emily Anderson, *The Letters of Beethoven* (New York: Norton, 1985), vol. 2: 727-28.

[14] Anton Schindler, *Bioqraphie von Ludwig van Beethoven,* trans. Constance S. Jolly, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 1966), 416.

[15] Richard Wagner, *Über das Dirigieren (On Conducting)*, trans. Edward Dannreuther in *A Treatise on Style in the Execution of Classical Music* (The Project Gutenberg Etext, October, 2003). http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/4523/pg4523-images.html

comprehension of the Melos is the sole guide to the right tempo."[16] Wagner went even further, stating that conductors' inability to identify a correct tempo (Melos) is caused by their "ignorance of singing."

Wagner then ties the apprehension of true Melos (true tempo) with a "correct phrasing and expression" and vice versa. He states,

> The French idea of playing an instrument well is to be able to sing well upon it. And (as already said) that superb orchestra sang the symphony. The possibility of its being well sung implies that the true tempo had been found. … The right comprehension of the Melos is the sole guide to the right tempo; these two things are inseparable: the one implies and qualifies the other. As proof of my assertion that the majority of performances of instrumental music with us are faulty it is sufficient to point out that our conductors so frequently fail to find the true tempo because they are ignorant of singing. … These people look upon music as a singularly abstract sort of thing, an amalgam of grammar, arithmetic, and digital gymnastics; — to be an adept which may fit a man for a mastership at a conservatory or a musical gymnasium; but it does not follow from this that he will be able to put life and soul into a musical performance. … With good players again, the true tempo induces correct phrasing and expression, and conversely, with a conductor, the idea of appropriate phrasing and expression will induce the conception of the true tempo.[17]

According to Wagner, therefore, there is an interdependence of tempo and phrasing. In other words, if one can identify a proper Melos (tempo) of a phrase, one can identify a proper tempo for the section to which the phrase belongs and vice versa.

Phrasing, in turn, was considered closely tied to accentuation. As far back as the 17th century, the philosopher René Descartes specified that "since the sound is emitted more strongly and clearly

[16] Wagner, *Über das Dirigieren,* Ebook.

[17] Wagner, *Über das Dirigieren,* Ebook.

at the beginning of each measure, we must conclude that it has a greater impact on our spirits and that we are thus roused to motion."[18] In Gregory George's *A Dictionary of Arts and Sciences,* published in 1806-07 in London, the article on 'Accent in music' states that "every bar or measure is divided into the accented and unaccented parts: the former being emphatical, on which the spirit of the music depends."[19] Later in the same century, Christiani corroborates the importance and interconnection of accents with phrasing and expression: "It has been said with truth, 'Upon accents the spirit of music depends, because without them there can be no expression. Without them, there is no more melody in song than in the humming of a bee.'"[20]

Based on the above statements, we can assume that a delivery of the correct spirit of music can be approached, very schematically, by identifying appropriate Melos/tempo, recognizing appropriate musical semantics of phrases, and applying accentuation that enlivens this music most expressively.

Tempo, Phrasing, and Accentuation in Piano Playing of Beethoven and His Contemporaries

Ignaz Moscheles (1794-1870), a composer and a piano virtuoso, states that "the player or conductor, who enters into the time and spirit of the piece must feel when and where he has to introduce the necessary changes: and these are often of so delicate a nature, that the marks of the

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[18] René Descartes, *Compendium Musicae,* trans. Walter Robert (Rome: American Institute of Musicology, 1961), 14.

[19] "Accent, in music, a certain modulation or warbling of the sounds, to express passion: either naturally by the voice, or artificially by instruments. Every bar or measure is divided into the accented and unaccented parts: the former being the emphatical, on which the spirit of the music depends." George Gregory, *A Dictionary of Arts and Sciences,* Volume 1, (1806-7), 8.

[20] Joshua Steele, "Prosodia Rationalis," an Essay *Towards Establishing the Melody and Measure of Speech*, (London: T. Payne, 1779), 68-69.

metronome would become superabundant, not to say impossible."[21] Clearly, the above quote's "changes" include changes of tempo, phrasing, and accentuation.

According to many accounts by Beethoven's contemporaries who heard him play, the character of Beethoven's own playing of the same piece could be varied and momentary. Like no one else, he knew the spirit and character of his music, including particulars of tempo, phrasing, and accentuation, and was able to "enter into the time and spirit of the piece" to apply a great variety of light and shade in revealing the multitude of potentialities in his music. As a great artist and performer, he was able to always capture listeners' attention by the highly expressive and diverse renderings, while always subduing his technical skills to artistic and expressive goals. His renderings were not always perfect technically, but they were always "full of spirit," as his contemporaries accounted.[22]

His performances were not uniformly hailed, however. Johann Cramer (1771-1858), a pianist and composer, who was praised by Beethoven himself and who was considered a virtuoso equal to Beethoven, criticized the composer's "uneven reproduction of one and the same composition, today spirited and full of characteristic expression, tomorrow eccentric to indistinctness, often Confusion."[23] Moscheles, recounted on 1814 performance by Beethoven this way: "I listened to

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[21] Anton Schindler, *The Life of Beethoven: Including His Correspondence with His Friends, Numerous Characteristic Traits, and Remarks on His Musical Works,* ed. Ignaz Moscheles, Volume II (London: Henry Colburn, 1841), 111.

[22] Clementi related that "'his [Beethoven's] playing was but little cultivated, not seldom violent, like himself, but always full of spirit." Henry Theophilus Finck, *Success In Music And How It Is Won*, (New York: Charles Scribner`s Son, 1909), 258.

[23] Finck, *Success*, 258.

Beethoven playing his new B minor trio... which was, yet again, so full of originality. I was less enthusiastic about his playing which, though full of spirit, lacked purity and precision."[24]

It is obvious that purely technical virtuosity probably was not among Beethoven's ideals, but highly expressive playing was. According to Schindler, Beethoven did not favor mechanical brilliance alone as the composer "said to [his student] Ferdinand Ries: "I shall have to look at your *allegro di bravura* movements. To be honest with you, I am no lover of this sort of thing; at least, all the works of this kind that I know seem to favor all too much the mechanical aspects."[25] According to Ries, expressivity was always Beethoven's main concern. He recounts,

> If I made a mistake somewhere in a passage, or struck wrong notes, or missed intervals - which he often wanted strongly emphasized - he rarely said anything. However, if I lacked expression in crescendos, etc. or in the character of a piece, he became angry because, he maintained, the first was an accident, while the latter resulted from inadequate knowledge, feeling, or attention. The first happened quite frequently to him, too, even when he played in public.[26]

The Rise of Virtuosity Over Expressivity

According to Ries' account above, expressivity, character, and strong accentuation were among Beethoven's performance priorities both in piano teaching and in his own playing. However, despite Beethoven's towering influence, the post-Beethovenian 19th century was marked by the

[24] Charlotte Moscheles, ed. Aus Moscheles' Leben. 2 vols, 1872-77, in Emil F. Smidak, Isaak-Iqnaz Moscheles, *The Life of the Composer and His Encounters with Beethoven. Liszt. Chopin and Mendelssohn* (Aldershot Hampshire, England: Scholar Press, 1989), 15.

[25] Schindler, *Beethoven,* ed. MacArdle, 395.

[26] Franz Wegeler and Ferdinand Ries, *Remembering Beethoven,* trans. Frederick Noonan, (London, 1988), 83.

rise of the performance paradigm that valued technical virtuosity and brilliance over expressivity.

Schindler, who witnessed Beethoven's expressive, spiritual, poetic, and free style of playing and became its ardent protagonist, wrote the following two passages in 1860:

> Over four decades [beginning in the 1820s] technical virtuosity has achieved total domination of the piano and the strings. This emphasis on mechanics has annihilated almost every trace of the spiritual element in music…
> This modern demon is contemptuous of the spirit of emotional performance inherited from the classical era as well as of the means of achieving an emotional response from the hearers. It follows no other command than the one that has grown habitual: all subjectivity is to be suppressed.[27]

> A correct understanding of free performance has been lost in the passage of time. We may well doubt, then, whether this manner of performance can be achieved without a previous study of the internal spiritual depths inherent in music, especially in the sonatas. We remember, furthermore, the complete absence of good models which through sustained efforts would provide practical examples of performance. And so on. There are many obstacles, and yet they must not deter us from doing everything in our power to remedy the situation, if only for reasons of historical accuracy.[28]

In 1869, Wagner, in defense of Beethovenian ideals, was moved to write an *essay Über das Dirigieren (On Conducting)* on the then-contemporary state of affairs in the fields of performance and conducting. A significant part of his essay is permeated with stinging remarks and performance examples addressed to Mendelssohn and other adherents of the virtuosic school. However, the virtuoso camp was fast growing, ironically, encouraged by the advent of the metronome so greatly admired by Beethoven. Besides the already mentioned Cramer,

[27] Schindler, *Beethoven,* ed. MacArdle, 395.

[28] Schindler, *Beethoven*, ed. MacArdle, 409.

Clementi (1752–1832), Hummel (1778–1837), Moscheles (1794-1870), Mendelssohn (1809–1847), Clara Schumann (1819–1896) and many others were encouraged by the ideals of virtuosos and prodigies like Paganini. The other group included Wagner (1813–1883), Liszt (1811–1886) (the early Liszt, however, should be attributed to the virtuosic group), Bülow (1830–1894), and others who followed Wagnerian principles.

In Wagner's opinion, the adherents of the virtuosic school were unable to perceive and deliver correctly the expressive Melos of Beethoven's and some other composers' music. Therefore, they tended to perform music of Beethoven and other composers in very fast tempos.

In Wagner's 83-page essay, Mendelssohn is mentioned 32 times.

Here are three quotes from Wagner's essay. In the first, Wagner complained about "the boldest and most inspired example" of inflexible tempo renderings of the *Eroica*'s *Allegro con brio* by the German "Kappelmeister" followers of Mendelssohn,

> Now, how does the true Beethovenian Allegro appear with regard to this? To take the boldest and most inspired example of Beethoven's unheard-of innovation in this direction, the first movement of his Sinfonia *Eroica*: how does this movement appear if played in the strict tempo of one of the Allegros of Mozart's overtures? But do our conductors ever dream of taking it otherwise? Do they not always proceed monotonously from the first bar to the last? With the members of the "elegant" tribe of Capellmeisters, the "conception" of the tempo consists of an application of the Mendelssohnian maxim "chi va presto va sano [those who go fast, go safely].[29]

Regarding performances of the two last Beethoven symphonies, he stated,

[29] Wagner*, Über das Dirigieren,* Ebook.

> Robert Schumann once complained to me at Dresden that he could not enjoy the Ninth Symphony at the Leipzig Gewandhaus concerts because of the quick tempi Mendelssohn chose to take, particularly in the first movement. I have, myself, only once been present at a rehearsal of one of Beethoven's Symphonies when Mendelssohn conducted; the rehearsal took place at Berlin, and the Symphony was No. 8 (in F major). I noticed that he chose a detail here and there—almost at random—and worked at it with a certain obstinacy until it stood forth clearly. This was so manifestly to the advantage of the detail that I could not but wonder why he did not take similar pains with other nuances. For the rest, this incomparably bright symphony was rendered in a remarkably smooth and genial manner. Mendelssohn himself once remarked to me, with regard to conducting, that he thought most harm was done by taking a tempo too slow; and that on the contrary, he always recommended quick tempi as being less detrimental. Really good execution, he thought, was at all times a rare thing, but short-comings might be disguised if care was taken that they should not appear very prominent; and the best way to do this was "to get over the ground quickly." This can hardly have been a casual view, accidentally mentioned in conversation. The master's pupils must have received further and more detailed instruction for, subsequently, I have on various occasions, noticed the consequences of that maxim "take quick tempi," and have, I think, discovered the reasons which may have led to its adoption.[30]

Later in the essay, Wagner cites a fast rendering of the third movement of Beethoven's Eighth Symphony by two of Mendelssohn's adherents to argue how fast tempo can kill the correct character of the movement, depriving it of its many beauties:

> I have often been astonished at the singularly slight sense for tempo and execution evinced by leading musicians. I found it impossible, for instance, to communicate to Mendelssohn what I felt to be a perverse piece of negligence with regard to the tempo of the third movement in Beethoven's Symphony in F major, No. 8. This is one of the instances I have chosen out of many to throw light upon certain dubious aspects of music amongst us."[31]

> Now, the late Capellmeister Reissiger, of Dresden, once conducted this symphony there, and I happened to be present at the performance together with Mendelssohn; we talked about the dilemma just described [in Wagner's opinion, a misconception about the very fast rendering of the Eighth Symphony's 3rd movement], and its proper solution; concerning which I told Mendelssohn that I believed I had convinced Reissiger, who had promised that he would take the tempo slower than

[30] Wagner, *Über das Dirigieren,* Ebook.

[31] Wagner, *Über das Dirigieren,* Ebook.

> usual. Mendelssohn perfectly agreed with me. We listened. The third movement began and I was terrified on hearing precisely the old Landler tempo; but before I could give vent to my annoyance Mendelssohn smiled, and pleasantly nodded his head as if to say "now it's all right! Bravo!" So my terror changed to astonishment. Reissiger, for reasons which I shall discuss presently, may not have been so very much to blame for persisting in the old tempo; but Mendelssohn's indifference, with regard to this queer artistic contretemps, raised doubts in my mind whether he saw any distinction and difference in the case at all. I fancied myself standing before an abyss of superficiality, a veritable void. Soon after this had happened with Reissiger, the very same thing took place with the same movement of the Eighth Symphony at Leipzig. The conductor, in the latter case, was a well-known successor of Mendelssohn at the Gewandhaus concerts [Ferdinand Hiller.] He also had agreed with my views as to the Tempo di Menuetto, and had invited me to attend a concert at which he promised to take it at the proper moderate pace. He did not keep his word and offered a queer excuse: he laughed, and confessed that he had been disturbed with all manner of administrative business, and had only remembered his promise after the piece had begun; naturally, he could not then alter the tempo, etc. The explanation was sufficiently annoying.[32]

The above quotes make it clear that the ideals of fast and strict tempo performances dominated German orchestral playing during the mid-19th century. The influence and importance of Beethoven's ideals of expressivity over virtuosity were endangered. In this light, it is understandable why Wagner and those who cherished similar performance principles rose to defend them.

[32] Wagner*, Über das Dirigieren,* Ebook.

Summary

The issues of character and spirit in Beethoven's music were much-discussed topics at the composer's time and later through the 19th century. Beethoven himself had a spiritually inclined personality and a broad range of interests in this sphere. He believed that music has a transformative, uplifting, and educational power brought down from the realm of the spirit through the souls and minds of great artists to the rest of mankind. His music delivers a broad range of moods and characters and requires expressivity and understanding of its spirit. In order to understand the spirit of Beethoven's music on both large and small structural scales, one should:

- pay great attention to Beethoven's Italian tempo designations;
- consult metronome markings left by Beethoven (if available);
- closely examine semantics of melodic lines ('Melos' in Wagner's terms) and phrasing;
- apply accentuation that brings sense to melodies and phrases and makes music comprehensible.

While trying to arrive at the most appropriate tempo as the main component influencing the spirit and character of the music, one should bear in mind that Beethoven didn't support virtuosity for its own sake and would always seek expressivity beyond mechanical correctness and brilliance. These ideals, however, experienced a decline by the middle of the 19th century, while the ideals of virtuosity were on the rise. Wagner, supported by his circle of artistic followers, was moved to defend Beethoven's principles in his essay *Über das Dirigieren* (*On Conducting*), deriding the opposing camp and its leader, Mendelssohn.

CHAPTER 2

Tempo and Metronome Markings

Introduction

Tempo and pulse are central to music performance. Mozart described tempo as "the most essential, the most difficult, and the chief requisite in music."[33] Wagner regarded "setting the right tempo" as a prerequisite of "the correct performance of a piece" and as a means "to recognize whether the conductor understood the musical composition or not."[34]

Beethoven exerted utmost care designating the most appropriate tempo for his works. Accounts of his contemporaries show that he had a habit of adjusting tempos both to faster and slower speeds after rehearsals and performances of his compositions.[35] Even when he was completely deaf, at rehearsals he used to "scan" the movement of string bows with his eyes with keen attention, "to judge the smallest fluctuations in tempo or rhythm and correct them immediately".[36]

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[33] Emily Anderson, *The Letters of Mozart and His Family,* 2nd edition (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966).

[34] Warren Bebbington, *Wagner as Conductor*, unpublished manuscript (Melbourne, 2009).

[35] See Herman Beck, *"Studien uber das Tempoproblem bei Beethoven"* (unpub. diss., University of Erlangen, 1954). Cited in William S. Newman, *Beethoven on Beethoven: playing his piano music his way* (New York: Norton, 1988), 88; also see Peter Stadlen, *Beethoven and the metronome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 332-33.

[36] Newman, *Beethoven on Beethoven*, 88.

In fact, before the invention of the metronome, Beethoven struggled with what he considered misinterpretations of his compositions' tempos.[37] For example, he complained that he had witnessed interpreters performing movements marked *Allegro* both slower and faster than he desired.[38] He frequently used additional Italian musical terms such as *molto, assai, ma non troppo, con spirito,* etc. to further clarify "the character of the piece" that could further lead to a better understanding of his desired speeds, but his frustration remained.

When a reliable and convenient form of a device that could measure tempo was finally invented by Dietrich Nikolaus Winkel around 1812, updated and patented by Johann Nepomuk Maelzel in 1815, and finally presented by Maelzel to Beethoven, the composer became an ardent and enthusiastic proponent of the new invention. The metronome seemed to resolve his longstanding struggle to provide an unmistakable tempo instruction. Such was Beethoven's idealistic belief in the new invention that he even promised to completely abandon the use of general Italian music terms in the future -- a promise, however, he never fulfilled.[39]

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[37] "I consider the invention of the metronome a welcome means of assuring that the performance of my compositions everywhere will be in the tempi that I conceived, which to my regret have so often been misunderstood." Rudolf Kolisch, "Tempo and Character in Beethoven's Music," *The Musical Quarterly* 77, no. 1 (1993), 97.

[38] See the quote in Footnote #39.

[39] Here is Beethoven's famous 1817 letter to Hofrat von Mosel (1772-1844), an Austrian court official, composer and writer on music, in which he expresses his views on the tempo indications and the need to popularize the newly invented metronome: "Noble Sir! I am heartily delighted that you share my own opinion concerning the terms to indicate tempo, which still stem from the barbarous days of music; for, to take only one example, what can be more nonsensical than allegro which simply means merry, - how far away we often are from this notion of this tempo, so that the music itself says the opposite of the indication. As far as these four principal tempi are concerned, which incidentally do not possess anywhere near the truth or importance of the four principal winds, we would gladly do without them. But the words that indicate the character of the piece are a different matter. These we cannot abandon, since the tempo is really more the body of a piece, while these terms refer to its very spirit. As far as I am concerned, I have long been thinking of abandoning these nonsensical terms allegro, andante, adagio, presto, and Maelzel's metronome gives us the best opportunity to do so. I give you my word here and now that I will never use them again in any of my new compositions. Another question is whether by doing so we will further the much needed proliferation of the metronome - I hardly think so. But I have little doubt that we will be decried as tyrants and yet, if

Beethoven put exceptional care into tempo indications -- by means of the general Italian categories, additional Italian modifiers, and, later, the metronome. However, his belief in the possibility of specifying absolute tempo values and his conviction that the metronome would insure tempo "accuracy" in performance was turned out to be overly idealistic.

Beethoven specified metronome marks for the *Eroica* and the rest of his first eight symphonies in 1817,[40] thirteen years after *Eroica*'s composition. By that time, he was already completely deaf but *Eroica* had already seen multiple performances under his direction, including when Beethoven could only partially hear. Therefore, for this symphony, he still could have some memory of the practical challenges associated with the physical realization of the symphony from the time of earlier rehearsals and performances, although the accuracy of this memory is unknowable.

Among many modern conductors, there is a belief that Beethoven's metronome markings need not be followed very closely as they do not necessarily best represent the character of the music, and are often too fast to be effective. Instead, many eminent conductors choose tempi that fall

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the cause itself were really served in the process, it would be better at any rate than to be accused of feudalism. That is why I believe it would be best, especially for our countries, in which music has become a national necessity, and every village schoolmaster must be urged to use the metronome, for Maelzel to try to sell a certain number of metronomes by subscription at higher prices, and as soon as his costs have been covered by that number he will be in a position to provide the remaining metronomes for the musical needs of the nation so cheaply that we may surely expect their most widespread use and distribution. It goes without saying that a few people must lead the way, to stimulate others to follow; as far as I am concerned, you can surely count on me, and I await with pleasure the task which you will assign me in this regard. I am, noble Sir, with great respect, Your most devoted Ludwig van Beethoven." Kolisch, "Tempo and Character," 95-96.

[40] Sandra P. Rosenblum, "Two sets of unexplored metronome marks for Beethoven's piano sonatas," *Early Music XVI,* no. 1 (1988), 70.

into the mainstream of the "received" tradition, rather than being guided by Beethoven's own markings.

In the following pages, I will address some of the most widespread beliefs and assumptions about this topic to help conductors and performers alike arrive at more informed decisions about *Eroica*'s tempi. The following are among the most debated tempo-related questions posed in scholarly literature, interviews, public talks, and among musicians:

What are *Eroica*'s most controversial metronome indications?
Why are some of Beethoven's metronome indications in the *Eroica* so fast?
Were early metronomes reliable devices and might Beethoven's particular device have been functioning incorrectly?
Were some of the most questionable tempos in the *Eroica* caused by Beethoven's inability to hear the physical realization of his music?
Can an odd-seeming metronome marking be caused by a copying error in the score?
Do metronome marks apply only to first bars of a movement?
Do Beethoven's fast metronome indications actually mean what we think they mean?
Is it technically impossible to play *Eroica*'s finale in Beethoven's tempo?
Have tempo choices in the *Eroica* slowed over time? If so, what caused this?
Why traditional and Historically Informed Performance (HIP) conductors, even those who claim fidelity to Beethoven's tempo markings and performance authenticity, do not follow Beethoven's tempos?
What objective and subjective factors can affect tempo choice and to what degree?

Why did some 19th-century composers choose not to provide metronome markings for their compositions and how might evidence of a composer's performances of their own music influence a conductor's tempo choices?

After addressing these questions, I will provide a short summary of guiding principles that should help inform stylistically appropriate tempo choices. I will then discuss each tempo and metronome indication in the score and address issues of practical application.

What are Eroica's most controversial metronome indications?

In the *Eroica*, Beethoven notates six tempo indications in the form of traditional Italian terms, each followed by a metronome mark, as follows:

I. *Allegro con brio*, Dotted half note=60 beats per minute (BPM)

II. *Adagio assai*, Eighth=80

III. *Allegro vivace*, Dotted Half=116; then *Alla breve*, Whole note=116 in mm. 381-84.

IV. *Allegro molto*, Half=76 (beginning)

Poco Andante, Eighth=108 (m. 349)

Presto, Quarter=116 (initially, erroneously, Eighth=116).[41]

Based on recorded performances and written and verbal testimonies of prominent conductors such as Felix Weingartner, Erich Leinsdorf and Roger Norrington, the most controversial

[41] Please see more detailed explanations on pp. 28-29 and 66 as well as in Footnotes #61, #62, and #111.

metronome marks in the *Eroica* are *Allegro con brio* in the first movement, the one in the second movement, and the three in the *Finale*. In addition, the initially published note value attached to the last metronome indication in the symphony, *Presto* Eighth=116 is believed to be a mistake. The metronome indications mentioned above all seem extremely fast. Until approximately the middle of the 20th century, most of the *Eroica* recordings did not align or even closely approach these numbers. With the advent of the Historically Informed Performance movement, Beethoven's metronome speeds were reevaluated, both in theory and in practice.

The vast majority of recordings of the *Eroica*'s first movement are slower than the metronome mark, varying within the limits of 50-55 BPM. Among the HIP-influenced recordings, conductors Sir Roger Norrington, John Eliot Gardiner and David Zinman each begin the *Allegro con brio* in a tempo close to Dotted Half=60.[42] Shortly thereafter, though, they all adopt a tempo 2-3 BPM slower than Beethoven's.[43]

The recorded performance tradition of the *Marcia funèbre* suggests an even more dramatic tempo divergence from Beethoven's metronome marking than the first movement. Rather than Beethoven's prescribed 80 per eighth note, speeds vary from an extremely slow 50-54 (Hans

[42] In Norrington's more recent 2018 concert performance on modern instruments (Sudwestrundfunk Symphonieorchester), his opening tempo of the first movement slowed to 56 BPM.

[43] See Table #1 on p. 36-38 for the links to recordings and the main metronome speeds of the performances.

Pfitzner's early 1929 recording with Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra)[44] to about Eighth=76-80 (Norrington).[45]

Finally, the *Finale*'s first two tempos -- *Allegro molto* and *Poco Andante* – are almost never performed as quickly as the metronome speeds specified by Beethoven. Only the opening 11 measures, considered a "bravura" introduction, are performed close to the prescribed *Allegro molto*, Half=76. The tempo then usually drops to 60-70. (Frans Brüggen's HIP period instrument recording with the Orchestra of the 18th Century takes this section even more slowly at 52-56.)

The *Poco Andante* (Eighth=108) section is usually interpreted as being close to a walking tempo but in four beats per measure, although Beethoven's metronome speed, in spite of being notated in eighths (Eighth=108), probably suggests a musical movement "in two" (each quarter being equal to 54 BPM).[46] Nevertheless, the vast majority of the recordings take the slower tempo of Eighth=76-90.[47]

Why are some of Beethoven's metronome indications in the Eroica so fast?

Many accounts of Beethoven's own playing at the keyboard testify to his love of playing at the fastest speed possible while retaining the essential details of musical texture and articulation.

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[44] Hans Pfitzner, "Hans Pfitzner / BPO - Beethoven : Symphony No.3 "*Eroica*" - 2nd Mvt (1929)," April 21, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lfAHGD2CXAo.

[45] Roger Norrington, "Beethoven - Symphony No. 3 in E flat major (*Eroica*)," April 17, 2015, https://youtu.be/tGqRczMf2Yc?t=919.

[46] More on this in Chapter 2-1 on p. 63-64.

[47] David Zinman most closely adheres to Beethoven's metronome indication: https://youtu.be/U91UyiSmQ8E?t=369.

Like Mozart, Beethoven was a rare keyboard prodigy. Given his choleric and explosive personality, his fast tempi seem to appear as the natural reflection of his character. Carl Czerny (1791-1857), a prominent composer, pianist, and for many years Beethoven's piano student, stated,[48] "no one matched him [Beethoven] in the speed of his scales, double trills, leaps, etc."[49] The Beethoven scholar Clive Brown states that "the metronome marks of Schubert, Rossini, Spontini, Spohr, Mendelssohn, and others confirm that Beethoven's liking for extremely rapid tempos in certain types of movement was shared by other prominent composers at that time."[50] Beethoven's fast tempi, then, seem not to be intentional, and reflect his aspirations for the fast-paced character of the fast movements of his music.

Were early metronomes reliable devices and might Beethoven's particular device have been functioning incorrectly?

These are credible questions that cannot be definitively answered. On the one hand, after 1815, such prominent musicians as Beethoven and Salieri endorsed and used the metronome. There was also a growing number of amateur players who acquired the device, following the example of influential musicians.[51] If the problem of having poorly calibrated and noticeably misaligned

[48] Czerny described his student-teacher relationship with Beethoven as follows: "The author of this manual has often been asked to discuss the performance of Beethoven's piano works. In undertaking to do so, he is confident of his qualifications for the task, inasmuch as in his early youth (from 1801 on) he was tutored in piano playing by Beethoven; he was extremely partial to Beethoven's piano music, studying all such works immediately they appeared, some of them under the master's own supervision; and later, too, he had the pleasure of Beethoven's friendly and instructive company, until the last days of the master's life." In You-Whai Tsao*, "Beethoven's Tempo in His Thirty-Two Piano Sonatas"* (DMA diss., The Claremont Graduate University, 1996), 11.

[49] Carl Czerny, *On the Proper Performance of All Beethoven's Works for the Piano*, ed. Paul Badura-Skoda (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1970), 15.

[50] Clive Brown, "Historical Performance, Metronome Marks and Tempo in Beethoven's Symphonies," in *Early Music 19*, no. 2 (1991), 258.

[51] See Beverly Jerold, *Music Performance Issues*: *1600-1900*, (Hillsdale: Pendragon, 2016) 172-74.

metronomes were widespread, we would presumably have multiple reports about it. Though some accounts of malfunctioning metronomes exist, they are rather rare and appear to be exceptional.[52] In any case, even if we cannot be completely confident about whether Beethoven's device was fully accurate, the degree of the divergence can hardly be more than 1-2 BPM slower or faster before being noticed by a user with a good sense of metronome speeds.

Might Beethoven's particular device have been mechanically damaged? The fact that Beethoven's metronome is preserved but missing the pendulum added to the probability of the theory. However, the study of Lawrence Talbot,[53] professor emeritus of mechanical engineering at the University of California in Berkeley, makes us believe that this scenario is also highly improbable to explain Beethoven's questionable tempo markings. Talbot's mathematical analysis of the possibility that Beethoven's metronome was producing incorrect speeds due to a mechanical friction of the pendulum was inspired by the outcomes of Peter Stadlen's 1967 research[54] into the issue of concordance between Beethoven's metronome markings and performance tempos evidenced in available recordings. The result of Stadlen's findings is well summarized in the following quote by Clive Brown,

> More than half of Beethoven's metronome marks are, of course, largely uncontentious. … Stadlen calculated on the basis of a substantial sample of recordings that out of 136 metronome marks there were 70 which were vindicated by modern performances: 40 of them where both faster and slower performances

[52] As late as 1886, Camille Saint-Saens had to request that the Academy of Sciences in Paris establish standards: "This instrument is employed universally. Unfortunately, it can be useful only under the condition that it is an instrument of precision, which is scarcely ever the case. The musical world is filled with metronomes that are poorly constructed and poorly regulated [for accuracy], which mislead musicians instead of guiding them."
In 1903, Frederic Hellouin declares: "Nearly all the ordinary metronomes are unsound. Also, certain composers, with the best of intentions and a very meticulous bent, often provide inaccurate tempos for their works."
Jerold, *Music Performance Issues,* 171.

[53] Lawrence Talbot, "A note on Beethoven's metronome," *Journal of Sound and Vibration*, Vol. 17, issue 3, (1971).

[54] Peter Stadlen, "Beethoven and the metronome," *II. Soundings*, no. 9 (1982), 38-73.

> could be found, 28 where only the fastest performances and two where only the slowest equaled Beethoven's metronome mark. In order to accept that the remaining 66 markings seriously misrepresent Beethoven's intentions, it is necessary to postulate a mysterious intermittent fault in the composer's metronome, periodic lapses in his tempo sense, bouts of recurrent mechanical incompetence or other such incredible conditions, all totally unsupported by hard evidence.[55]

The Talbot's analysis concluded that while the friction could hypothetically produce up to a 10% reduction in the frequency before the irregularity became noticeable, it is "insufficient to explain all of the metronome marks in question".[56] In other words, Talbot's findings suggest that the various tempo differences described in Stadlen's research are wider than can be satisfactorily explained by a hypothetically maximum 10% speed increase due to a malfunctioning metronome. In fact, it is hard to imagine how even a 5% frequency deviation could go unnoticed by Beethoven and/or his students, colleagues, and friends (including Maelzel himself).

Were some of the most questionable tempos in the Eroica caused by Beethoven's inability to hear the physical realization of his music?

Beethoven was completely deaf when he set metronome markings for the *Eroica*. Is it possible that his deafness caused him to lose a practical sense of tempos and of musicians' physical and technical abilities to realize them? Perhaps he notated metronome markings that are faster than he would have intended his music to sound if he had been able to hear normally. Some conductors justify their choice of slower (and sometimes significantly slower) tempi by the belief

[55] Clive Brown, "Historical Performance, Metronome Marks and Tempo in Beethoven's Symphonies." *Early Music* 19, no.2 (1991), 249.

that a slower tempo delivers more meaning and character, and that the composer might, in fact, have preferred to hear it more slowly if he had all of his aural faculties.

Of course, even though tempo and character are related, they are not the same thing. *Con brio* can be achieved in a variety of tempi; a slow yet intense tempo can feel fiery, and even quicker than an inert but speedier tempo. But would Beethoven approve a performance of *Eroica*'s *Finale* played not *Allegro molto* (Dotted Half =76 or close to that) but more like *Allegro* (Dotted Half=60)? Why did he write "molto?" The responsible performer needs to come to terms with the Italian terminology, too.

"In the last days of May or possibly the first week of June 1804",[57] during the period of the first *Eroica* rehearsals, Beethoven's hearing was only partially affected. In the Heiligenshtadt Testament (6 October 1802), he mourned that he could not hear a soft sound far away while his companion (most likely his assistant and student Ferdinand Ries) could clearly hear it.[58] But Beethoven could hear Ries and communicate verbally with him. Since we know that the complete deafness occurred some 14 years later – around the time he specified metronome markings for the *Eroica* -- we can assume that at least for a few years after his above-mentioned

[57] Tomislav Volek and Jaroslav Macek, "Beethoven's Rehearsals at the Lobkowitz's," *The Musical Times* 127, no. 1716 (1986), 79.

[58] "O how harshly was I repulsed by the doubly sad experience of my bad hearing, and yet it was impossible for me to say to men speak louder, shout, for I am deaf… but what a humiliation when one stood beside me and heard a flute in the distance and I heard nothing, or someone heard the shepherd singing and again I heard nothing, such incidents brought me to the verge of despair."
"If at times I tried to forget all this, oh how harshly was I flung back by the doubly sad experience of my bad hearing. Yet it was impossible for me to say to people, "Speak louder, shout, for I am deaf. … But what a humiliation for me when someone standing next to me heard a flute in the distance and I heard nothing, or someone standing next to me heard a shepherd singing and again I heard nothing. Such incidents drove me almost to despair…"Alexander Wheelock Thayer, *The Life of Ludwig Van Beethoven* vol. I, The Project Gutenberg, 2004, 353. http://www.gutenberg.org/files/43591/43591-h/43591-h.htm#Page_348

conversation with Ries he could have had at least limited experience of hearing his symphony in physical sound, both in private rehearsals and performances at his patron Prince Lobkovitz's palace, and in public performances. Although it is certainly possible that in 1817, when he specified metronome markings for the *Eroica*, his ability to remember the tempo of earlier performances would be impaired, it is hard to imagine that the metronome indications he then specified could be more than 3-4 BPM slower or faster from what he actually heard in earlier rehearsals and performances that he directed.

In evaluating the accuracy of Beethoven's metronome marks, one should also bear in mind that the actual device the composer used had an "arm" or pendulum that showed the tempo at the same time as a sound-click denoting it, very much like many mechanical metronomes still in use today. Therefore, when the deaf Beethoven wrote down his metronome markings in 1817, he still could perceive the tempo visually, even without hearing the click.

Another point to consider here is that the metronome markings for the *Eroica*'s *Scherzo* movement are not similarly questioned. How could Beethoven fail (or be too excited) to provide "appropriate" metronome markings for the first, second, and final movement but, at the same time, could successfully specify a generally unquestioned speed for the third movement! Brown discussed this inconsistency in his above-cited remark about Peter Stadlen's initial research (see p. 24-25). As the quote states, it is at least strange that around half of Beethoven's metronome marks are supported by the performance practice but the rest are questioned. My conclusion is that both Beethoven's idea of the speeds in his music, and the performance practices of his time, favored faster tempi in general than later performance practice tended to employ.

Another reason for the *Eroica*'s fast tempo indications could be that, in 1817, it is possible that Beethoven provided metronome numbers by checking the tempos at a keyboard. An orchestra is a weightier "instrument" than a piano since it takes more physical movement by more people to produce the notes. Also, the action of Beethoven's 1817 pianoforte was lighter than in our current grand pianos. This could also stimulate quicker tempos.

Thus, it is possible that Beethoven's metronome indications could have been somewhat faster than the real-life embodiments of his music in rehearsal and performance.[59] In any case, the faulty metronome argument cannot fully justify a performance of the *Allegro con brio* in the tempo of Dotted Half=47-50 (10-13 points slower than Beethoven's mark). Performances in significantly slower or faster tempos should be regarded with some caution and should be questioned in terms of stylistic appropriateness.

Can an odd-seeming metronome marking be caused by a copying error in the score?

A simple answer to this question is "yes". And it is not an infrequent problem. An initial metronome indication of Eighth=116 for the *Presto* in the *Eroica's Finale* is an example of an incorrect metronome marking mistakenly introduced into the initially published list of

[59] "It may of course be reasonable to suggest that, either because Beethoven set his metronome marks at the piano or in his head, some of the fastest markings are rather more rapid than he might have wanted or achieved in performance. But unless further distorting factors came into play, these would probably be only a degree or two faster than the tempo which he would have sought in practice. It is not incompatible with what is known of Beethoven's temperament that in certain types of movement he should have aimed for the fastest tempo at which a piece could be played without loss of essential detail; nor is it impossible that in some instances he slightly overestimated the capacity of mere mortal musicians." Brown, "Historical Performance, Metronome Marks and Tempo in Beethoven's Symphonies," 249.

metronome markings for the first eight symphonies. In the Critical Commentary to the Bärenreiter edition of the score (the *Eroica*'s most thorough and complete critical edition of the set of score and parts to the date), editor Jonathan Del Mar considers the initially published tempo marking as a mistake.[60] Clive Brown points out more examples in Beethoven's scores "where the right figure is linked to the wrong note value."[61] Stadlen proves further in his research that the initial erroneous tempo was never supported by the prevailing performance practice. [62] From the context, it is clear that Eighth=116 is obviously too slow a tempo to be *Presto*.[63]

Do metronome marks apply only to first bars of a movement?

A famous Beethoven quote about tempo can be found in the holograph of one of his songs, "Nord oder Süd." It states,

> 100 according to Mälzel, but this can apply only to the first measures because feeling also has its tempo; this is, however, not completely expressed in this number (namely, 100).[64]

[60] Please see Footnote #111; also, see more details on p. 66 as well as in Footnotes #61 and #62.

[61] "Right numbers associated with wrong note durations a more frequent error is where the right figure is linked to the wrong note value. In many instances, common sense makes the correct note value immediately obvious. A number of errors of this kind occur in the booklets of metronome marks that Beethoven published in 1817—op.59 no.i/iv, the concluding Presto (Quarter=92 instead of Half=92), op.74/ii (Quarter=72 instead of Eighth=72), op.74/iii, the Piu presto quasi prestissimo (Dotted Half=100 instead of Dotted Whole=100), and the second movement of the Fourth Symphony (Quarter=84 instead of Eighth=84). Another frequently reprinted mistake is the metronome mark "E" [eighth] rather than Quarter=116 for the final Presto of the Third Symphony." Brown, "Historical Performance, Metronome Marks and Tempo in Beethoven's Symphonies," 250.

[62] "…this is such an obvious error that it has never led to confusion, and the present recordings are all close to the intended tempo (though, in a nice illustration of how easily such errors are perpetuated, the London Classical Players's booklet prints the original, incorrect note value). Brown, "Historical Performance, Metronome Marks and Tempo in Beethoven's Symphonies," 250.

[63] Please see more thoughts about this tempo in Chapter 2-1, p. 66.

[64]Beverly Jerold, *Music Performance Issues*: *1600-1900*, 180.

This quotation is sometimes used to argue that a performer may significantly deviate from Beethoven's metronome markings (comma is removed) since his metronome designations apply only to the first few measures of the music. In my opinion, this quote cannot legitimize a radically different tempo choice for an entire piece. The composer has chosen to assign a metronome indication of the desired tempo, even though he himself allowed for further deviations from it.

One important use of this quote is that it can serve as explicit evidence that, for at least in one of his compositions, Beethoven intended an application of the so-called *tempo rubato* technique, a temporary fluctuation of tempo in order to produce the desired *affekt* or a particular expression, rather than permitting a frivolous attitude towards his initial metronome indication. When pondering the above-cited quote, one should always remember Beethoven's wholehearted trust in the effectiveness of the metronome in order to specify his musical intentions. Therefore, his metronome indications were always a result of a deliberate attempt to guide a performer to his idea of the correct tempo that he believed was a vital means of leading to a "correct" character in his music.

The notion of two different categories - the general tempo and its further fluctuations - was supported by Beethoven's contemporaries.[65] The existence of tempo rubato technique

[65] 'Teaching Methods' author Friedrich Guthmann wrote in 1806: "Whoever can and wants to keep time precisely according to the Taktmesser [*one of the metronome predecessors*] throughout a whole piece must at the least be no very sensitive and expressive player. Such control of the expression must also lead to an inevitable stiffness in performance; in most cases, it is even contrary to the spirit of true music. Therefore, the *Taktmesser's* true function should be more to indicate the initial tempo than to require following it strictly throughout the piece during the increasing fire of execution and dense profusion of ideas."

necessarily implies the existence of a general main tempo. And it is this general tempo that the metronome is meant to indicate for at least the first few measures, providing the general tempo idea within a larger context.

Do Beethoven's fast metronome indications actually mean what we think they mean?

There is a rather exotic theory, forwarded mainly by Willem Retze Talsma, that Beethoven's specified metronome speeds for fast tempos only should be taken at half the value of the specified metronome indication. According to Talsma, the indicated note value before a metronome mark belongs to a rhythmic unit only. In other words, in the *Eroica*'s *Finale - Allegro molto* Dotted Half=76 BPM, the actual tempo should be a Quarter=76 . The indication *Dotted half* supposedly denotes a rhythmic unit of the movement only. Without going into too many details here, there are multiple flaws and inconsistencies in this theory. It is not corroborated even in the above example, as it is hard to imagine how a Quarter=76 tempo may stand for the *Allegro molto* indication! William S. Newman has provided a list of seven reasons why this theory is inaccurate.[66]

Ignaz Moscheles, Beethoven's student who was entrusted to arrange a piano reduction of his opera *Fidelio*, stated in 1841: "The musical world knows that marking the time by a metronome is but a slight guide for performers and conductors. Its object is to show the general time of a movement, particularly at its commencement; but it is not to be followed strictly throughout; for no piece, except a march or a dance, would have any real life and expression, or light and shade, if the solo performer, or the orchestra under its conductor, were strictly to adhere to one and the same *tempo*, without regard to the many marks which command its variations." This quote is initially cited in Anton Schindler's "The life of Beethoven". Beverly Jerold, *Music Performance Issues*: *1600-1900*, 167.

[66] "… 1) it defies Nottebohm's reprinted clarifications as well as other practical evidence like that cited below from Quantz a half-century earlier, and from Sir George Smart during Beethoven's lifetime; 2) it fails to justify adequately its application only to fast tempos; 3) it largely disregards the similar complains of excessive speeds in the *Andante* and slower movements; 4) it overstates both the technical impracticality and the musical incomprehensibility of most of Beethoven's markings in the movements with fast inscriptions; 5) it overlooks Beethoven's own exceptional technical dexterity (as reported in our previous chapter); 6) it generally sidesteps the many markings (with fast inscriptions) in which the value in the marking is the same as, not twice that of, the unit-beat in the time signature

Is it technically impossible to play Eroica's finale in Beethoven's tempo?

There is a notion that some of Beethoven's tempi are unplayable. At least in the case of the *Eroica*'s *Finale*, this statement is simply wrong. I performed the *Eroica* with UCLA Philharmonia in January 2018. Among other goals, I wanted to try to play the *Allegro molto* section of this movement at a tempo close to Beethoven's metronome speed of Half=76. We managed to accomplish this goal, with certain tempo fluctuations within the movement, resulting in a range of 72-78.[67] In this tempo, the movement has a particularly virtuosic and extremely playful character. It was not an easy task for students to accomplish, particularly because we performed the movement with 29 players, one or two players more in number than Beethoven reportedly used when he first heard this symphony in private rehearsals at Prince Lobkowitz's palace in 1804. Nevertheless, I can testify to the fact that this movement can be effectively performed in the tempo specified by Beethoven. And we are not alone at UCLA. Wiener KammerOrchester, a professional orchestra from Vienna under the direction of Mark Laycock, has also performed this section of the Finale at 70-73, a tempo very close to Beethoven's marking.[68] If a student orchestra can effectively perform the *allegro con brio* in *Eroica*'s *Finale* in Beethoven's stated tempo, I don't see why other orchestras cannot.

(e.g., a quarter note at 120 in 2/4, in the finale of the String Quartet Op. 18/1; and 7) it rests not on any unequivocal, contemporary documentation, only on conjectural statements. Newman, *Beethoven on Beethoven*, 85-86.

[67] UCLA Philharmonia, Movement IV: https://youtu.be/158rxRxu8hk

[68] Marlamuse, "Beethoven Sym.3 "*Eroica*" IV. Finale Part 1. Wiener KammerOrchester," November 27, 2008, accessed August 16, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CPdREfatz9c.

Have tempo choices in the Eroica slowed over time? If so, what caused this?

In the 19th century, as it is in our time, there were two main performance traditions in Western classical music: one that encouraged spirited tempi with limited tempo fluctuation, and the other that advocated for slower renderings, more rhetorical "profundity" and more application of *tempo rubato*.

As we have discussed, based on some of Beethoven's own reported tempi and some accounts of his contemporaries, tempos for both fast and slow movements of his music appear to have been played at a livelier pace than we customarily hear in the modern era.

One of the notable proponents of fast-paced and stricter interpretation was Felix Mendelssohn, who had great influence on the music of his time as both conductor and composer. It is, questionable, though, how strict Mendelssohn's own performances were and what motivated that strictness. Two later accounts by Ignaz von Mosel (1843)[69] and Otto Jahn (1854)[70] (the latter

[69] "Whoever knows how much a piece's effect depends on observing the composer's tempo and how older works, namely Mozart's operas, are now dashed over so that all clarity vanishes and all enjoyment of the countless beautiful details is lost…" Ignaz von Mosel, "Die Tonkunst in Wien," Allgemeine Wiener Musik-Zeitung 3 (Nov. 4, 1843): 557. In Beverly Jerold, *Music Performance Issues*: *1600-1900*, 170.

[70] "A fundamental flaw in all the performances of the orchestra is the exaggerated speed of most of the tempi which, following Mendelssohn's unfortunate example, has become more and more prevalent here. This is all the more deplorable since the orchestra cannot keep up the pace, so that the tempo finally lags perceptibly. It is obvious that such a fast tempi, which no one would confuse with fire and passion, bespeaks a lack of clear feeling, and completely obliterates the character and meaning of the composition, just as it is obvious that the tone of the sound, suffering from this speed, can never come into their own. If this rapidity indicated at least a virtuosity on the part of the orchestra, one would marvel at it, but here it is quite another matter. The orchestra is not capable of playing difficult works at this speed; they make only half a pretense, neglecting all detail, and this style of slipping and sliding, of doing nothing quite correctly, takes over. There is never any more a question of fine nuances and shadings, and for these the gross, vulgar shock-effects are no substitute. This haste and hurry spreads to the whole concept and performance of music, and we can no longer find loving care and perceptive treatment, either in the strict observance of rhythmic divisions or in the distribution between light and shade in polyphonic forms."
Otto Jahn, "Die Leipziger Abonnementconcerte…," *Die Grenzboten* 13/1, no. 19 (Leipzig, 1854): quoted by Schindler, *Beethoven as I Knew Him*, 439. In Beverly Jerold, *Music Performance Issues*: *1600-1900*, 170-71.

attended “The Leipzig Concert Series” in which Beethoven’s music was performed) support the statement.

Starting in the 1840s, Wagner exerted his tremendous influence by introducing the idea of “never too slow” interpretations of slow tempos.[71] Both slow-paced music and fast tempi slowed down within his search for the sublime and the profound. His remarkable musical impact coupled with his epistolary, musicological, philosophical, and conducting activities overshadowed what came before musically. Many followed his example of slower, grander interpretations of his own music and that of his predecessors and contemporaries, including Beethoven. He opposed the earlier school of fast-paced interpretations and regarded Mendelssohn’s quick tempi with a certain degree of reproach and condescension.[72]

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[71] “The Adagio stands to the Allegro as the sustained tone stands to the RHYTHMICAL MOVEMENT (figurierte Bewegung). The sustained tone regulates the Tempo Adagio: here the rhythm is as it were dissolved in pure tone, the tone per se suffices for the musical expression. In a certain delicate sense it may be said of the pure Adagio that it cannot be taken too slow. A rapt confidence in the sufficiency of pure musical speech should reign here; the languor of feeling grows to ecstasy; that which in the Allegro was expressed by changes of figuration, is now conveyed by means of variously inflected tone. Thus, the least change of harmony may call forth a sense of surprise; and again, the most remote harmonic progressions prove acceptable to our expectant feelings.
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.”Wagner*, Über das Dirigieren,* Ebook.

[72] “I remembered it well, when I came to lead the orchestra of the Philharmonic Society in London, 1855. Mendelssohn had conducted the concerts during several seasons, and the tradition of his readings was carefully preserved. It appears likely that the habits and peculiarities of the Philharmonic Society suggested to Mendelssohn his favourite style of performance (Vortragsweise)— certainly it was admirably adapted to meet their wants. An unusual amount of instrumental music is consumed at these concerts; but, as a rule, each piece is rehearsed once only. Thus in many instances, I could not avoid letting the orchestra follow its traditions, and so I became acquainted with a style of performance which called up a lively recollection of Mendelssohn's remarks.
The music gushed forth like water from a fountain; there was no arresting it, and every Allegro ended as an undeniable Presto. It was troublesome and difficult to interfere; for when correct tempi and proper modifications of these were taken the defects of style which the flood had carried along or concealed became painfully apparent. The orchestra generally played mezzoforte; no real forte, no real piano was attained. Of course, in important cases I took care to enforce the reading I thought the true one, and to insist upon the right tempo. The excellent musicians did not object to this; on the contrary, they showed themselves sincerely glad of it; the public also approved, but the critics were annoyed and continued so to browbeat the directors of the society that the latter actually requested me to permit the second movement of Mozart's Symphony in E flat to be played in the flabby and colourless way (ruschlich herunter spielen) they had been accustomed to—and which, they said, even Mendelssohn himself had sanctioned.” Wagner*, Über das Dirigieren,* Ebook.

The prominent German conductor, virtuoso pianist, and teacher Hans von Bülow carried on this tradition. Through the early and mid-20th century conductors Felix Weingartner, Wilhelm Furtwangler, Otto Klemperer, Bruno Walter (and many after them) and via Beethoven's monumentalized image in The Third Reich, the general trend of slower performance tradition reached the recorded era and firmly impressed itself upon the modern era. Of course, the interpretative palette of the twentieth century is very diverse and cannot fit the somewhat schematic depiction of the historical process outlined here. Nevertheless, the fact is that Beethoven's notated tempi, and those of many of his contemporaries, are in many cases faster than the prevailing mainstream performance tradition of the twentieth century. The appearance of the HIP movement in the later 20th century -- whose main idea was and still is to try to revive lost performance traditions (including Beethoven's faster tempi) – attempts to rediscover the historical tempos of Beethoven's own time.

Why traditional and HIP conductors, even those who claim fidelity to Beethoven's tempo markings and performance authenticity, do not follow Beethoven's tempos?

The following is an analysis of tempo choices in the *Eroica* based on recordings of some of the most prominent HIP conductors of the 20th and 21st centuries: Rene Leibovitz and The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (1961); Christopher Hogwood and The Academy of Ancient Music (1986); Roy Goodman and the Hanover Band (1987); Roger Norrington and the London Classical Players (1989) and the SWR Symphonieorchester (2005 and 2018 respectively); Frans Brüggen and the Orchestra of the 18th Century (1990 and 2011); Nicolaus Harnoncourt and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe (1991); John Eliot Gardiner and the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique (1995); and David Zinman's recording with the Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich (1998).

The choice of these conductors and orchestras was inspired by two separate reviews by Clive Brown[73] and Channan Willner.[74]

Table No. 1

Conductor	**1st *Allegro con brio* Dotted Half=60 BPM**	**2nd *Adagio assai* Eighth=80 BPM**	**3rd *Allegro vivace* Dotted Half=116**	**4th *Allegro molto* Half=76**	**Poco Andante Eighth=108**	**Presto Quarter=116**	**Youtube Links**
Rene Leibowitz (The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra) 1961	54-58	64-66	122	65-67	90-92	118	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Gb4bqw_jUQ https://youtu.be/35Jqluz5J4I?t=109 https://youtu.be/cila9s7yQBE?t=312 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqBfB68lszo
Christopher Hogwood The Academy of Ancient Music (1986)	49-50	62-68	106-110	62-64	80-84	100	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-UOMN02YwB0 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m5kiCvFdPHc https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rTbX3Umt1pM https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mnrf1sveC-A
Roy Goodman (Hanover Band) 1988	51-53	66-68	124-128	70	94-98	114-15	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vgKtoPpM1yM https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKM7vlFwcA0 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YCWjH9cNr1k https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vpmm1KXYHnA
Roger Norrington (London Classical Players) 1989	56-58	76-80	116-118	70-72	96-100	104	https://youtu.be/tGqRczMf2Yc https://youtu.be/tGqRczMf2Yc?t=920 https://youtu.be/tGqRczMf2Yc?t=1678 https://youtu.be/tGqRczMf2Yc?t=2022

[73] Brown, "Historical Performance, Metronome Marks, and Tempo in Beethoven's Symphonies," 247-58.

[74] Channan Willner, "Beethoven Symphonies on Period Instruments: A New Tradition?" *The Musical Times* 131, no. 1764 (1990), 88-91.

SWR Symphonieorchester 2005	54-56	76-82	110-106	70-74	84-92	94-96	https://youtu.be/_TZAIfHvUWk?t=5 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NeGy4KCPBkU https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0SGffYpBcrE https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bj2o8xmrRio
SWR Symphonieorchester 2018	56	80-84	114-17	66-78	92-100	92-94	https://youtu.be/JB-qq39e47I?t=3 https://youtu.be/JB-qq39e47I?t=1009 https://youtu.be/JB-qq39e47I?t=1820 https://youtu.be/JB-qq39e47I?t=2184
Frans Bruggen (Orchestra of the 18th Century) 1990	49-50	76-80	128-132	63-65	80-86	118	https://youtu.be/JQT8Fi09Ng4?t=70 https://youtu.be/JQT8Fi09Ng4?t=1162 https://youtu.be/JQT8Fi09Ng4?t=1950 https://youtu.be/JQT8Fi09Ng4?t=2276
2011	47-50	70-72	108-112	52-56	60-74	116	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvZNY_RZb7E https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HkpIpKK-7rQ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XuenAiZz67M https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VJgUCvsYgP8
Nicolaus Harnoncourt (Chamber Orchestra of Europe) 1991	57-60	68-72	116-118	74-63	70-74	108	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G7axvM2ArQE https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lCJ2OZalu9E https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kXg9povW2is https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1h6xKCBNcRs
John Eliot Gardiner (Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique) 1994	58-59	70-72	114-120	63-66	90-94	109	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9Kql7IoKFg https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DfGSaNB2j1M https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFpzAfB5UgE https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_ifbsyPAMk
David Zinman (Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich) 1998	58-60	74-75	124-126	64-66	104-110	118	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ccJ0PC8Xb3Q https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5CU9eIQo9rM https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2gPU-bJnEqE

							https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U91UyiSmQ8E

The table clearly shows that, despite reading more or less the same sources and knowing Beethoven's clear tempo indications, the tempo palette in HIP performances has no less diversity than it has in the non-HIP performances, with one important stipulation - that the general tempo ranges are still generally a bit faster and closer to Beethoven's marks than in the majority of non-HIP performances. The only recording that consistently most closely adheres to Beethoven's tempo markings is Norrington's. However, even his interpretations do not always reach the metronome indications specified by the composer, particularly in the final movement. In general, the slowest-paced recording is by Hogwood. Very peculiar is the opening tempo choice in the *Finale* by Brüggen in 2011. It is 11-13 points below the composer's indication, totally ignoring his tempo specification *Allegro molto*.

In the *Marcia Funèbre*, Norrington and Brüggen approach Beethoven markings. Hogwood is slower in this movement.

Here is a quote from Norrington's article on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of his 1989 recording of the complete set of Beethoven's symphonies,

> The speed of the music was a particular problem. Beethoven had carefully given a metronome mark to every movement and every change of tempo in his symphonies. But almost every conductor ignored these speeds and performed the music much more slowly and "grandly". One musicologist constructed a table to show how far Beethoven's metronome must have been faulty. But the idea that Beethoven did not know how his music should go, or would use a faulty metronome, worried me greatly. When I looked at metronomes of the period, they were perfectly accurate -

> a metronome is, after all, only a variable clock; there is nothing much that can go wrong with it. So, if the metronome was right, those conductors were wrong.[75]

We can argue whether metronomes of the period were "perfectly accurate" and send Mr. Norrington to the accounts by Saint-Saëns and Hallouin,[76] but Norrington's conclusion is certainly reasonable.

To answer the above questions more broadly: In performing music publicly, serious musicians are motivated to share their interpretations and impact the audience, so that the potentialities of a piece are revealed most effectively. Performance choices are generally guided by these intentions.

Each musician has either a conscious or subconscious hierarchy of principles that influences his/her performance choices. Since tempo is very important in this hierarchy and is a key musical component that affects other performance parameters, choice of tempo is one of a performer's main decisions. When choosing a tempo, a musician is largely influenced by a composer's written indications, by metronome markings when the piece has them, and, of course, by all of the surrounding musical context.

Like other performance parameters, tempo choice is also influenced by the musician's own judgment of the speed and pacing that would best reveal the potentialities of the music.

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[75] Roger Norrington, "Roger Norrington on the Reception of Beethoven's Work," *The Guardian,* (2009).

[76] See Footnote #52.

Sometimes, a composer's own tempo indications and a performer's understanding of the most expressive tempo are in conflict.

It appears that an individual conductor's subjective understanding of the most effective tempo tends to takes precedence over their "responsibility" to adhere to the composer's metronome indications. The vast majority of *Eroica*'s tempo choices by important HIP conductors deviate from Beethoven's indications. Therefore, in the hierarchy of performance choices (whether conscious or subconscious), the choice of having a more meaningful and communicative tempo (as the conductor understands it) appears to have a higher priority than following the composer's metronome designations, allowing a conductor to reveal more of their understanding of the essence of the works.

This subjective inner decision-making process, the conscious or subconscious hierarchy it involves, and the resulting tempo decisions it produces are extremely important factors in understanding how a performer arrives at his/her interpretation.

What objective and subjective performance parameters can affect tempo choice and to what degree?

A few objective parameters that go beyond the musical score should be considered when conceiving an optimal performance tempo.

The size of the hall: if the hall is large, it requires a more voluminous sound to fill it. This may require slightly slower tempos (particularly in fast-paced music) to allow, for example, more

time to apply bow pressure or amount for strings. It also may call for more time to breathe and blow harder in winds, and, generally speaking, to apply more volume in percussion.

The size of the orchestra: in general, the larger the orchestra, the more difficult it is to achieve an extremely fast tempo. A larger orchestra produces more sound that requires slightly more time to be digested acoustically by the audience and be perceived as fast but not rushed.

The hall's reverberation time: the longer the acoustical echo, the slower the tempi needs to be in order to avoid a muddy sound.

Since conductors and performers are human beings and not mechanical or electronic devices, the following human factors should also be considered: blood pressure; the amount of adrenaline in the body; time of the day; food; weather; personal life circumstances; moods. Of course, any performer and conductor strives to minimize the influence of these human factors on tempo choice. However, both historical accounts and performance practice show that it is hard to completely eliminate them.[77] Some conductors even use metronome devices (usually before coming on stage) to remind them of the desired performance speed and to minimize the effect of these human factors.

[77] Regarding Beethoven's metronome marks in general, Harnoncourt cited the many circumstances that mitigate performance tempos (i.e., hall size, orchestra size, time of day, etc.) and noted that "if you fail to take all these factors into account and simply judge tempo with a metronome, then this is inhuman and unreal." He adds: "Beethoven did mean his tempi as he wrote them down. One just has to modify them all the time." Nikolaus Harnoncourt, "Beethoven's music is language at every moment: A conversation between Nikolaus Harnoncourt and Hartmut Krones," interview by Hartmut Krones in Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony No. 9 in D minor, op. 125, cond., Nikolaus Harnoncourt (The Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Teldec, 9031-75713-2, 1991), 3. Cited in David John De Seguirant, "Tempo markings in Beethoven's symphony no. 9 in D minor, op. 125: A study of selected documents and interpretations" (DMA Diss., The University of Oklahoma, 1994), 107.

Why did some 19th-century composers choose not to provide metronome markings for their compositions and how might evidence of a composer's performances of their own music influence a conductor's tempo choices?

When a performer takes a score and sees an absolute value of a metronome mark, it seems so obvious and simple to follow a composer's will for an ideal tempo. But, as we know, the practical applications of this issue are much more complicated to the extent that many great composers, including Beethoven's contemporaries such as Mendelssohn, and then later Brahms, and many others, refused to provide metronome numbers.

Without exploring why they refused to provide metronome speeds for their compositions, our understanding of the problem will not be complete. Consequently, one could fall into an extremely literal approach to Beethoven's metronome designations.

As we already know, Beethoven performed the same music in a varied way on different occasions. Mendelssohn believed that it is contrary to human nature to perform a composition always at the same speed.[78] Following him, Brahms noted that human emotion can hardly be restrained by a mechanical device.[79] When Berlioz performed *Grande messe des morts,* Camille

[78] "… though in playing he never varied the tempo when once taken, he did not always take a movement at the same pace, but changed it as his mood was at the time." Cited in Sir George Grove, ed., *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London 1879-89), quoted in Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice*, 284.

[79] "Those [markings] which are found in the Requiem are there because good friends talked me into them. For I myself have never believed that my blood and a mechanical instrument go well together… What I know, however, is that I indicate my tempos in the heading, without numbers, modestly but with the greatest care and clarity." Quoted in Styra Avins, *Performing Brahms's Music: Clues from His Letters*, in *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style*, ed. Michael Musgrave and Bernard D. Sherman (The United Kingdom: Cambridge, 2003), 22.

Saint-Saëns reported that he did not follow his tempi.[80] Furthermore, we know that one of the most strict proponents of the objectivity in music (although he softened his views by the end of his life) and an opponent of tainting music with emotion and self, Igor Stravinsky, had somewhat different tempi each time he recorded his own *The Rite of Spring* on three different occasions in 1921, 1940, and 1960. Moreover, we know that in the first part of his life he insisted on following his metronome marks and his recordings very closely. However, later he changed his own opinion stating that time and circumstances affect tempo and "every performance is a different equation of them."[81]

In the same manner, Rachmaninoff's own performance of Piano Concerto #2, for example, is well known for being a very free interpretation of his own tempi and metronome marks. In the footnote, I provide a breakdown of the first movement of his historical 1929 recording of the

[80] "The moderato (Quarter=96) at the beginning of the 'Dies Irae' was more like an allegro and the andante maestoso (quarter=72) following, like a moderato." Camille Saint-Saëns, *Musical Memories*, trans. E.G. Rich (London, 1921), 136-7. Quoted in Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice* (1750- 1900), 287.

[81] "[Transcriptions for mechanical piano] enabled me to determine for the future the relationships of the movements (tempi) and the nuances in accordance with my wishes. These transcriptions enabled me to create a lasting document which should be of service to those executants who would rather know and follow my intentions than stray into irresponsible interpretations of my musical text. (1934)
The essential thing, without which it would be impossible to form any idea of the composition [is] the pace of movements and their relationship to one another. (1934)
A recording is, or should be a performance, and who can suffer exactly the same set of performance limitations more than once — at least with familiar music? (1961)
I could not do any of [the recorded performances] the same way again. But even the poorest are valid readings to guide other performers. (1961)
If the speeds of everything in the world and in ourselves have changed, our tempo feelings cannot remain unaffected. The metronome marks one wrote forty years ago were contemporary forty years ago. Time is not alone in affecting tempo — circumstances do too, and every performance is a different equation of them. I would be surprised if any of my own recent recordings follows the metronome markings. (1961)
I have changed my mind . . . about the advantages of embalming a performance in tape. The disadvantages, which are that one performance represents only one set of circumstances, and that mistakes and misunderstandings are cemented into traditions as quickly and canonically as truths, now seem to me too great a price to pay. (1969, revised 1971)."
For tempo controversies of The Rite of Spring recordings see pp. 66-68 in Erica Buxbaum's article.
Erica Haisler Buxbaum, *Stravinsky, Tempo, and Le Sacre*. vol. 1, no. 1, (1988), 61-70.

concerto with Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra.[82] We also know that the recordings of *Don Quixote* and *Till Eulenspiegel* under Richard Strauss' baton take some tempo freedom beyond the limits of his tempo designations. And this list can be further expanded with names like Debussy, Prokofiev, Ravel, Elgar, and Bartok. Of course, *Eroica* is a composition of the classical era and the degree of tempo freedom stylistically appropriate in this case would probably be less dramatic than, for example, in Rachmaninoff's Romantic-era concerto. However, these examples vividly tell us that there should be a healthy degree of caution when taking metronomic speeds at their face values.

Written metronomic numbers and tempo designations, and their real-life application by their authors show the possibility for a certain leeway that should be mindfully considered by a performer. The degree of tempo freedom that can be reasonably applied can vary, and such parameters as the composition's era, historical accounts, availability of composers' own recordings as well as the notation in the musical score itself (the best source for many answers and insights) should become a conductor's best friends in deciphering the riddles contained in the score and arriving at informed and meaningful interpretive conclusions.

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[82] Rachmaninov, *Piano concerto #2*, Stokowski, Philadelphia Orchestra, (1929), Movement 1
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ns2f90GNzM8
Opening chords, tempo in the score Moderato H=66 BPM – Rachmaninoff plays it at 48-49 BPM;
A tempo, m. 9, H=66 – Rach. 80-82;
Moto precedente H=72 – orchestra plays at 84;
Next Piu vivo H=76 – Rach. 106-109;
Allegro H=96 – Rach. about 96;
Meno mosso H=76 – Rach. Tempo rubato 66-82;
Moderato H=69 – orchestra 69 – Rach. later at 78;
Meno mosso H=63 – Rach. about 80.

Summary

Here is a general summary of findings pertaining to the *Eroica*:

A) All of Beethoven's metronome indications should be seriously and literally considered (excluding the obvious mistakes as in the *Eroica*'s *Finale's Presto*);

B) Beethoven's metronome indications should be considered as guides to the overall character of the piece and serve as starting points, after which the tempo may be modified according to the expressive semantics of music;

C) Beethoven's fast metronome numbers are sometimes so fast that can result in a rushed performance. Therefore, they should be considered more as important guides. In order to be stylistically appropriate, the range of the actual performance speeds should not be so much slower that they fall into a different tempo category (e.g. *Presto* to *Allegro*, *Allegro* to *Andante*, etc.);

D) It is appropriate to slightly adjust tempo speeds according to the size of the hall, its reverberation, the size of the ensemble, and other performance conditions.

Clive Brown sums it up well: "Every sensitive musician is aware that the quest for historically appropriate tempos must be concerned with plausible parameters rather than with precisely delineated or very narrowly defined absolute tempos. . . many psychological and aesthetic factors, as well as the varying physical conditions in which performance takes place, militate against the notion that a piece of music should be rigidly bound to a single immutable tempo.[83]

[83] Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice*, 283.

CHAPTER 2-1

Tempo and Metronome Markings: Issues of Music Notation in the Score

Movement I

Italian tempo designation	*Allegro con brio* (Lively with fire)
Metronome indication	Dotted Half=60 BPM
Recordings in close to Beethoven's tempo	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ccJ0PC8Xb3Q

Dotted Half=60 is one of the quickest metronome indications in the symphony. Weingartner states: "If this time were uniformly observed, the whole movement would acquire a hasty, even trivial character which is quite *contrary to its nature*." Weingartner's wording is of interest as it suggests that Beethoven specified a metronome marking that is "contrary" to the inherent character of the music![84] Instead, Weingartner suggests a tempo of Dotted Half=54 "or thereabouts…"[85] "Thereabouts", here, may refer either to a tempo close to 54 or to the possibility of tempo modifications throughout the movement.

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If Beethoven's tempo is sustained without a change, it creates technical challenges and a sense of rashness in the movement's most technically challenging section of violins in mm. 65-70 (Letter B), 186 (F) and the like. It is not impossible to play these sections in this tempo but it is very

[85] Weingartner: "I have therefore adopted for the initial tempo the metronome mark [of] Dotted Half=54 or thereabouts, by which I do not mean to say that many parts must not be played even more calmly still." Felix Weingartner, *On the Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies and Other Essays* (New York: Dover, 1969), 93.

difficult to sustain enough weight and, at the same time, clarity in the violins that the character of the music requires. If performed according to Beethoven's metronome, there is a danger that the character of this section would depart from furious, energetic heroism toward the cartoonish. Weingartner states that "…violin figures… cannot possibly be clearly brought out [in this tempo]."[86]

Here is a breakdown of some key tempo issues in the first movement:

mm. 1-2: According to Beethoven's notation, the first two opening chords (the first time in the history of symphonic music that a symphony would open with two abrupt and identical chords) should be played in the tempo of the first movement. However, in practice, they are sometimes interpreted as an epigraph to the whole symphony. In this case, they are played in a somewhat slower tempo as if they do not fully belong to the following opening theme, which continues in tempo only in m. 3, in this case.[87]

Letter A (m. 45) and the similar passages: In many recordings, the tempo is held back slightly to provide more time for woodwinds and violins to deliver a more tender theme.

B (m. 65): Some recordings of both the "received" and HIP traditions take this place slower than the opening tempo to allow more time to play sixteenth notes in violins which are the driving force of the violent character of this section. The applied *sostenuto*, in this case, may be particularly important if the opening tempo is close to Beethoven's 60 BPM (see this chapter's opening paragraph).

The second theme, C (m. 83): Please refer to Chapter 3-1 on Tempo Rubato, p. 84.

[86] Weingartner, *On the Performance,* 92.

[87] Listen, for example, to Felix Weingartner, Wiener Philharmoniker, 1936. https://youtu.be/nzjSnSGuUgU?t=8

For the possibilities of tempo deviation in **mm. 144-47, mm. 152-65** and **mm. 166-77** please refer to Chapter 3-1 on Tempo Rubato, p. 85.

F (m. 186): As in letter B. If *sostenuto* is applied, the return happens in m. 206.

G (m. 220): As in A.

For the possibilities of tempo deviation in **m. 236 (Fugato), mm. 284-99** and **m. 374-M (m. 398)** and **m. 374-M (m. 398):** please refer to Chapter 3-1 on Tempo Rubato, pp. 86-87.

N (m. 448): See A (m. 45) above.

O (m. 468): See B (m. 65) above.

P (m. 486): See the second theme, C (m. 83) above.

For the possibilities of tempo deviation in **mm. 547-50, S (mm. 551-54), mm. 555-56, mm. 559-60, mm. 563-76** and **V (m. 647)** please refer to Chapter 3-1 on Tempo Rubato, pp. 87-88.

Movement II – Marcia funèbre (Funeral march)

Italian tempo designation	*Adagio assai* (Very slowly)
Metronome indication	Eighth=80 BPM
Recordings close to Beethoven's tempo	https://youtu.be/JB-qq39e47I?t=1009 https://youtu.be/6hNmLlm3yxA?t=1001

The tempo Eighth=80 with the time signature 2/4 poses the first interpretative dilemma of this movement. The notated speed of 80 BPM usually belongs to a range of an *Andante*, but

Beethoven's Italian designation here states not only *Adagio* (slow) but *Adagio assai* (very slow).[88]

How to explain this discrepancy? A logical answer is that the Eighth=80 could be regarded as Quarter=40, which makes it fit perfectly with Beethoven's Italian designation. Let's see whether we can find confirmation of the movement's slow two-beat nature.

We know that Beethoven specified this movement as a slow <u>march</u> (rather than, for example, a slow aria). Marches are meant to accompany processions and require steady and recognizable beats. Since in this case we have a **very slow** funeral march, we have to look for music and metric units in the score that exhibit the very slow-paced beats that would help identify this music as such. In his research into Beethoven's *adagios* written in 2/4 metre, Kolisch tries to identify a metric unit that would determine whether the music is in two beats (quarters) or in four (eighths).[89]

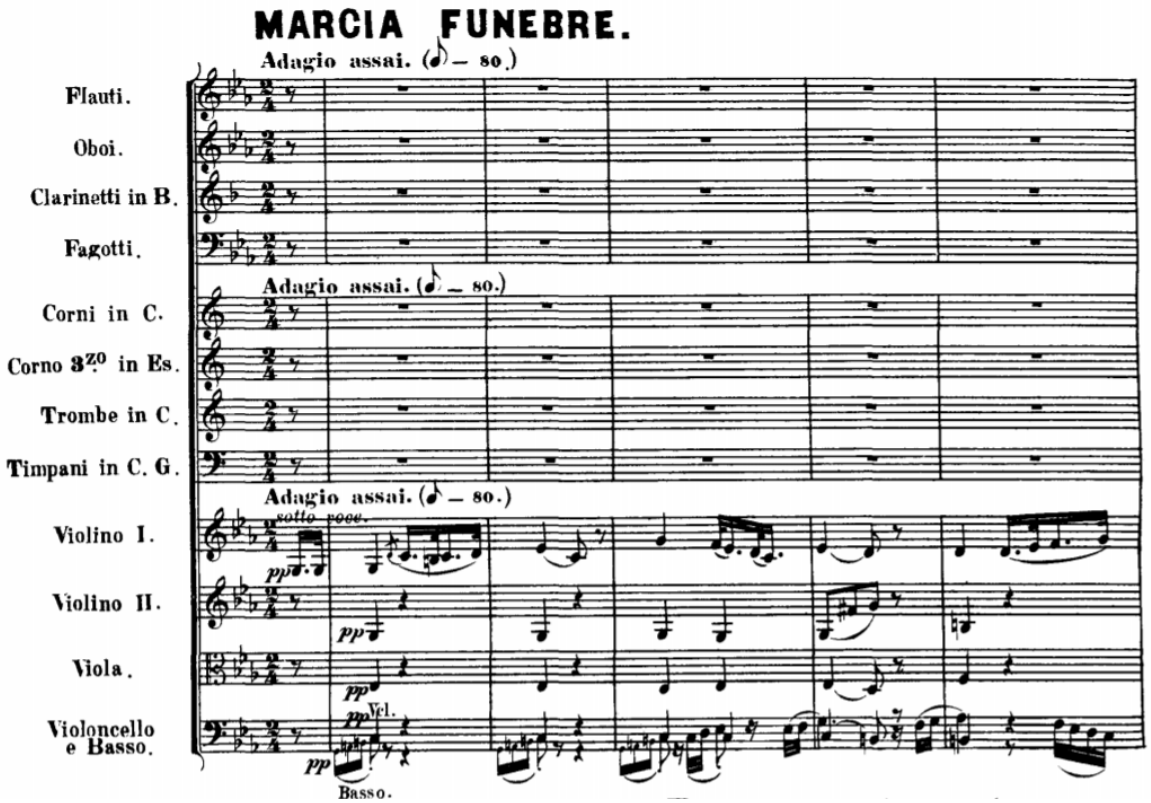
The first measures of the *Marcia funèbre* make it clear that the only way to hear the music as a very slow-paced march would be if we hear the metric units corresponding to quarter notes rather than to eighths (see Example on the next page).

[88] Of course, there are three even slower tempos categories: Largo, Grave and Lento.

[89] "In the Adagio movements notated in 2 metre, the problem consists in finding out whether the indication 'Adagio' applies to the quarter-notes, resulting in a true 4, or to the eighth-notes, which would produce a 4 metre. Beethoven, however, never used an 8 signature. Thus the notation by itself again does not give us sufficient information; we must seek it in the music." Kolisch, "Tempo and Character," 105.

Only in the tempo of Quarter=40 BPM or slightly less can we perceive this slow-paced walking tempo at which the quarter notes in the lower strings during the first four measures constitute the slow, march-like steps of a funeral procession (please see the Example below). On the contrary, if we try to apply a tempo of approximately Eighth=40 BPM, we end up in such a slow tempo that it can hardly be justified, especially given the overall length of the movement. We should also consider an important detail - Beethoven never used 4/8 time signature in his slow-paced music.[90]

Example

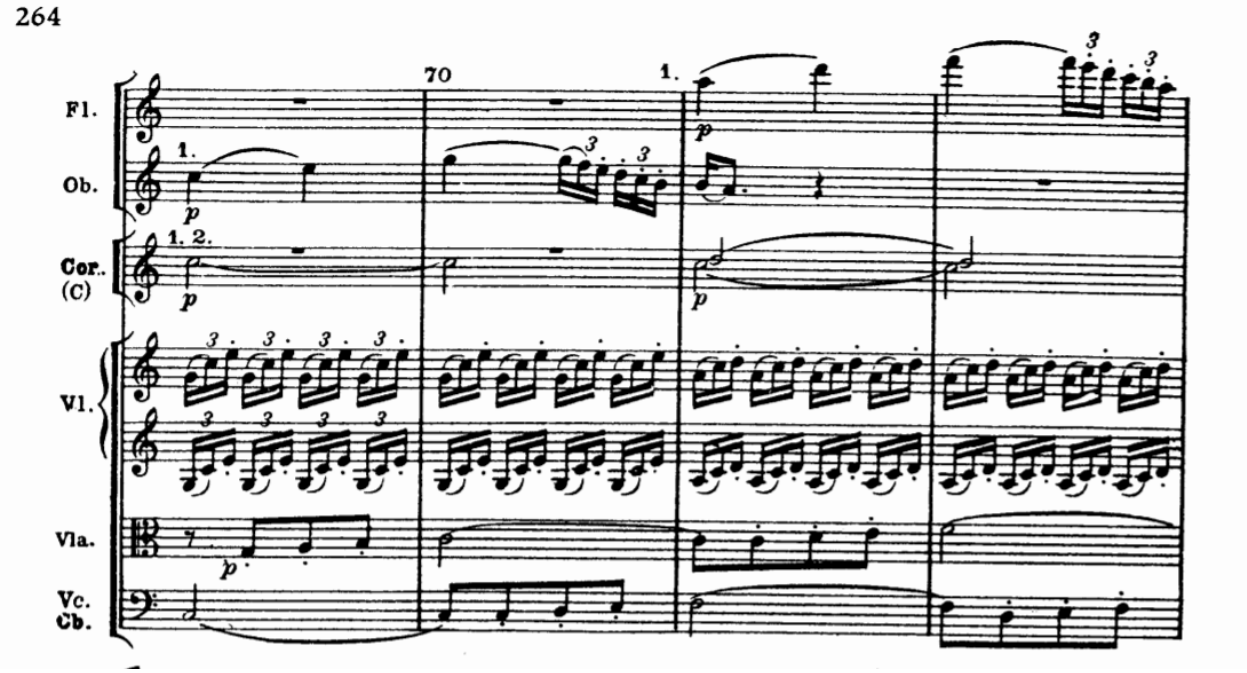


[90] Kolisch, "Tempo and Character," 105.

Additional evidence suggesting that the metric unit here is a quarter note includes the string bass ostinato figurations in m. 7 and later in all strings in mm. 11-12 and 15. Here, the longer eighth falls on the first and second quarters of the measures, rather than on each eighth note (as it would occur in any march written in four beats).

Further, the walking nature of this music in four beats would be completely lost in measures like 9-11, 13, 17, 19, 23-24 and particularly in 29-30 -- bars where all instruments or instrumental groups are playing quarters.

Another serious argument for the two-beat nature of this movement is the *Maggiore* section, which is undoubtedly in groupings of two pulses. Melodic line in winds is dominating in this section and is moving in quarter notes (Example below).



Therefore, this music is perceived in two. Kolisch states, "The *Funeral March* of the Third Symphony op. 55 constitutes a special case since the considerable rhythmic variety of its theme has almost always led to its being interpreted as a 4/8 *Adagio*. What makes such an interpretation untenable is principally the *Maggiore* section."[91]

Rebutting evidence that can serve as a rather weak justification that this movement has a four-beat nature lies in the measures where the texture becomes denser. In those measures, we start having thirty-second notes, namely mm. 191-208. In these measures, indeed, we have a motion on every eighth note. However, what makes this argument a feeble one is the fact that this section comes later in the piece and is surrounded by sections whose metric unit is predominantly a quarter.

It happens in countless works of great masters of classical western music tradition that the most appropriate tempo is on a verge of being either 'in two' or 'in four' in time signature 2/4, or even in the more frequent challenge of 4/4 vs *alla breve* (cut time).[92] But, it seems to me that in the case of the *Marcia funèbre* there are many more arguments to support the perception of the metric units here being in quarters rather than in eighths.

One could argue that Beethoven would have marked Quarter=40 if he wanted the tempo of this movement to be regarded in quarter notes rather than in eighths. But Beethoven's metronome

[91] Kolisch, "Tempo and Character," 105.

[92] A vivid example of this conducting dilemma is the *Allegro vivace* of Mozart's Symphony No. 41 (Jupiter).

went from 50 to 160 BPM only.[93] Therefore, he could not have actually set up his metronome at 40 BPM. So why could he not obtain the desired speed by setting his metronome to 80 to find the correct eighth note motion, and then divide it in half in order to provide a clear designation of *Adagio assai* Quarter=40. This would certainly have eliminated any confusion. We can only speculate. Perhaps by providing the metronome value in eighths, he wanted to guide conductors to conduct this movement "in 4" to ensure more control of the performance within each beat, or he might have wanted to ensure that the tempo would not exceed Quarter=40, which could happen while directing this music 'in two' (especially given an apparent tendency towards rushing in some performances of Beethoven's time and after).

Practically speaking, one might ask: Is it indeed important in how many beats we conduct each measure if we know the right tempo?

The vast majority of available recordings take this movement at somewhere between Eighth=60 and Eighth=70. Performances in which tempo centers around Eighth=60 result in a reading that, in fact, moves in eighths rather than quarter notes. This turns the movement into a rather slow, mournful instrumental *aria*.

[93] "This new 1815–16 metronome – the one on which all the surviving Beethoven markings were based – was a metal box some 31 cm high; and although the pendulum worked like the later one its calibrations were only from 50 to 160 – in twos from 50 to 60, in threes from 60 to 72, in fours from 72 to 120, in sixes from 120 to 144 and in eights from 144 to 160. (Examples survive in the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Vienna; the private collection of Paul Badura-Skoda, Vienna; and at the Brussels Conservatory, Inv. 639)."
David Fallows. "Metronome (i)." Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, accessed July 25, 2017, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/18521.

This movement's tempo traditions were heavily affected by the Wagnerian concept of "never too slow" *adagios* reflected in so many recordings, though today HIP performances reveal the expressive opportunities that come with returning to Beethoven's original metronome markings.[94]

Some key tempo issues in the second movement:

m. 1: Weingartner suggests sustaining a general tempo of around Eighth=66, sometimes increasing the speed to 72 BPM.[95] However, his own highly acclaimed 1936 recording of this movement is at odds with what he recommends. Because of the scarcity of applicable performer-oriented literature on the *Eroica*, on the one hand, and importance of Weingartner's book *On the Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies,* on the other, I think it is important to very briefly highlight the discrepancy between his musicological statements and his performance practice. This review can also serve another purpose, namely to show that the theory and practice of even such great conductors as Weingartner can constitute two different things.

He starts the movement at about Eighth=53 and increases the speed gradually to 61 BPM towards the *Maggiore* section in m. 69. Despite his own warning to not increase the tempo in

[94] It appears that Beethoven scholars know almost nothing about the circumstances under which Beethoven specified his first set of metronome markings in 1817, including those for his first eight symphonies. It is possible that Maelzel, living in contact with Beethoven, was working on tempo charts to further popularize his device and encourage even better sales. Thus, he could have somehow influenced the final numbers provided by Beethoven so that those numbers would better fit the tables he was working on. For a more detailed account about the period and some circumstances that surrounded the appearance of Beethoven's metronome indications in 1817, Maelzel's activity in Vienna at that time, and his possible influence on Beethoven's metronome indications, see Beverly Jerold, *Music Performance Issues*: *1600-1900*, 165-92.

[95] "The stepping-forward character of this movement must be preserved in spite of the *Adagio assai*. It would therefore be unnatural for the time to be too slow. The metronome mark Eighth=80, however, gives such an alarmingly quick time that it cannot possibly be the right one. I adopt Eighth=66 as the normal speed, which can be occasionally increased to Eighth=72." Weingartner, *On the Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies,* 102.

that section,[96] he accelerates immediately at the beginning of this section to approximately 74, and then further accelerates to 86. Further, despite his recommendation not to hurry the *Fugato* section (mm. 114-50),[97] he starts it at 82 and increases the speed gradually to 92. He then follows his own remark about a slight increase in the tempo in "bar 160 and following".[98] His further comments on tempo in mm. 173-200 suggest that he proceeds in the same pulse[99] whereas, in fact, he modifies tempi significantly. He reaches the fastest tempo of 96 BPM in m. 160 and then drops the tempo dramatically to 58-60 in the variable return of an expressive passage of music that was featured earlier in letter A (m. 17). He further increases the speed to 74 BPM by m. 191 and then gradually decreases it back to 50-54 by the end of the piece.[100] Therefore, taking into account that the practical realization of Weingartner's conducting does not align well with his written comments, his recommendations should be taken more as an invitation to develop a

[96] "I have often heard the "maggiore" rendered sentimental by a heavy slowness of the time, or trivialized by a graceful hastening of the speed. There is not the slightest reason for changing the normal time of this melody, so affecting in its simplicity." Weingartner, *On the Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies,* 103.

[97] "This grandiose fugato should not be in the least hurried; it should advance with brazen food stamps Like the chorus in a tragedy of Aeschylus." Weingartner, On the Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies, 104.

[98] "Never has a fearful catastrophe been represented by such simple means as we have here. The immense excitement which is expressed by the triplets of the strings in contrast to the fanfares of the brass (which remind us of the trumpets of the Judgment Day) Justifies us here, in my opinion, in introducing a somewhat more animated time. Played in pure *adagio*, these triplets run some risk of producing a noisy, rather than a powerful effect. But here as elsewhere it is only a question of fluctuation of sensation, not of a complete change of time." Weingartner, On the Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies, 104.

[99] "… at the same time I held fast to this somewhat more animated tempo, as this seemed justified by the mysterious vibrations of the accompaniment, and gave the graduated crescendo in bar 182 (which occurs in the melody also) where is more passionate expression then in the previous similar passage (bar 18); even here I made no decrease in the speed but maintained this sort of after-quiver which follows intense excitement, until the entry of a more restful expression somewhere about bar 200 gave an opportunity of making the restfulness apparent by gradually bringing back the speed to the normal time. The actual first tempo was reached by bar 209, when the echo of the previous emotion seems completely to have died away." Weingartner, On the Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies, 105.

[100] Weingartner, after all, is a vivid representative of a great Wagnerian-Lisztian tradition of expressive conducting and tempo modifications who, together with Hans von Bülow and Wilhelm Furtwängler, greatly influenced the 20th century's musicians through their recordings. Furtwängler, however, although applied slow Wagnerian tempi in his interpretations, nevertheless had conducted in much stricter tempo stylistic.

personal opinion about the tempo in the specified section rather than the instruction to implementation. Nevertheless, the areas where he comments about tempo modifications make a lot of sense.

m. 69: There is no tempo change assigned by Beethoven here, but the performance practice suggests three possibilities: A) remain in the same tempo (as suggested by Weingartner in his book); B) push the tempo forward slightly[101]; C) hold the tempo back slightly.

m. 84: Sometimes the tempo is pushed a little bit here as well. The return back happens through a slight *rallentando* in m. 89 by m. 90.[102]

m. 101: Two interpretative decisions are possible here (particularly if the tempo was accelerated previously) -- either a sudden slowing down on the first beat of m. 101, or a gradual *rallentando* back to the opening tempo in m. 105. In any case, one should be mindful about the extent of the tempo change/*rallentando*. Beethoven indicated the slowing down of this music by applying the larger note values (half note and dotted quarter).

Movement III – Scherzo

Italian tempo designation	*Allegro vivace* (Joyfully or merrily lively)
Metronome indication	Dotted Half=116 BPM
Recordings close to Beethoven's tempo	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kXg9povW2is
	https://youtu.be/tGqRczMf2Yc?t=1678

[101] I very slightly pushed the tempo to infuse a livelier feeling. I did it also to "pay back" some "stolen" time in the previous measure because I slowed down the three preceding eighths of the bass line, adding *diminuendo*.

[102] I also conducted these measures *più mosso* to highlight the dance-like character of this section.

Beethoven's metronome mark for the *scherzo* is not questioned in any of the critical works that I have consulted. It is clear that the metric unit of this movement is one measure or a dotted half note, as specified by Beethoven.

On recordings, one can find *scherzo* speeds that are identical to Beethoven's metronome marking, that are slightly slower or even slightly faster. This movement's tempo is the only instance in the *Eroica* when some performances move quicker than Beethoven's metronome speed.[103]

In 1844, the German music scholar Eduard Krüger left an account of the *Eroica*'s tempi from performances he heard conducted by Karl Möser in Berlin in 1830 and by Karl August Krebs in Hamburg in 1841. For the *scherzo,* he mentioned hearing a tempo of 100 BPM – much slower than the marking. He also commented about Hummel's tempo for this movement that the composer was said to have provided for his piano arrangement of the Symphony, and which is exactly Beethoven's 116 BPM: "Hummel's keyboard edition specifies Dotted Half=116, which to me appears too fast to the point of unintelligibility; is Hummel supposed to have had authentic tempos?"[104]

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[103] Faster recordings:
a) Brüggen, 1990, 128-32 BPM: https://youtu.be/JQT8Fi09Ng4?t=1950;
b) Goodman, 1988, 124-28: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YCWjH9cNr1k;
c) Leibovitz, 1961, 122: https://youtu.be/cila9s7yQBE?t=312;
Slower recordings:
a) Hogwood, 1986, 106-110: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rTbX3Umt1pM;
b) Brüggen, 2011, 108-12: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XuenAiZz67M;
c) Norrington, 2005, 110-16: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0SGffYpBcrE.

[104] About the other movements' tempos, he provides the following numbers and comments: "Allegro Quarter=150. Adagio (Marcia funèbre) Eighth=66; Finale Quarter=126. Hummel says: Half=76, thus Quarter=152, which to me seems terrible and incomprehensible." Beverly Jerold, *Music Performance Issues*: *1600-1900*, 187.

There are almost no technical restrictions to playing this movement faster than Beethoven's metronome designation, except for certain challenges for the horn group solo in the *Trio* section. Brüggen's recording, which is the fastest on the list, takes the trio a bit slower. However, the Hanover Band and Goodman (second fastest on the list and faster than Beethoven's indication by 8-12 BPM), manages to play the *Trio* almost without any deceleration in the tempo.

Movement IV– Finale – Allegro molto

Italian tempo designation	*Allegro molto* (Very joyful or merry)
Metronome indication	Half=76 BPM
Recordings close to Beethoven's tempo	
UCLA Philharmonia 2018 performance	https://youtu.be/158rxRxu8hk[105]

The opening Beethoven's metronome mark of this movement constitutes one of the most controversial tempo issues in the *Eroica*. If taken literally, the resulting tempo is truly virtuosic and on the verge of technical and ensemble skills. But let's see if this argument can serve as an ample reason for not playing the bass theme and the following section of the *Eroica*'s *Finale* that at least in the close proximity to Beethoven's indication.

As I already mentioned before, UCLA Philharmonia[106] has performed the opening section under my baton in close to Beethoven's tempo and sometimes even 1-2 BPM faster than his mark as a

[105] Beethoven's tempo is sustained until *Poco Andante* section.

[106] UCLA Philharmonia is the Herb Alpert School of Music's primary orchestral ensemble consisting of music performance majors.

part of my graduate lecture recital in January 2018.[107] Our very small performance forces were nearly identical to the forces Beethoven had at his disposal in 1804 – 26-28 musicians during first private rehearsals at Prince Lobkowitz's palace in Vienna that made our task even more challenging.[108] To present the work in the size of the first live playing of the work was one of the main ideas. We had 4 first violins, 4 second violins, 3 violas, 2 cellos, 2 double basses, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 3 horns, 2 trumpets, and timpani totaling 29 musicians. Regardless of the extremely fast tempo, we attempted to produce a performance that would have a character of an exciting celebration as the motive of the tune from the last movement of the ballet *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus* (The Creatures of Prometheus), Op. 43 suggests. In the ballet, however, the tempo is designated as *Allegretto* without metronome indication. The fact that Beethoven decided to change the tempo to a much faster *Allegro molto* serves as another

[107] Our performance speeds were as follows:
mm. 12-43 – 78 BPM;
mm. 45-75 – 74-77;
mm. 76-116 – around 70;
mm. 117-246 – 71-73;
mm. 247-55 – we did accelerando to about 78;
mm. 258-76 – around 68;
mm. 277-344 – 70-73;
mm. 345-48 – we did rallentando.
https://youtu.be/158rxRxu8hk
A note: Our initially planned concert in December 2017 was cancelled due to fires around UCLA. Students went to a month-long winter break after which we had one full rehearsal and a shorter dress rehearsal before the concert to revive the work. Therefore, some ensemble issues that you may hear in the fourth movement resulted from emergency circumstances that affected our rehearsal process.

[108] Beethoven's forces at Prince Lobkovitz's Viennese residence were as following: "2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 clarini, 4 violins, 2 violas, 2 basses and timpani. … The strikingly small number of strings and the absence of cellos is explained by the undoubted participation of members of the Lobkowitz orchestra, who naturally were not paid separately. The violinists Wranitzky, Schreiber and Cartellieri and the cellists, the Krafts father and son, must have taken part. The orchestra that played thus numbered 27 (or, more precisely, 26 to 28). If according to present practice this number may seem unacceptably small for the *Eroica*, when one considers performing practices of the time and the size of the hall, such a disposition would certainly have been acceptable, especially since these were only rehearsals." Volek and Macek, "Beethoven's Rehearsals at the Lobkowitz's," 78.

argument why this movement should be regarded as very fast rather than simply fast, or moderately fast, as many of the 20th-century recordings suggest.

In our quest for the appropriate tempo, let's turn to the notation of the Finale. We again have to decide what are the metric unit in this movement, or by Kolisch's very apt definition, what is "the distance between two accentuated points".

The opening 11 measures can shed little light on our problem. But starting from measure 12 it becomes again crystal clear that "the distance between two accentuated points" is one measure and by no means not a quarter note. It is more obvious and even definite in mm. 44-51 when the theme that was previously played as separate notes, in these measures is more connected by half notes that unambiguously lean towards the first beats of each bar. The eighth notes in these measures only support the first beats' inclination of every metric unit which is, in this case, one measure or a half note.

Since this movement is a theme and variations, the presence of the initial theme is evident in each subsequent variation. Therefore, since there is no tempo change within the opening *Allegro molto* section until the tempo change in *Poco Andante* in m. 349, it is obvious that all the subsequent variations in *Allegro molto* will bear the imprint of the whole-measure metric units until the *Poco Andante*.

In the search of the appropriate tempo for the Allegro molto, we should count on two additional aspects. Although the tempo *Allegro molto* is undoubtedly very fast, it is still not the fastest on

the tempo scale. There are two more gradations of *Presto* and *Prestissimo*. This could lead as to a logical conclusion that we should aim for a very fast tempo which, however, won't turn music into a succession of unintelligible sounds but will preserve expressivity and clear articulation.

On the other hand, we should bear in mind that Beethoven, as a keyboard performer, possessed a truly outstanding piano technic and by accounts from his contemporaries was capable of the unparalleled level of virtuosity and liked showing his formidable skills to the public. Johann Reichardt, a German composer, writer, and music critic, attended a concert in Vienna on 22 December 1808 at which he heard Beethoven playing his Fourth Piano Concerto. He accounted about "then new piano concerto "of immense difficulty, which Beethoven, with astounding command, executed in the fastest possible tempi." This is in spite the fact that neither the first nor the third movement of the concerto is marked *prestissimo:* they carry the indications *allegro moderato* and *vivace* respectively."[109]

Taking into account the above findings, we can decide on the most appropriate tempo that can vary from an orchestra to orchestra depending on the musicians' level of technical skill. With UCLA Philharmonia we witnessed that even a proficient student orchestra using modern instruments can play the *Finale*'s *Allegro molto* section in Beethoven's range of tempo (68-76 BPM) without loss of character or clear articulation.

[109] Susan Liu Lee, "Czerny's interpretation of Beethoven's Piano Sonatas" (PhD diss., University of Wales Bangor. 2003), 115.

Why then do many conductors chose a tempo that was much slower? The answer to this may probably lie in a belief of the heroic nature of this Symphony and, again, in Wagnerian influence on the 20th century recorded tradition.

Many interpreters could think that a very fast tempo with the resulting very playful, and sometimes even childishly exciting character simply does not align well with the concept of the final movement of the grand "Heroic symphony to commemorate the memory of a great man". Coupled with, and possibly misled by, Wagner's ideas of profundity, cantilena, and slowness even in fast-paced *Allegro* music. But they overlooked that Wagner also asked to distinguish between two types of fast movements: one where the cantilena and a "sustained tone" take a significant role in the music texture (he called this type an "emotional" and "sentimental" and a newer one), and the older where the rhythmic figuration "gets the upper hand of the melody" and "the reaction of rhythmical movement against the sustained tone is entirely carried out." He called this latter type of *Allegro* a "naïve" and exemplified it with *Allegro*'s represented in Mozart's overtures to operas *"The Marriage of Figaro"* and *"Don Giovanni."* As an example of the newer "sentimental" *Allegro,* he suggested an *Allegro con brio* from the *Eroica*. He also mentioned that "obviously the proper pace of a piece of music is determined by the particular character of the rendering it requires; the question, therefore, comes to this: does the sustained tone, the vocal element, the cantilena predominate, or the rhythmical movement (figuration). The conductor should lead accordingly."

Thus, according to Wagner himself, since the prevailing character and note values in the *Finale*'s *Allegro molto* section are the constant flow of eighths and sixteenth notes (only briefly

interrupted by a break in mm. 255-57) this section falls under the category of naïve *Allegros* and should be led by a conductor accordingly fast. He further makes an important statement that I have never seen quoted for some reason (unlike his other quote about "never too slow" *adagios*) although it is stated in the same document *Über das Dirigieren (On Conducting)*: "As I have said of the pure Adagio that, in an ideal sense, it cannot be taken too slowly, so this pure unmixed Allegro cannot be given too quickly."[110]

Therefore, taking into account a number of factors such as Beethoven's own very fast Italian tempo indication *Allegro molto*, fast metronome mark Half=76, the one-measure metric unit (or the distance between two accentuated points), a constant flow of eighths and sixteenths, Beethoven's inclination to rather fast rendering of his fast tempi, and the technical ability to play this movement in the tempo specified by composer, we can infer that the desired tempo of this section would be rather very fast than moderately fast (unlike the vast majority of the recorded tradition suggests) in the metronome speed close to Beethoven's designation. Practically speaking, the level of speed of this section would be limited by the skill level of the orchestra and the clarity of articulation of fast sixteenth notes that the orchestra is capable of achieving.

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[110] "In the course of the argument so far, two species of Allegro have been mentioned; an emotional and sentimental character has been assigned to the latter, the true Beethovenian Allegro, whereas the older Mozartian Allegro was distinguished as showing a naive character. I have adopted the expressions "sentimental" and "naive" from Schiller's well-known essay upon "sentimental and naive poetry."
It is needless to discuss the aesthetic problems Schiller touches upon. It is enough to state here that I take Mozart's quick Alla-breve movements as representative of the naive Allegro. The Allegros of the overtures to his operas, particularly to "Figaro" and "Don Giovanni" are the most perfect specimens. It is well known that Mozart wished these pieces to be played as fast as possible. Having driven his musicians into a sort of rage, so that to their own surprise they successfully rendered the unheard of Presto of his overture to "Figaro," he commended them, saying: "that was beautiful! Let us take it still quicker this evening." Quite right. As I have said of the pure Adagio that, in an ideal sense, it cannot be taken too slowly, so this pure unmixed Allegro cannot be given too quickly.
The slow emanations of pure tone on the one hand, and the most rapid figurated movement on the other, are subject to ideal limits only, and in both directions the law of beauty is the sole measure of what is possible. The law of beauty establishes the point of contact at which the opposite extremes tend to meet and to unite."
Wagner, *Über das Dirigieren,* Ebook.

Movement IV– Finale – Poco Andante

Italian tempo designation	*Poco Andante* (In rather walking speed)
Metronome indication	Quarter=108 BPM
Recordings close to Beethoven's tempo	https://youtu.be/U91UyiSmQ8E?t=370

This section until the next *Presto* indication represents another perplexing tempo mark. The Italian tempo mark suggests that the tempo is related to the previous tempo and should be somewhat slower than the previous *Allegro molto* towards the *Andante* range but can be interpreted as a faster than regular Andante. The dilemma with this tempo is not in the tempo itself as its metronome speed falls into *Andante* range but in the recorded performance practice – it never supports it! Even HIP conductors. David Zinman on the link above just starts this section in a very close to Beethoven's tempo of 104 BPM but then very soon drops the tempo to around 98 BPM and stays there. Majority of HIP conductors plays within the range of 90-100 (4 recordings, 3 conductors); 3 recordings and conductors within 80-90; one within 70-80; and one within 60-74.

Let's try to identify metric units in this section. Again we have movement in two quarter notes rather than in four eighths. It is particularly clear at the beginning of the section in mm. 349-64. Even in the tempo of slower recordings, despite the fact that conductors may beat 'in four', the distance between two accentuated points is one quarter. We have a very similar situation here as we already encountered in the *Marcia funèbre*: music that moves in quarters and metronome mark that specifies speed in eighth rather than in quarters whereas the time signature is 2/4 (not 4/8). The only difference this time is that we have a metronome mark that falls within the tempo

range of *Andante* that corresponds to the metronome designation while in the second movement the metronome mark was in the majority of contemporary metronome ranges falling into the next tempo category of Andante.

However, despite all these characteristics and Beethoven's indications, the majority of the performances interpret this music as being written in metric units of eighths rather than in quarters. A major discrepancy that shows itself in the slower renderings is that music still sounds in 'in two' but much slower clearly moving to the slower tempo categories of *Adagio and even Largo* since the metronomic expression would be 30-35 BPM in quarter notes for the recordings within 60-70 (initially being metronomized in eighths); 35-40 for 70-80 BPM; and 40-45 for 80-90. All these speeds in quarters correspond to contemporary ranges of *adagio* (last one) and *largo* (first two ranges).

Slower renderings can be beautiful but they definitely change the character of the music to a much more broad similar to a vocal arioso or instrumental aria whereas in faster tempo it much more retains its playful, joyful, and coquettish character (except for the last section in mm. 420-30).

Movement IV– Finale – Presto

Italian tempo designation	*Presto* (At a rapid tempo)
Metronome indication	Quarter=116 BPM (initially published by mistake as Eighth=116)[111]
Recording in close to Beethoven's tempo	https://youtu.be/VJgUCvsYgP8?t=703

There are certain orchestral challenges to play this section in Beethoven's tempo. These include very fast thirty-second notes that are written as precisely measured notes (not as tremolo). It is hard to play this rhythm clearly in the tempo specified by Beethoven. In addition, horn parts make leaps in this tempo and the range quite challenging in mm. 455-56, particularly taking into account written *sforzandi.*

[111] Beethoven's metronome mark, as published in the Algemeine Musikalische Zeitung of 17 December 1817 (omitted in E [full score published by Simrock in 1822], however) is Eight=116. It seems certain that this must be an error; cf. Peter Stadlen's tabulation (1982:59) of different conductors' tempos, all falling within 20% of Quarter=116. Though some writers (e.g. Grove 1898:49) apparently except the Eighth marking at face value, all those who discuss it either dismiss it as an error for Quarter (e.g. 1907:51) or else merely except the Quarter marking found in their own additions of the score, viz.: many, but not all, printings of Br2 [full score, first published by Breitkopf und Härtel, Leipzig, probably in 1920s], and M [Peters, 1872 or 1902; Eulenburg, 1920 or 1936; and Philharmonia, 1923]." Jonathan Del Mar, *Ludwig van Beethoven: Symphony no. 3 in E-flat major: Eroica: Op. 55, critical commentary*, (New York: Bärenreiter, 1997), 50.

CHAPTER 3

Tempo Rubato

Introduction

There is a lot written about tempo and metronome issues in Beethoven's Symphonies - less about tempo rubato and tempo modifications issues. And among the latter pool of literature, there is very little specificity about particulars of the practical application of the tempo rubato and tempo modification techniques and principles in the *Eroica*, especially not from musicological, but from a performer's perspective. The most notable detailed, practical, performer-oriented works about *Eroica* are two books by famous maestros Felix Weingartner and Erich Leinsdorf.[112] However, even their performance directions about the application of the tempo rubato are very modest.

For a performer, the issue of tempo rubato or tempo modification is one of the most complicated both in theory and in practical application. The further back one goes, the more difficult it is to obtain a clear understanding of both the theoretical and practical components of its application. However, we do have some references and accounts regarding the controversial issue of the application of tempo modification technique in the 19th century, and even earlier, that we will expound later in this chapter.

[112] Felix Weingartner, *On the Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies and Other Essays* (New York: Dover, 1969). Jon Ceander Mitchell. *The Braunschweig scores: Felix Weingartner and Erich Leinsdorf on the first four symphonies of Beethoven* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2005).

It is important to mention at the very beginning that back in the 18th century and approximately till the middle of the 19th century, the meaning of the terms "tempo rubato", 'tempo modification', "tempo fluctuation", 'tempo irregularities', and the like had certain important differences from what the musicians used to regard nowadays. That is why it is important to trace the distinctions of the meaning of the terms, as well as the particulars of the application of the above-mentioned terms from the earliest accounts until modern time.

The Earliest Accounts

As early as 1723, Pier Francesco Tosi (c. 1653 – 1732), a singer, composer, and an author of the first known substantial treatise on Baroque vocal music *Opinioni de' cantori antichi, e moderni...* (Observations on the Florid Song), acknowledges about the *tempo rubato*,

> Whosoever doesn't know how to steal the time in singing knows not how to compose, nor to accompany himself, and is destitute of the best taste and greatest knowledge. … The stealing of time, in the pathetic, is an honourable theft in one that sings better than others, provided he makes a restitution with ingenuity.[113]

Edward Dannreuther (1844-1905), a pianist and writer on music, in his 1893-5 *Musical ornamentation complete in one volume* treatise, attributed the origins of the tempo modification practice to even earlier Italian vocal music of Florentine monodists. He specified that,

> In the comments to the quotations from Caccini's *Nuove Musiche* it is shown that the tempo rubato probably originated in the Monody (circa 1600), when the divisions and graces of the vocal part were sung, for the sake of expression, with certain deviations from the steady progress of the bass.[114]

[113] Pier Francesco Tosi, *Observations on the Florid Song*, trans. Johann E. Galliard, (London: 1987), 70.

[114] Edward Dannreuther, *Musical ornamentation complete in one volume. Ornamentation* I (New York: Kalmus, 1961), xiii.

Two Main Types of Tempo Rubato – 'Earlier' and 'Later'

'Earlier' Type of Tempo Rubato

It is important to acknowledge that the *tempo rubato* in the above quotes refers only to a melody in a solo line while the accompanying orchestra stays in strict time. This attribution of the term t*empo rubato* only to tempo alterations in a leading voice or an instrument while the rest of the music sustains a strict pulse, characterizes an important distinction in the understanding of the use of the term *tempo rubato* until, approximately, the middle of the 19th century. This type of *tempo rubato* will be later called a "classical", "melodic" or simply an "earlier" type of the *tempo rubato* in musicological works of the 20th-21st centuries.[115]

'Later' Type of Tempo Rubato

Another conception of the tempo modification existed at the same time as the one mentioned above. Having differing accounts about its use as early as the middle of the 18th century, the 'Later' concerned the issues of tempo modifications by a whole ensemble. Instead of being called tempo rubato, at that time, it was usually referred to as a temporal acceleration or retardation of the overall tempo rate, or would simply define the technique in some other way. In the 20th-21st centuries, it was most commonly referred to as a 'later' type of *tempo rubato.*[116] In addition, one should be aware that in the vast majority of cases, the modern tradition has developed a custom to refer to both types of tempo rubato simply as 'tempo rubato' without any specification. That is why the modern musicians unfamiliar with the distinction may be misled when they encounter a

[115] Some "academic" attempts to title this type of *tempo rubato* (in contrast to the later type of tempo modifications by a whole ensemble) include: melodic versus structural (Ferguson, p. 8-9), momentary versus continuous (Hudson, 300), borrowed versus stolen (Donington, 430-34), contrametric versus agogic (Rosenblum, 373-92).

[116] See Footnote #115 above concerning more versions of the term.

term *tempo rubato* in the 18th-19th-century's literature by perceiving it as a more common tempo fluctuation by a whole ensemble, whereas it actually refers to tempo deviations of a solo/melodic line only.

Issues of Practical Application of the 'Earlier' and 'Later' Tempo Rubato

Application of the 'Earlier' Tempo Rubato Technique

Some commentators on the topic provided more detailed accounts on possible places in music where a short-term acceleration and retardation can be applied. However, many of them stated that an attempt to codify all the instances where the tempo irregularities can occur is nearly impossible and a challenge to adequately denote a degree of these tempo fluctuations for all the instances.

C.P.E. Bach specified a couple of instances where the 'earlier' type of rubato can be applied,

> The Tempo rubato may be applied to slow notes in tender and sad phrases; it applies better to dissonant than to consonant successions. Rubato demands both judgment and feeling— a player possessed of these qualities will find it easy to play any phrase, no matter which, with the degree of irregularity intended; and it may even be worth his while to practice rubato in connection with all sorts of phrases. Without refinement and sensibility, however, the result will be disappointing.[117]

To summarize C.P.E. Bach's account, tempo rubato:

- may be used on slow notes in tender and sad phrases;
- applies better to dissonant rather than consonant successions;
- demands both judgment and feeling.

[117] Dannreuther, *Musical Ornamentation* II, 59.

As an applicable summary of the principles that Garcia II mentions, we can mention the following:

- Tempo rubato is “the momentary prolongation of value which one gives to one or several tones”;
- One can use it at passionate moments in music;
- The tempo in the accompaniment should be sustained “with precision”;
- The soloist is free “to set off certain phrases in a new way”.

One gives prolongation to:

- Appoggiaturas;
- Notes with a long syllable;
- Notes important to the harmony;
- Ones to stand out;
- One makes up lost time by accelerating the other notes;

After deviation, one can join the base:

- At the moment the harmony would change, or
- At the very end of the phrase.

This technique requires:

- An exquisite feeling of the rhythm and;
- An imperturbable poise.

Tempo rubato is best used:

- In passages where the harmony is stable, or
- Slightly varied.

One of the questions that legitimately appear in relation to the application of the 'earlier' type of *tempo rubato* is whether the 19th-century performance practice implied the use of this type of *tempo rubato* in orchestral playing. I will attempt to answer this later in the research when we will talk about Beethoven's views and application of tempo rubato in his own playing.

Application of the 'Later' Tempo Rubato Technique

Czerny, Schindler, and William S. Newman suggest that tempo fluctuations are possible to separate themes in the sonata form. Schindler specified: "We encounter both caesuras and rhetorical pauses frequently in Beethoven's sonatas (the latter more frequently than the former), and they are generally there to separate the successive themes from one another." Newman and Czerny acknowledge the same practice in the performance practice of Beethoven and in the scores of his contemporary Schubert.[118]

Theodor Kullak (1818-1882), a student of Czerny and Liszt, in his *Die Ästhetik des Klavierspiel* writes about the connection between *accelerando* and *crescendo*, on the one side, and *ritardando* and *diminuendo*, on the other,

> Accelerando and ritardando are analogous to crescendo and diminuendo. An ascent in pitch, a rise of emotion, suggest naturally a crescendo and accelerando as means of expression, just as a calming-down suggests both diminuendo and rallentando. The union of accelerando with crescendo, and of diminuendo with rallentando, is most natural and occurs very frequently, especially in slow, expressive pieces.[119]

[118] Ronald Bruce Mayhall, "Tempo Fluctuation in the Romantic Era as Revealed by Nineteenth Century Sources and Applied to Selected Choral Compositions" (DMA diss., The University of Oklahoma, 1990), 52-54.

[119] Adolph F. Christiani, *The principles of expression in pianoforte playing (*New York: Harper & Brothers, [c1885]), 275.

Türk in *Klavierschule* describes certain circumstances at which the temporary tempo fluctuations can be applied. He states,

> It is difficult to specify all the places where quickening and hesitating can take place; nevertheless, I shall seek to make at least some of them known…
> - The tempo is taken gradually slower for tones before certain fermatas…;
> - Toward the end of a composition (or part of a composition), which is marked diminuendo, [and];
> - For tender … or melancholy passages concentrated in one point;
> - Certain thoughts, which are repeated in a more intensified manner (generally higher) require the tempo to be increased to some extent;
> - Sometimes when gentle feelings are interrupted by a lively passage, the latter can be played somewhat more rapidly;
> - A hastening of tempo may also take place in a passage where vehement effect is unexpectedly to be aroused.[120]

Carl Czerny in his 1839 *Vollständige theoretisch-praktische Pianoforte-Schule* (Complete theoretical and practical piano forte school) also specifies some additional instances where *ritardando*, *rallentando,* and *accelerando* can be employed. Czerny regarded tempo modification "the most important consideration in performance" in connection with Beethoven's music. Schindler's account states the following,

> "We are all the more grateful to Carl Czerny. The chapter 'On Modifications in Rhythm' in the third part of his textbook presents a clear lesson. In the very first paragraph, he quite rightly calls this modification 'the most important consideration in performance'. Czerny himself says in the second chapter of the fourth part that everything he says here is still insufficient for playing Beethoven's music."[121]

In connection with Beethoven's style, Czerny's rules and examples should be given very close attention because of his close and long association with the composer that started in 1801, when

[120] Daniel Gottlob Türk and Raymond H. Haggh. *School of Clavier Playing, Or, Instructions in Playing the Clavier for Teachers & Students* (University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 360.

[121] Anton Schindler, *Biographie von Ludwig van Beethoven*, trans. Constance S. Jolly, ed. Donald Wales MacArdle, (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, Faber and Faber, 1966), 412.

Czerny was only 10 years old, and continued in different forms until the composer's death in 1927. Czerny was entrusted by Beethoven to premiere his Piano Concertos No. 1 and No. 5 in 1806 and 1812 respectively. Having an exceptional memory, he knew all Beethoven's piano works by heart and could play them on a request. He had absorbed Beethoven's style of playing and reflected his understanding of it in *On the proper performance of all Beethoven's works for piano* (1846). Off course, there is a difference between a piano and orchestral playing but nevertheless, some of the principles and approaches can be transferred from piano playing to orchestral performance. In his earlier 1839 treatise *Vollständige theoretisch-practische Pianoforte-Schule* (Complete theoretical and practical pianoforte school), Czerny specifies the following principles for application of *ritardando* and *rallentando*:

"Rule l — Before the return of a principal theme.

Rule 2 — On those notes within a period which lead to the beginning of a phrase or even a mere section.

Rule 3 — On accented long notes, followed by shorter ones.

Rule 4 — Before going over to a different tact, i.e., just before the change of time begins.

Rule 5 — Immediately before a pause or rest.

Rule 6 — On the diminuendo of a part which was just before very lively, as also on brilliant passages, when suddenly a run occurs which requires a soft and delicate rendering.

Rule 7 — On all embellishments of many quick notes, which one finds it difficult to get comfortably into the strict measure of time.

Rule 8 — Occasionally, also on the ascending crescendo of an especially emphasized part, leading to an important climax or to an ending.

Rule 9 — On very humorous, capricious, or fantastic parts or passages, to elevate their character.

Rule 10 — Almost wherever the composer has marked ‘espressivo,' and

Rule 11 — At the end of every long trill, as on every soft cadence in general.”[122]

In addition, Czerny mentions three more situations in which *ritardando* or *accelerando* seem appropriate:

Rule 12 — Every sudden modulation, or change of key, should be made apparent, by a change of tempo also.

Rule 13 — If the new key is to be rendered forte, and the modulation to it piano, then the new key should enter in tempo or even a little accelerando;

Rule 14 — When the transition into a theme is composed of staccato notes or chords, a ritardando would be quite appropriate toward the end; but when the transition is composed of rapid or legato notes, then a strict tempo, or, according to circumstances, even an accelerando would be more suitable.”[123]

He also adds about repetitions in a piece,

> “When any musical idea, any group, or phrase, or passage recurs in various places of a composition, then the performer is not only at liberty, but it should be his duty, to alter the mode of rendering at each repetition, in order to avoid monotony. But, in deciding upon this variation, he has to consider what precedes and what follows, and then determine his mode of rendering accordingly.
> Ritardando is, as a rule, far more generally applicable than accelerando, because it does not impair the character of a piece as much as a too frequently recurring accelerando would do.”[124]

[122] Carl Czerny, *Vollständige theoretisch-praktische Pianoforte-Schule* (Complete theoretical and practical piano forte school), trans. J.A. Hamilton (London: R. Cocks, 1839). Cited in *Brown, Classical and Romantic Performing Practice* (1750-1900), 386.

[123] Christiani, *The Principles of Expression*, 265.

[124] Carl Czerny, “Pianoforte-Schule”, quoted in *Principles of Expression* by Christiani, 265.

Kullak in 1861 *Die Ästhetik des Klavierspiels* and Christiani in 1885 *The Principles of Expression in Pianoforte Playing* Kullak mentions the following two instances when *ritardando* can be applied:

“1. Every note in melodic declamation, which is sufficiently significant to be emphasized, receives a rallentando.” Christiani comments on this: “This rule, which Dr. Kullak considers of particular importance, refers to the slight, almost imperceptible *tenuto* or *fermate* on single notes, which leads so easily (especially with singers) to unsteady time-keeping, and does generally more harm than good.”[125] Kullak continues,

“2. Rallentando is also there employed, where a thought terminates. Also, either at the actual ending of a piece or at such parts of a piece which indicate an essential division.”

"Accelerando is, in general, not so permissible as ritardando.”

"The inner reasons which demand an accelerando consist in the ascent of the physical motion that is deposited in the tone-work, and in the rise of emotional activity. The outer reasons concern the charm of variety or the brilliancy of sensuous effect.”

"The ending of a thought is more fittingly depicted by ritardando than by accelerando. Yet, there are cases where an accelerando, at the end of a composition, is quite appropriate.”

"Accelerando is, as a rule, appropriately employed in places where brilliancy succeeds quietness. For example, in concertos and other concert pieces, where the passagework commences after the 'Cantilena.'”

"Also, in places where unessential passages are inserted between essential themes…”

"Repetitions of a musical thought are usually rendered in a changed tempo. The first time, accelerando; the second, ritardando.”

[125] Christiani, *The Principles of Expression*, 272.

"The, union of accelerando with crescendo, and of diminuendo with rallentando, is most natural and occurs very frequently, especially in slow, expressive pieces…"

"Accelerando, however, may go with diminuendo, and ritardando with crescendo."

"The addition of a rallentando to a crescendo adds greatly to the significance of the expression…

Regarding the above-mentioned observations, commentaries, principles, and even rules, one can possibly raise an objection that many of them relate to piano or solo playing and do not refer to the orchestra. This is true but only partially, since the orchestra is still a large ensemble and sometimes Beethoven's and Mozart's-time orchestras were not bigger than 30 players. However, although it probably imposes certain limitations on the overall flexibility of the entire orchestra to apply the 'later' type of the *tempo rubato* technique, it does not limit individual players to employ the 'earlier' type and does not entirely object to the use of either *tempo rubato* type in general. Schindler's remark in 1860 supports this notion: "That orchestral music does not admit of such frequent changes of time as chamber music, is, of course, an understood fact."[126] Marx, referring to a lesser degree of flexibility by the act of group musicianship, relates the following,

> Although a poet writes his monologue or dialogue in a regular, progressive rhythm, the reciter must, none the less, observe certain divisions and pauses in order to bring out the sense, even where the poet could not indicate them by punctuation; and this style of declamation is equally applicable to music, and is modified only by the number of participants in the execution of the given work.[127]

[126] Schindler, *Beethoven*, v. II, 140, quoted in Newman, Beethoven. 116.

[127] Quoted in Franz Kullak, *Beethoven's Piano-Playing*, trans. Theodore Baker (New York: G. Schirmer, 1901), 24.

Beethoven's Views on Tempo Rubato and Its Application in His Own Playing or in the Performances under His Direction

In the previous sections, in an attempt to provide an overall context, we have reviewed some important theoretical viewpoints on the meaning of both types of the *tempo rubato* technique and its practical application in music from the earliest accounts until approximately the beginning of the 20th century. But we have deliberately omitted accounts by Beethoven himself. Now is the time to address in detail, as much as the obtainable evidence allows, what his approach was to *tempo rubato* and tempo modification issues.

Schindler explains,

> "While it is indeed difficult to explain the special qualities of Beethoven's music in words that will bring about a sure understanding and make every aspect self-evident, some means must nevertheless be found to at least approaching this goal. For my part, I think the best guide is to be found in the instructions that Beethoven gave for free performance, for tradition is based first and foremost upon these instructions. The reader will recall what we said on page 209 about Frauvon Ertmann's playing."[128]

The account of Ertmann's playing states the following, [129]

> "This sensitive musician used the same insight with respect to nuances of tempo in a way that cannot be described in words. She knew how to give each phrase the motion of its particular spirit, how to move artistically from one phrase to the next so that the whole seemed a motivated unity. . . She seemed to have an inborn instinct for playing free tempo correctly."[130]

[128] Schindler, *Biographie*, 22.

[129] Dorothea von Ertmann (1781-1849) was a German pianist and a renowned Beethoven's piano student. She premiered his Cello Sonata No. 3 and was a dedicatee of the composer's piano sonata No. 28, op. 101.

[130] Anton Schindler, Biographie von Ludwig van Beethoven. 209.

Mendelssohn, providing another account of Ertmann's performance, stated that "she sometimes rather exaggerates the expression, dwelling too long on one passage, and then hurrying the next; but there are many parts that she plays splendidly, and I think I have learned something from her."[131]

The above quotes provide very little practical detail about the particulars of Beethoven's *tempo rubato* style except for one thing: they serve as evidence that he most likely employed some kind of it. Unfortunately, there are no Beethoven's own accounts on the topic. However, his own comment regarding the tempo of his song "Nord oder Süd" tells us that he was aware of the application of the 'later' type of tempo modification technique.[132] According to other sources cited by William S. Newman, one of America's serious 20th-century researchers of Beethoven's performance style, in His book "Beethoven On Beethoven", Beethoven was also well aware of the meaning and application of the 'earlier' type of *tempo rubato*. Newman also confirmed that Beethoven, during his lifetime, shifted from a stricter tempo performance style at the beginning years of his career "toward more flexible tempo in later years as he increasingly embraced the new Romanticism."[133]

Furthermore, Schindler accounts for distinction that Beethoven made between "free performance" (an equivalent of tempo modification term or the 'later' type of *tempo rubato* used to describe Beethoven's free manner of playing), and *tempo rubato* "of the Italian singer",

> "We must note that the term 'free performance' has falsely been equated with the tempo rubato of the Italian singer [the 'earlier' type of *tempo rubato*]. The fact alone

[131] Felix Mendelssohn, *Letter to Frau von Pereira*, (July, 1831).

[132] See a comment about "Nord oder Süd" on p. 29.

[133] Newman, *Beethoven on Beethoven,* 112-13.

> that the Italian term generally occurs only in opera buffa and hardly ever in opera seria is an indication that the two terms are not identical. Beethoven protested against the use of the Italian term in regard to his music, albeit in vain, for Italian terminology had come to dominate everything in his epoch, including his own music."[134]

Although Schindler's accounts should be considered with a great caution, we nevertheless can not omit his testimonies.

Marx, in *Introduction to the Interpretation of Beethoven Piano Works* (1895), cites an account that supports the thesis that Beethoven "had nothing in common" with the artificial use of the "early' type of *tempo rubato*,

> "The tempo rubato was a fashion of the eighteenth century, dating from the last half, and came from the singers of Italy and France. It was intended to replace the free, deep feeling which was wanting in the compositions themselves; this tempo rubato was, therefore, an untruth and was soon compelled to yield to the reaction of reason. With this fashion (which amid other things became visible in Pergolesi's Stabat Mater) Beethoven had nothing in common; he followed entirely the inner impetus—the demand of the thing—when he resorted to free movement."[135]

Ignaz von Seyfried (1776-1841), an Austrian composer and conductor, who conducted the original production of Beethoven's *Fidelio*, recalled about the time between 1800-05 (it is during those years that Beethoven, among others, directed the first rehearsals and performances of the *Eroica*) provides the only account that is directly connected to Beethoven's application of the tempo rubato in orchestral setting: "He was very particular about expression, the delicate nuances, the equable distribution of light and shade as well as an effective tempo rubato, and

[134] Schindler, *Bioaraohie von Ludwig van Beethoven*, 409.

[135] Adolf Bernhard Marx, *Introduction to the Interpretation of Beethoven Piano Works,* trans. Fannie Louise Gwinner (Chicago: Clayton F. Summy Co., 1895), 73n.

without betraying vexation, would discuss them with the individual players."[136] It is unclear, however, which type of the *tempo rubato* is implied: the 'earlier' or the 'later'. Nevertheless, another important detail that arises from this account is that Beethoven implied the application of at least one type of the tempo rubato in his orchestral compositions. Taking into account the above-mentioned accounts that Beethoven did not like to associate his free manner of playing with the earlier type of tempo rubato, it is likely that he meant the later type in the above quote by Seyfried.

Clive Brown, when pondering over the possibility of application of the 'earlier' (melodic) *tempo rubato* by orchestras in Beethoven's Vienna has arrived at the following conclusion,

> The most common concept of tempo rubato at this period allowed that a soloist could take more time on a note or phrase as long as he made it up elsewhere in the bar, while the accompaniment maintained a steady tempo. Theoretically, therefore, this could have been applied in orchestral compositions to soloistic passages, particularly by such undoubtedly fine wind players as the clarinetist, Friedlowsky, or the horn player, Herbst. But whether or not Viennese orchestras at that time were capable of realizing an effective tempo rubato, there can be little doubt that Beethoven envisaged it.[137]

Schindler detailed further Beethoven's playing in cantabile and cantilena music as the following

> He would emphasize all retardations, especially that of the diminished second in cantabile sections, more than other pianists. His playing thus acquired a highly personal character, very different from the even, flat performances that never rise to tonal eloquence. In cantilena sections he adopted the methods of cultivated singers, doing neither too much nor too little. Sometimes he recommended putting appropriate words to a perplexing passage and singing it, or listening to a good violinist or wind player play it.[138]

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[136] Thayer, *The Life,* 94.

[137] Clive Brown, "The Orchestra in Beethoven's Vienna" in *Early Music 16*, no. 1 (1988), 18.

[138] Schindler, *Bioaraohie von Ludwig van Beethoven*, 416.

As we know, Beethoven's approach to singing a "perplexing passage" will find its reconfirmation in the future Wagner's method to identify a correct tempo through 'Melos', an ability to sing a melody to find its appropriate tempo rate. Beethoven's moderation of "doing neither too much nor too little" finds its confirmation in the account left by his piano student and a close associate Ferdinand Ries who mentions his ability to keep general strict tempo with some deviations on the way,

> He played this Rondo [Op. 13] with a unique expression. In general, he himself played his compositions most eccentrically, though usually keeping strict time, only occasionally hurrying the tempo somewhat. Sometimes he would play a crescendo with a ritardando, which made a very fine and striking effect. In playing he would give, now to one passage and again to another, in the right hand or left, a beautiful, fairly inimitable expression.[139]

On the other hand, Pianist Leschetizky (1830-1915), a Polish pianist and teacher who studied with Czerny and who taught many prominent pianists including Paderewski and Schnabel, left the following account of Beethoven's attitude towards the strict time playing and application of the *tempo rubato*,

> One must play Beethoven with feeling, with warmth. Beethoven himself hated this so-called 'classical' piano playing [strict-time piano playing, in this context] which so many pianists affect. That he was no pedant is shown by the fact that he wrote more expression signs in his compositions than any one else has ever done— and changed them more often! These things I had from his own pupil, Czerny, with whom I studied all of the Beethoven concertos and most of the sonatas.[140]

[139] Franz Kullak, *Beethoven's Piano Playing*, trans. Dr. Th. Baker, (New York: G. Schirmer, 1901), 11.

[140] Henry Theophilus Finck, *Success In Music And How It Is Won*, (New York: Charles Scribner`s Son, 1909), 377.

Summary

I have explained two types of tempo rubato, the 'earlier' and the 'later,' and the way they were described in the 18th and 19th centuries. I also summarized some of the main rules for both types of tempo rubato. These rules will be important in framing the next chapter of this dissertation. Finally, I identified Beethoven's own views on, and application of, both types of tempo rubato, as well as presented the views of Beethoven's contemporaries.

CHAPTER 3-1

Application of Tempo Rubato in the *Eroica*'s Notation

Movement I

mm. 1-2: Please refer to Chapter 2-1 on Tempo, p. 47.

mm. 29-34: Barely perceptible 'tempo sostenuto' is possible to articulate the chords well, with the compensation on the *crescendo* in mm. 35-36.

Letter A (m. 45-60) and the like: This transitional theme can be slightly held back.[141] The return of the stolen time can occur on the *crescendo* in mm. 61-64. See also comment in Chapter 2-1 on p. 47.

mm. 74 and 477: Bruno Walter in his four recordings of the *Eroica* in 1941, 1949, 1957, and 1958 retards slightly by the end of these measures, then applies a short luftpause, and proceeds

[141] "A very slight slackening of the time, just enough to prevent the melody from seeming hurried, is justifiable here, but this must give the impression of being a result of the feeling, not of being done intentionally. If anyone does not feel capable of doing this, he had better not vary the time at all." Weingartner, *On the Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies*, 93.

further *a tempo*. This may serve as a great example of one of the places where the effect of applying *ritardando* during *crescendo* (sometimes used by Beethoven in his piano playing) can be applied in the *Eroica*.[142]

The second theme, C (m. 83): One possible approach is to take the theme more slowly and apply tempo rubato. The other is to stay in strict tempo. Weingartner suggests slowing the time,[143] and Leinsdorf writes *espressivo* in his score. If *tempo sostenuto* is applied, the return to the *Tempo primo* happens either starting in m. 99 or in m. 103 (the latter is supported by Weingartner). In this theme, Beethoven breaks the energetic and willful motion of music through syncopated entrances of woodwinds and strings. He also breaks it by the interplay of syncopated *sforzandi* of the middle strings, on the one hand, and of the violins, bassoon, and oboe on the other, interrupted by asymmetrical *pizzicati* of double basses in mm. 89-91. This musical

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[142] Leisdorf writes about this in the following words: "When I first heard performances of Bruno Walter, he quite often applied a type of Luftpause (a short wait before an especially important accent) in works of Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven. The luftpause appears with regularity in Mahler's scores, for it is part of his typical phrasing. It is indicated by the comma and buttressed by shortening the note before it and delaying the downbeat of the next measure ever so slightly...This nuance was noticeable in Walter's performances of the classics to such a degree that it appeared to be a mannerism, an artificiality of the kind Mahler eschewed in his more mature years. Walter too became more straight forward as he aged, revising his technique from a somewhat nervous overuse of nuance toward ever greater simplicity." Erich Leinsdorf, *The Composer's Advocate* (Yale 1981), 50.

The four recordings are as following:

1941, New York Philharmonic: https://youtu.be/GV1CnlG5R9I?t=81
1949, New York Philharmonic: https://youtu.be/OgWX6RIfzgs?t=87
1957, Symphony of The Air: https://youtu.be/B77H74A6GJQ?t=88
1958, Columbia Symphony: https://youtu.be/4XYNB6QBius?t=93

In addition, the following principle from the above-mentioned list can be applied here: "The addition of a rallentando to a crescendo adds greatly to the significance of the expression."

[143] Weingartner: "A skillful conductor will be able to hold back the time at the entry of the secondary theme to just the extent that the execution of the *portamento* characteristic of this theme demands, without interrupting the course of the piece. This slowing down of the time might perhaps slightly increase from bar 95 onwards, so that the *pp* beginning in bar 99 can be played comparatively slowly, by which means the tension is increased. The entry of the quaver movement and the *crescendo* then lead back quite naturally to the principal theme." Weingartner, *On the Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies*, 94.

uncertainty is overcome gradually in mm. 99-108, and, finally, is fully resolved or thrown aside in D (m. 109), after which the main tempo returns.

mm. 136-39 and 539-42: It is possible to apply a barely perceptible tempo sostenuto here to allow the eighths in strings to sound well-pronounced and return to tempo primo on the *crescendo* in mm. 140-42 and 543-45 respectively.

mm. 144-47: It is possible to ritard on these measures, and in m. 147 in particular, to highlight even more the asserting power of the three chords played *tutti*. In this case, the following measures until the ending may be taken slightly slower.

mm. 148-52 measures into 1st ending: These measures can further be slowed, based on the application of two principles from the list described in the previous chapter where *ritardando* is possible.[144]

mm. 152-65: Some interpreters still take these measures slightly held back in terms of tempo with a peak of the *sostenuto* happening in mm. 164-65.[145] The word "slightly" is a key here as Beethoven notates a slowing in this section anyway by writing two-measure sustained chords in the lower strings followed by a three-beat sustained descending chord progression in the strings. Therefore, the minimal stretching of time would be appropriate only if carefully highlighting the idea of dark uncertainty in this transition resolving into the bright second theme motifs in m. 166.

mm. 166-77: As in letter A. The return of *Tempo primo* comes in m. 178.

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[144] *Ritardando* is possible:
"Toward the end of a composition (or part of a composition), which is marked diminuendo."
"On crescendo and diminuendo: accelerate on crescendo and retard on diminuendo
"Rule l — Before the return of a principal theme."
"The ending of a thought is more fittingly depicted by ritardando than by accelerando."

[145] Weingartner: "If the conductor finds it necessary to introduce a slight moderation of the time at the beginning of the 2nd ending, he must not fail to revert to the normal tempo in bar 166. Weingartner, *On the Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies,* 95.

G (m. 220): As in A.

m. 236, Fugato: Some interpretations take this section somewhat slower (this is more the case if the previous section starting in G is not held back). The *sostenuto* continues until m. 284. Sometimes additional *rallentando* is applied in m. 279. For the following 4 measures (280-83) two interpretative decisions sometimes applied: A) they are taken even slower but in the same tempo through all four measures; or B) they are taken slower in the first measure and gradually accelerate into the return of the main tempo in m. 284.

H-m. 275 (mm. 248-75): As in mm. 29-34.

mm. 276-79: These measures can be done even slightly slower to enhance the dramatic effect of the chords, particularly in m. 279.

mm. 280-83: Depending on a tempo rate of the preceding measures, the first three chords in forte can be played slightly slower (if it makes sense) to allow for the application of a lot of weight. By the end of the measures, tempo may be increased to arrive at the tempo rate of the next new theme.[146]

mm. 284-99: Sometimes these measures are taken slightly slower than the *Tempo primo,* particularly if the preceding four measures are taken more slowly. The return to *tempo primo* should be applied on the *crescendo* in m. 299.

K-m. 353 (mm. 322-53): The tempo can be held back slightly in this section as in mm. 284-99. The return to tempo primo can happen on the crescendo in mm. 354-61.

m. 374-M (m. 398): These measures are sometimes performed with a very slight pulling back of time (*sostenuto*) in order to allow strings to have more time to expressively perform their

[146] The following principle can be applied here: "*Accelerando*, however, may go with *diminuendo*…"

mournful figurations in the first four measures and then to calm down.[147] The return to *Tempo primo* should be applied in the recapitulation in M (m. 398).[148]

N (m. 448): See A (m. 45) above.

P (m. 486): See the second theme, C (m. 83) above.

mm. 547-50: As in mm. 144-47 above but this second time the degree of *rallentando* can increase even more.[149]

S. (mm. 551-54): This section is sometimes taken more slowly than the main tempo.

mm. 555-56: These two measures are sometimes stretched to break the evenness of the pulse and make the arrival of the next two measures (557-58) in strict time, but unexpected and different from the general pulse.

mm. 559-60: These measures are sometimes also prolonged as mm. 555-56 above breaking the pulse again for the same reason for mm. 561-62 in strict time to appear somewhat unexpected and a bit out of the main pulse.

mm. 563-76: This section is sometimes performed slightly slower. The return to the **Tempo primo** should happen, in this case, on the eighths during mm. 577-80.

mm. 599-602: A slight ritardando sometimes applied on *decrescendo* in these measures.

mm. 603-30: This section can be taken slightly held back. The return to *tempo primo* happens gradually between letters U-V (mm. 631-44).

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[147] The following principles are applicable here: *Ritardando* is applicable "to separate themes in the sonata form." "… Ritard on diminuendo." "The tempo is taken gradually slower … toward the end of a composition (or part of a composition), which is marked diminuendo." "Rule l — Before the return of a principal theme."

[148] The following principle can apply here: "Sometimes when gentle feelings are interrupted by a lively passage, the latter can be played somewhat more rapidly."

[149] The following principle can apply here: "When any musical idea, any group, or phrase, or passage recurs … it should be his duty, to alter the mode of rendering at each repetition." See pp. 71-76 for the list of rules.

V (m. 647): Sometimes a barely perceptible *poco a poco accelerando* is applied following the gradual *crescendo* starting in this measure until letter W (m. 673) where *Tempo primo* is applied again for a few measures until the next *crescendo* in m. 677 when a new barely perceptible acceleration is applied again through the end of the movement.

Movement II – Marcia funèbre (Funeral march)

Slow movements, as accounted before, traditionally suitable for the expressive rendering and open for the application of tempo rubato. *Eroica*'s *Marcia funèbre's* deeply dramatic and mournful music is full of expressivity and requires the application of tempo modifications.

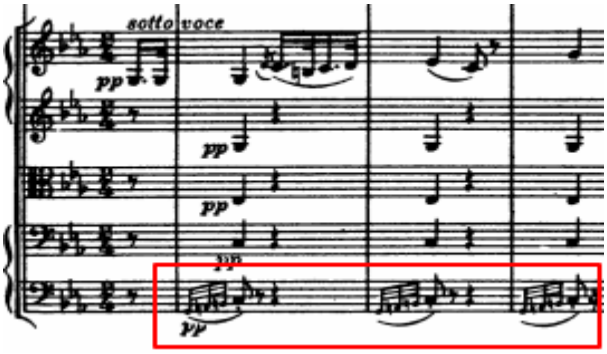
Application of the 'Earlier' Type of Tempo Rubato

Marcia funèbre creates an excellent opportunity to naturally apply tempo rubato technique in its 'earlier' meaning of the term. We have here a steady bass or chords and at the same time instances of melodic lines played by either a solo instrument, a group of instruments or a single string group. This creates possibilities to play a melodic line with the flexibility of a singer or an instrumental soloist, while the rest of the orchestra follows a steady beat.

I applied the 'earlier' type of tempo rubato in this movement in my January 2018 UCLA Philharmonia performance. I will share some observations below based on my practical experience.

mm. 1-3: In these measures, one can apply an effect in the double bass part that can be considered an application of the 'earlier' type of the *tempo rubato* technique. It is possible to

start the grace notes in each of the first three bars slightly before the beat and arrive at the first beat slightly after it actually comes in the rest of the string voices (Example below).



This displacement of the beats can be likened to the application of a rubato technique in piano playing when sometimes the beats of the left hand do not coincide in time with the steady beats of the right hand. In this place, it can create a very peculiar effect of the bass figuration that can be likened to a deep human 'sigh' that goes against the steady steps of the mournful 'procession' on the quarter notes in the rest of the string section. This effect is also applicable and can be appropriate in mm. 105-106 but only on the C's that are preceded by grace notes.[150]

mm. 1-5, 30-2, 104-11, 238-first beat of 245: It is possible to apply some tempo irregularity in the group of the first violins in these measures. However, this requires a high skill-level of musicianship. It is more difficult to apply tempo rubato by a group of musicians than by a single

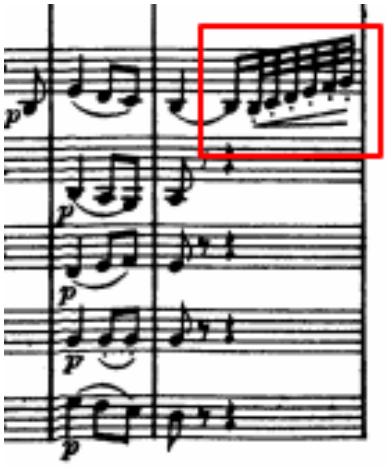
[150] Weingartner wrote about the difference between the C's preceded by the grace notes and by the measured triplets of thirty-seconds in the following words, "… the three first C's in the bassos are introduced by grace notes, and that these, in contrast to the later, written-out, demisemiquavers, must not be played thus [Example of the eighth note C in m. 107 preceded by the triplet of thirty-second notes] but that the G marks the first point of the bar, followed by the other notes in such quick succession, however, that they only form one rhythmic value. The same hold good, of course, for the similar passage at bar 105. It is striking, however, that here the notes preceding the third C have a different notation from those in our passage, whereas in all other points the similarity is complete. I do not know of any reason for this, but of course the will of the master must be obeyed." Weingartner, *On the Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies,* 102.

instrument. For example, it is easier to play rubato by oboe in mm. 8-13 (but not after that), 38, 51-52 (but not after that), 69-71; by flute in mm. 71-73.

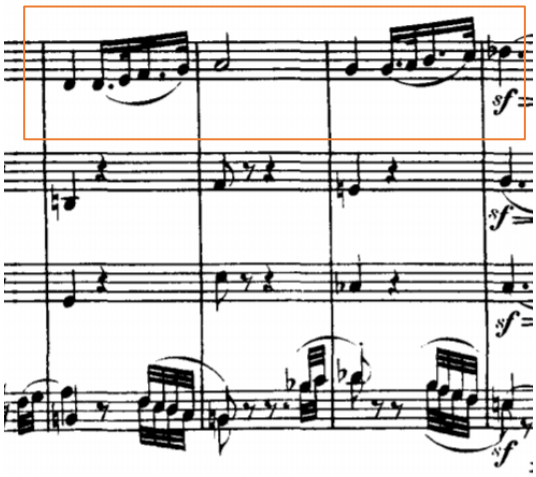
mm. 8-13: For oboe solo, refer to the previous comment regarding mm. 1-5, 30-32, 104-11, 238-first beat of 245.

mm. 18, 109, 111, and 182 (violins); 38 (1st oboe): It is possible to ask the group of the 1st violins (see Example 2 – for mm. 18 and 182; Example 3 for mm. 109 and 111) and oboe (see Example 4) to start the up-going passage later than it's written and then try to compensate the lateness by gradually increasing the speed of the passage towards the upper note making crescendo at the same time. The effect should be as if something is sky-rocketing up by overcoming some kind of the opposite pressure down the earth. In these instances, it would be permissible, I believe, if the upper note of the passage in both instances comes later than the first beat in the rest of the instruments creating some kind of rhythmic irregularity permissible by this technique.

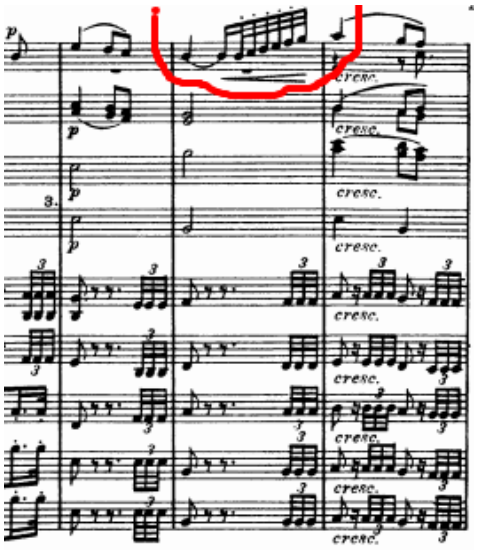
Example 2



Example 3



Example 4



Maggiore, mm. 69-73: Oboe and then flute can apply a complete freedom limited by only artistic sense of proportion and beauty. Please also see comments on mm. mm. 1-5, 30-32, 104-11, 238-first beat of 245. It is possible to extend the application of the rubato to mm. 74-75. However, it will be significantly more difficult to apply because of the simultaneous playing of the melody by the above instruments and the 1st bassoon.

Application of the 'Later Type of Tempo Rubato

mm. 27-29: This passage can be varied in tempo by the group of cellos, particularly because of the *espressivo* and *decrescendo* markings inserted by the composer. Likewise, mm. 47-50, although note marked *espressivo*, can be played rubato despite the involvement of both flutes and clarinets, 1st bassoon, 2nd oboe, and 3rd horn.

mm. 47-50: Please see the previous comment. The tempo can accelerate barely perceptible on the first crescendo only and slow down on decrescendo. The second crescendo should not accelerate in order to have time to gain energy for the *sforzando* in m. 50.

mm. 67-68: In performance practice, these measures are sometimes slowed down in order to prepare for the entrance of the new theme in a new key that follows.

m. 84: Sometimes tempo pushed a little bit here as well. The return back happens through a slight *rallentando* in m. 89 by m. 90.

mm. 103-104: These measures are sometimes slightly retarded and the first beat in *piano* is placed with a light delay.

mm. 114-57: If the main tempo in m. 114 is quickened then the compensation for the energy collected during the section between mm. 114-51 can be released and calmed dawn in mm. 152-57 by slightly stretching time in these measures. The stretching of time should be applied, however, very judicious and by a very small degree because Beethoven helps to achieve the same effect by means of the larger note values, applied *decrescendo*, and *sotto voce* marking. Therefore, the applied *rallentando* should only carefully highlight the effect already notated in the score by other means than the tempo rubato.

mm. 168-72: Sometimes these measures are used to slow down the tempo a bit to arrive at a slower rendering of the opening mournful theme by an oboe and clarinet in F (m. 173).

mm. 181-84: These very expressive bars are sometimes given more time to be ‘digested’ by the listeners.

mm. 187-91: These measures are sometimes taken slower than the similar section in F (mm. 173-80).

mm. 212-13: Sometimes a rallentando is applied in m. 212 to prepare the appearance of a new theme in the next measure. The section starting in m. 213 sometimes performed slightly faster. However, it is rather a very subtle quickening of tempo.

mm. 229-45: Sometimes, general gradual rallentando is applied through the end of the movement with additional tempo fluctuations on the way.

mm. 229-30: Sometimes these bars are stretched in order to allow more time to articulate the sighs in winds and strings.

mm. 232-37: There are different interpretative possibilities here: A) strict tempo; B) almost imperceptible and gradual *rallentando* with more of it in the last measure; C) the same as previous but applying a little *accelerando* with *crescendo* and *rallentando* with *diminuendo* (with more *rallentando* in the last measure).

m. 246: This measure is sometimes retarded significantly, particularly if gradual rallentando is applied in the section mm. 229-45. The slowed down temp allows it to be conducted in 8-beat pattern.

Movement III – Scherzo

The running nature of this scherzo movement in the outer sections does not provide room for application of any type of tempo modification.

Trio, m. 167: Sustained chords on the first beats of mm. 167, 183, and 225 are usually prolonged and the rest of the upward passage is slightly hurried.

m. 431-End: Starting from the m. 431, the speed sometimes accelerates slightly and gradually through the end of the piece. This creates a very exciting effect.

Movement IV– Finale – Allegro molto

Natalie Bauer-Lechner, a faithful friend of Gustav Mahler and a violist, who kept private notes on her meetings with the composer, left an account about Mahler's application of the 'later' type of tempo rubato in the *Allegro molto* section of *Eroica*'s *Finale*. She recalled in 1898,

> Of the examples which he gave us, let me mention only the beginning of the last movement of the '*Eroica*,' 'which is always performed wrongly': Mahler sang the passage as the bad conductors perform it, and said: 'They mistake this for the theme (after the preceding stormy opening) and consequently take it far too quickly, instead of realizing its true meaning. Beethoven is trying it out meditatively — then playfully he is learning to walk — he gets into his stride gradually. That's why the latter part of it — like an answer — should follow rather more quickly. Above this foundation, which serves as accompaniment throughout the whole piece, the themes sing out in all their fullness — and must by no means be rushed through casually.'[151]

mm. 30-31, 38-39, 54-55, 70-71, 94-95, 102-103: When approaching *fermata* measures, a *rallentando* is applied on all the recordings in Table 1. This performance principle corroborates one of the rules stated by Türk about the possible places for the use of *ritardando*.[152]

mm. 107-16: Following the principles expressed by Türk,[153] Czerny,[154] Kullak,[155] and Riemann,[156] these measures can be accelerated. We have here the continuous example of

[151] Natalie Bauer-Lechner, *Erinnerunqen an Gustav Mahler* (Recollections of Gustav Mahler), trans. Dika Newlin, ed. Peter Franklin (Vienna, 1923), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 112.

[152] "The tempo is taken gradually slower for tones before certain fermatas."

[153] "Certain thoughts, which are repeated in a more intensified manner (generally higher) require the tempo to be increased to some extent."

[154] "Rule 14. … when the transition is composed of rapid … notes, then … according to circumstances, even an accelerando would be more suitable."

[155] "Accelerando is, as a rule, appropriately employed in places where brilliancy succeeds quietness."

[156] "… accelerate on *crescendo*"

thoughts which are repeated in a more intensified manner as well as the *crescendo* mark in mm. 111-12.

m. 117: If accelerando is applied in the previous section (mm. 107-16), then the energy accumulated by the momentum in those measures can be released by slightly holding back the tempo in the quiet section starting in this measure.

mm. 191-98: In this measure, tempo is sometimes held back, due to artistic and/or practical reasons. From the artistic standpoint, rules #6 and #7 by Czerny can be applied here.[157] practically, the very fast virtuosic passage in the 1st flute sometimes requires a more held-back tempo to accommodate the player.

mm. 246-58:

A) These measures serve as an example of a possible acceleration of tempo, without it being literally notated. Beethoven achieves a great emotional climax here exclusively by means of rhythmic and harmonic intensification. The melodic line represented here by the 1st violins, oboes, and bassoons repeats two sets of two two-measure motifs (eight measures total) in the same "forte" dynamic sustained already for 35 measures. If these last eight measures (mm. 246-53), culminating on two massive chords (mm. 254-55) are played in the same tempo and the same dynamic, it results in a long section played loudly for too long. That is why, following the principle that repetitive phrases should be altered in some way, it is necessary to consider changing some element of the performance. One of the possible solutions is to apply an *accelerando* to the last sets of the most repetitive phrases.

[157] "Rule 6 — On the diminuendo of a part which was just before very lively, as also on brilliant passages, when suddenly a run occurs which requires a soft and delicate rendering."
Rule 7 — "On all embellishments of many quick notes, which one finds it difficult to get comfortably into the strict measure of time."

B) After the two massive chords, mm. 256-57 starts with an octave unison played *subito piano* and sustained for two measures. Since this piano unison comes after the intense episode described above, these two measures in *piano* dynamic provide a great opportunity to rest and release the tension. Therefore, this unison is sometimes sustained longer than two measures (as if it has a fermata in m. 256).

m. 258: The soft variation that follows sometimes is slightly held back as a tender music that follows the preceding tumultuous section. Weingartner also suggested holding the tempo back in this section.[158]

mm. 346-48: Performances often performer this section with a ritard before the fermata in m. 348.[159]

Movement IV– Finale – Poco Andante

mm. 349-64: Marked *con espressione* (with expression), the beginning of this section is traditionally played with a large amount of the 'later' type of tempo rubato.[160]

mm. 358 and 360: With the consecutive solo lines of the 1st clarinet and oboe, in these two measures Beethoven clearly alludes to the solos of the 1st oboe and violins in the *Marcia*

[158] "It seems to me advisable to introduce a somewhat more restful time at the entry of the C major (bar 258) by means of a slight *ritenuto* in the two preceding bars (the G of the horns). It is also better for the following fugato, which is essentially more complicated than the first one beginning at bar 117, not to be played too fast (Quarter=126 at the most)." Weingartner, *On the Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies,* 102.

[159] "The tempo is taken gradually slower for tones before certain fermatas."

[160] According to Czerny's "Rule #10," tempo modification is possible "Almost wherever the composer has marked 'espressivo."

funèbre.[161] Therefore, with the steady beats in the strings and horns, both solo instruments can apply the 'earlier' tempo rubato technique here.

m. 392: On the fourth beat of this measure, there is an extremely tense harmony with "B-flat" and "A" sounding simultaneously. Riemann in his *Music-Lexicon* suggests:

> Further, the rule holds good, that anything specially striking in the course of a passage of simple melody, rhythm, and harmony, should be made prominent, accentuated; especially, from harmonic considerations, chords which are foreign to the tonic, or detached, and sharply dissonant sounds.[162]

Therefore, it is advisable to make the fourth beat of this measure very prominent by a slight ritardando applied to it and by starting it a beat before. The beginning of the next measure can move a little bit faster to compensate for the slackening of time in the previous measure.

mm. 429-30: A Rallentando may be successfully applied here.

Conclusions

The topics of character and spirit of Beethoven's compositions were widely discussed during his life. Beethoven considered his creative work as a sacred divine mission to educate, uplift, and transform mankind.

According to accounts, he performed his own music quite fast, yet never for the sake of virtuosity only. His playing was full of expression, quite free and each time different in terms of tempo and tempo deviation, yet keeping the general tempo of a composition. However, he didn't

[161] See comments to mm. 18, 109, 111, and 182 (violins); 38 (1st oboe) on pp. 88-89.
[162] Hugo Riemann,. *Musik-Lexikon.* 4th ed., trans. J. S. Shedlock (New York: Da Capo, 1970), 623.

like the association of his music with the 'earlier' type of capricious and unstable rubato used by Italian singers.

Beethoven recommended to his students that they sing a perplexing passage or hear a good wind player or violinist in order to find the right mode of rendering. Wagner further developed Beethoven's idea in his theory of Melos as a means to find the right tempo. He also introduced an idea of slower renderings in order to appreciate the philosophical and expressive depths of Beethoven's music. After Beethoven's death, the composer's principles of expressivity were overshadowed by the growing influence of the virtuosic performance style embodied by Mendelssohn. In 1869, Wagner wrote the essay *Über das Dirigieren* defending the principles established by Beethoven and reproaching Mendelssohn and his followers for overly fast and inaccurate performances. Wagnerian ideas, supported by his composition and conducting activities, exerted significant influence on performance traditions during the second half of the 19th century. His most notable followers Liszt and Bülow continued implementing his ideas, and later through Weingartner, delivering and firmly imprinting them in the early 20th century's recordings.

Tempo and metronome markings in Beethoven's music have always been famously controversial. However, despite the significance of the *Eroica* in Beethoven's oeuvre and for the history of western classical music altogether, there are few sources that provide practical information about tempo decisions from a performer's perspective. Beethoven was very particular and detailed about tempo designations and made distinctions between the main and modifying Italian terms. He was one of the very first ardent proponents of the metronome and

believed that metronome indications can provide valuable information about the general tempo of a piece. Beethoven specified tempo and metronome speeds for every movement and even sections (as in *Finale*) of the *Eroica*.

A few important conclusions resulting from my research:

- Tempi in Beethoven's time were generally faster than in the modern era, particularly in slow and moderately-paced music;
- *Eroica*'s notated metronome speeds and tempo designations are all perfectly playable, although sometimes very fast.
- *Eroica*'s metronome markings should be given extremely serious consideration, though after starting a movement, tempo may, of course, vary.
- It is highly improbable that Beethoven's metronome speeds can be slower more than 1-2 BPM even if one can presuppose that the device the composer used was not functioning properly;
- While the metronome indications might have been affected by the composer's deafness, it is unlikely that the difference could be more than 3-4 BPM at most;
- *Eroica* tempo choices by some of the great 20th-century German conductors were influenced by Wagner's ideals of profundity and slowness, but are contrary to Beethoven's indications notated in the score and most likely do not resemble Beethoven's own performance ideals;
- Despite the attempts of the HIP movement's conductors to respect Beethoven's metronome speeds, their *Eroica* recordings vary significantly in tempo range. However, their speeds are generally faster and closer to the score's notation than in the performances of their non-HIP counterparts;

- One possible reason that HIP conductors don't adhere to Beethoven's metronome markings is the existence of a personal hierarchy of performance principles and priorities. In this hierarchy, the desire to reveal the potentialities of a piece in a most impactful way has a higher priority than a need to adhere to the composer's tempo and metronome indications;
- Composers do not always follow their own prescribed tempi when performing their own music; therefore, *Eroica*'s metronome indications should be taken as guides, rather than tyrannical obligations;
- Beethoven's notation in the *Eroica* suggests the application of two main types of tempo rubato technique: either by a solo instrument while the rest of the ensemble plays in strict tempo, or by the whole ensemble;
- A number of objective and subjective factors can affect the tempo choices of a conductor, including the size of the hall and ensemble; reverberation time; blood pressure; adrenaline; time of the day; food; weather; mood; and personal life circumstances.

I hope that this research contributes to the scholarly literature on the topic of tempo, metronome marks, and character in Beethoven's compositions and provides a practical guide to some important performance issues in the *Eroica.*

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