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## Florestan Reading Fidelio

Genius is the introduction of a new element into the intellectual universe. – Wordsworth<sup>1</sup>

Ideas interest us either for their content . . . or their origins, their history, their circumstances. . . . That which is new interests us less, for one sees that so much can be made out of the old. – Novalis<sup>2</sup>

What an opera *Fidelio* is! I do not say that every idea in it appeals to me completely, but I would like to know the name of the opera that could have a more profound effect. . . . Do you find in it a single number with which Beethoven broke new ground? I do not.  
– Mendelssohn (as quoted by J. C. Lobe)<sup>3</sup>

Christopher Reynolds

### I

**R**omantic composers, writers, and artists worked in a culture that valued both originality and tradition. Those who aspired to greatness, to a reputation for genius, had to guard their claims to originality. Were there not an equally strong desire to be lauded in comparison to the revered masters of preceding generations, to take a place alongside the forefathers of the tradition, originality would have been at once easier to attain and less prized. In *Also sprach Zarathustra*, Nietzsche expressed the relationship of tradition and originality in teleological terms: the creator progressed through two stages defined first by the capacity to bear the weight of tradition—symbolized by the camel—and second by rebellion against the tradition—symbolized by the lion. Only then could the third and truly creative stage, that of the child, follow.<sup>4</sup> More recent views, mine included, see originality and tradition in an ongoing state of tension with each other.<sup>5</sup>

1. “Essay, Supplementary to the Preface,” in *The Poetical Works of Wordsworth*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, rev. Ernest de Selincourt (London: Oxford UP, 1969), p.750.

2. Novalis, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Hildburg and Werner Kohlschmidt (Gütersloh: S. Mohn, 1967), p.427; I quote here from Mark Evan Bonds, *Wordless Rhetoric: Musical Form and the Metaphor of the Oration* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1991), p.168.

3. Johann Christian Lobe, “Conversations with Felix Mendelssohn,” trans. Susan Gillespie, in *Mendelssohn and His World*, ed. R. Larry Todd (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991), pp.187–205, on p.193.

4. On the three metamorphoses (or transformations), see Laurence Lampert, *Nietzsche’s Teaching: An Interpretation of “Thus Spoke Zarathustra”* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1986), pp.19 and 32–35.

5. Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1973), and *A Map of Misreading*

Because of the correlation between genius and originality in the nineteenth century, composers since Mozart and Haydn have been quicker to deny rather than acknowledge musical debts to predecessors and contemporaries. Beethoven, for example, after being asked in 1798 how frequently he attended operas by Mozart, reportedly demurred, "I do not know them and do not care to hear the music of others lest I forfeit some of my originality." This denial simply cannot be taken seriously. Already as a member of the orchestra for the Court Theater in Bonn, Beethoven had performed several operas by various composers, including three by Mozart: *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1789 and 1791), *Don Giovanni* (1790), and *Le nozze di Figaro* (1790).<sup>6</sup> Moreover, after arriving in Vienna in search of Mozart's spirit, he had written variations on several of Mozart's arias: "Se vuol ballare" (1793), "Là ci darem la mano" (1796), and from 1798, the same year in which Beethoven revealed his anxiety about guarding his originality, he wrote his Variations on "Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen" from *Die Zauberflöte*.

Young Beethoven evidently studied whatever Mozart he could get his hands on. A sketch leaf that he probably wrote in Bonn in late 1790 (now preserved in the Kafka Miscellany) includes a six-measure phrase under which Beethoven wrote a unique attribution: "This entire passage has been stolen from the Mozart symphony in C minor." Beneath this passage Beethoven wrote a slightly varied form that he immediately labeled as his own: "Beethoven ipse."<sup>7</sup> Lewis Lockwood recently proposed three possible explanations for these self-conscious attributions: (1) after writing what he thought was his own theme, Beethoven realized that it was actually by Mozart and therefore altered it; (2) Beethoven deliberately tried to write in a Mozartean style while retaining "his own voice"; and related to this, (3) Beethoven acknowledged that for any theme or figuration he wrote, there was a possible Mozartean model.<sup>8</sup> Without additional evidence, a choice between these

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(Oxford: Oxford UP, 1975); Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (New York: Methuen, 1985); Kenneth Hull, *Brahms the Allusive: Extra-Compositional Reference in the Instrumental Music of Johannes Brahms* (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1989); Joseph Straus, *Remaking the Past: Musical Modernism and the Influence of the Tonal Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1990); Kevin Korsyn, "Towards a New Poetics of Musical Influence," *Music Analysis* 10 (1991), 3–72; Mark Evan Bonds, "Sinfonia anti-eroica: Berlioz's *Harold en Italie* and the Anxiety of Beethoven's Influence," *JM* 10 (1992), 417–62; Richard Taruskin, "Revising Revision," *JAMS* 46 (1993), 114–38; and my "Beyond Absolute and Program Music: Fausts, Forests, and Other Texted Allusions" (forthcoming).

6. Thayer-Forbes, p.208. For the operas that Beethoven played, see the lists on pp.97–98.

7. Joseph Kerman, *Kafka*, I (fac.) fol.88<sup>r</sup>; II (transcription), 228 and 293; Lewis Lockwood, "Beethoven before 1800: The Mozart Legacy," *Beethoven Forum* 3 (1994), 39–40.

8. Lockwood, "Beethoven before 1800," p.41.

three options cannot be made. Yet whichever possibility, it is remarkable how few changes—more to register and phrasing than pitches and harmonies—sufficed to make Mozart Beethoven in Beethoven's eyes.

For students of all kinds, emulation was recommended. In his *School of Practical Composition*, Carl Czerny advised novices to model their compositional structures on masterpieces:

Having here given the harmonic skeleton or outline of the two Studies by Cramer and Chopin, we must observe to the pupil, how extremely useful and requisite it is, for him to write out similar ones of very many distinguished compositions, such as Mozart's and Beethoven's Sonatas, Quartetts and Symphonies. . . . Equally as useful is it for the pupil, by way of exercise, occasionally to write out a composition of his own on such an harmonic skeleton; which, however, in respect to the ideas, melodies, and passages, must be entirely different from the chosen original.<sup>9</sup>

Although published in 1848, Czerny's treatise was begun in the mid 1830s. Indeed, in 1832 Czerny had supplied a remarkable demonstration of this very technique by publishing a skeletal analysis for the first movement of Beethoven's "Waldstein" Sonata in an essay included in his edition of Anton Reicha's *Vollständiges Lehrbuch der musikalischen Composition* (Vienna: Diabelli, 1832).<sup>10</sup>

This method of working explains the many structural similarities between the finales of Brahms's Piano Concerto No. 1, op. 15, and Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3.<sup>11</sup> But, to an extent not yet realized, Brahms had already emulated Beethoven in his Sonata in C Major, op. 1, which biographers and critics routinely cite as the earliest example of Brahms alluding to Beethoven (exs. 1a and b). By beginning his first published opus with a five-measure reference to the exact rhythms of the

9. Carl Czerny, *School of Practical Composition*, op. 600, trans. John Bishop, 3 vols. (London: Robert Cocks, 1849), I, 93.

10. Czerny's essay, "Über die Formen und den Bau jedes Tonstückes," has been published in *Musiktheorie I* (1986), 261–76. The plan and discussion of Beethoven's op. 53 are also included in *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century, Volume 1: Fugue, Form and Style*, ed. Ian Bent (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), pp. 184–96. For a discussion of Czerny's essay, see Peter Cahn, "Carl Czerny's erste Beschreibung der Sonatenform (1832)," *Musiktheorie I* (1986), 277–79. Regarding the date of Czerny's *Practical School of Composition*, see William S. Newman, "Communication," *JAMS* 20 (1967), 513–15.

11. Charles Rosen, "Influence: Plagiarism and Inspiration," *19CM* 4 (1980), 91–93; and Reynolds, "A Choral Symphony by Brahms?" *19CM* 9 (1985), 17. Brahms's deference to Beethoven extends even to the opus number, which he surely realized belonged to Beethoven's First Piano Concerto.

## Example 1:

a. Beethoven, Sonata for Piano, op.106, movt.I, mm.1-2.

b. Brahms, Sonata for Piano, op.1, movt.I, mm.1-2.

c. Beethoven, Sonata for Piano, op.53, movt.I, mm.1-3.

d. Beethoven, Sonata for Piano, op.53, movt.I, mm.1-3, metric reduction.

The image contains four musical excerpts labeled a, b, c, and d. Excerpt a shows the beginning of Beethoven's Sonata for Piano, op.106, movement I, measures 1-2, in B-flat major, 3/4 time, marked 'Allegro'. It features a treble and bass staff with a descending scale in the right hand and a descending arpeggio in the left hand. Excerpt b shows the beginning of Brahms' Sonata for Piano, op.1, movement I, measures 1-2, in B-flat major, 3/4 time, marked 'Allegro'. It features a treble and bass staff with a descending scale in the right hand and a descending arpeggio in the left hand. Excerpt c shows the beginning of Beethoven's Sonata for Piano, op.53, movement I, measures 1-3, in C major, 3/4 time, marked 'Allegro con brio'. It features a single bass staff with a descending scale. Excerpt d shows the metric reduction of the beginning of Beethoven's Sonata for Piano, op.53, movement I, measures 1-3, in C major, 3/4 time, marked 'Allegro con brio'. It features a single bass staff with a descending scale.

“Hammerklavier” Sonata, op.106, Brahms wittingly or not joined the company of Hummel, Mendelssohn, and doubtless others as well, who had derived opening motives from this late sonata by Beethoven (Mendelssohn’s early B $\flat$ -Major Sonata was published posthumously as op.106).

For his Sonata op.1, Brahms followed Czerny’s advice to the letter. His first movement apes the formal plan of the first movement of the “Waldstein” Sonata for much of the exposition (see Table 1). Virtually the same length, the exposition of the “Waldstein” requires eighty-five measures, Brahms’s eighty-seven. The first phrase repeats a step lower in B $\flat$ ; where Beethoven has a descending scale on the dominant, Brahms substitutes a descending arpeggio. The first phrase returns in C major in a varied format, Beethoven’s with sixteenth notes, Brahms’s with imitation; both variants repeat four measures later, this time not a step down but up, in D minor. This quickly leads in both to a bridge that begins in B major functioning as the dominant of E. The second theme is preceded by a decrescendo; Beethoven marks the second theme *dolce e molto legato*, while Brahms specifies simply *dolce*; and both begin the second group in the middle and upper registers, with the left hand using a treble clef for precisely two measures. After the end of the first theme group, the similarities wane. The second theme group of each sonata has several pedals, and the developments move first to flat then to sharp keys. Given this consistent series of formal correspondences, it may be no coincidence that, although in the rhythm of his opening motive, Brahms adheres to the rhythms and staccato articulations of Beethoven’s op.106, in his choice of pitches he took from the “Waldstein” Sonata (exs.1c and d).

Brahms departs from his musical guide deliberately and with considerable ingenuity (ex.2). Beethoven ends the bridge by emphasizing an A in the upper register, the dominant seventh that then resolves into the G $\sharp$  to begin the second theme. At the end of *his* bridge section, Brahms also stresses this dominant-seventh A, preparing the expected resolution down to G $\sharp$  or G $\flat$ . But that resolution never arrives. Instead, the A abruptly becomes the new tonic. Having departed, Brahms does not

Table 1: Comparison of Brahms op.1 and Beethoven op.53  
Exposition of movt.I, Key of C major

<i>Brahms</i>	<i>Harmony</i>	<i>Beethoven</i>
1st theme, m.1	I	1st theme, m.1
1st theme, m.5	$\flat$ VII	1st theme, m.9
descending scale on V, m.11	I	descending arpeggio on V, m.16
1st theme varied, m.14	I	1st theme varied, m.17
1st theme varied, m.18	ii	1st theme varied, m.21
bridge, mm.23–33	V/III	bridge, mm.28–34
decrescendo to 2nd theme		decrescendo to 2nd theme
2nd theme = dolce		2nd theme = dolce e molto legato
in middle and upper registers		in middle and upper registers

Example 2:

a. Beethoven, Sonata for Piano, op.53, movt.I, end of bridge, beginning of second theme.

a.

b. Brahms, Sonata for Piano, op.1, movt.I, end of bridge, beginning of second theme.

b.

rejoin the Beethovenian fold in the first movement. The recapitulation is a studied avoidance of the “Waldstein” model (see Table 2), both in the type of musical event included in the recapitulation and in the harmonic plan. It is as if Brahms initially adheres to the model only so that he can later reject it.

In his finale, Brahms also turned back to Beethoven, to the finale of the C#-Minor Sonata, op.27, no.2. Again the influence shapes Brahms’s beginning: the Alberti-like bass pedal with well-accented or articulated notes, the *sforzato* chords that intrude on the last weak beats of the measure, and the phrase structure of the beginning—after phrases of eight plus six measures and a pause in m.14, both composers return to the beginning. Beethoven marks this movement *Presto agitato*; Brahms also has *Presto agitato, ma non troppo*, though at the end of the movement.

Interpreted in the light of its relations to Beethoven, Brahms’s op.1 thus looms as a musical declaration of independence. The outer movements of the sonata begin with their homages to op.106, op.53, and op.27, but Brahms uses these references principally as points of departure for his own musical journey. Such close adherence to formal structure might be seen as evidence of Brahms’s youth and his acceptance of not only the authority of Beethoven as the appropriate model but also the merits of composing from models.

But mature composers also found inspiration in turn-of-the-century Beethoven. Schubert’s Octet from 1824 derives much from Beethoven’s Septet of 1799–1800, and critics have long heard echoes of Beethoven in compositions written during the one year that Schubert survived Beethoven. Charles Rosen, for example, detects “numerous reminiscences of Beethoven’s opus 28 and opus 31 in the last three piano sonatas.”<sup>12</sup> Scott Burnham recently described the power that music from Beethoven’s middle period has had over critics and performers to the present day;<sup>13</sup> indeed, Brahms’s choice of models for his first published sonata, his choice of Beethoven’s Third Piano Concerto for his First Piano Concerto, and the sustained influence of *Fidelio* discussed below indicate the impact of Beethoven’s works composed from about 1801 to 1814.<sup>14</sup>

12. Rosen, *Sonata Forms* (New York: Norton, 1980), p.286. See also Richard Rosenberg, *Die Klaviersonaten Ludwig van Beethovens: Studien über Form und Vortrag*, 2 vols. (Olten: Urs Graf, 1957). Regarding earlier works, see Edward Cone, “Schubert’s Beethoven,” *MQ* 56 (1970), 779–93; and Beth Sharnar, “Three Missing Months in Schubert’s Biography: A Further Consideration of Beethoven’s Influence on Schubert,” *MQ* 73 (1989), 417–34.

13. Scott Burnham, “On the Programmatic Reception of Beethoven’s *Eroica* Symphony,” *Beethoven Forum* 1 (1992), 24.

14. Leon Plantinga discusses the dating of op.37 in “When Did Beethoven Compose His Third Piano Concerto?” *JM* 7 (1989), 275–307.

Table 2: Comparison of Brahms op.1 and Beethoven op.53:  
 Harmonic plan of recapitulation, movt. I, Key of C major

<i>Musical Event</i>	<i>Beethoven</i>	<i>Brahms</i>
1st theme	I	V <sup>7</sup> /IV
1st theme, repeated	♭VII	i, ♭II, II
scale descends to pauses on	♭VI, ♭VII	no
1st theme varied	I	no
1st theme varied	ii	no
bridge	V/VI	V/III to V/v

Musicological studies are rife with identifications of musical indebtedness; it is no great achievement to prove once again that Brahms and Schubert labored in Beethoven's shadow. But the abiding interest of borrowings between composers already known to admire each other is less in reaffirming lines of influence than in trying to ascertain how common and how conscious such practices were, on the one hand, and in trying to explain the function and meaning of different kinds of borrowings, on the other. Quotations, allusions, and structural modelings may differ from each other in terms of function or content, or in terms of the relative fidelity of the later work to the model. And yet they may also have much in common: the symbolic function of a quotation within a new musical context may be similar to that of an allusion, and, as I shall argue, a composer could adapt either a quotation or an allusion to a new context in ways also evident in a composer's adaptation of an earlier formal plan in a structural modeling. Whether with appropriations that may be explained as youthful endeavors—as in Brahms's interest in Beethoven's "Waldstein"—or with Beethoven's lifelong confrontation with Haydn and Mozart, there is much to learn about how far and how successfully a composer balanced the demand to be novel with the need (or desire) to work within a tradition.

## II

In the examination of the motivic debts and influences of *Fidelio* that follows in the third and fourth sections of this study, I shall treat motives as musical-textual entities rather than solely as collections of pitches organized in some identifiable rhythmic pattern. The motives in *Fidelio* have often been discussed, both for their connections with other works and for evidence of how Beethoven used motives in



support of drama; among the works of many, contributions by Ernst Bücken, Winton Dean, Erich Schenk, Philip Gossett, and Carl Dahlhaus are notable.<sup>15</sup> Since *Fidelio* derived much from French revolutionary opera, and since French revolutionary opera made use of reminiscence motives, Dahlhaus maintained that we may reasonably expect to find “recurring musical symbols” in *Fidelio*.<sup>16</sup> For Dahlhaus, the question of how Beethoven used motives as musical symbols was a part of a larger question of how Beethoven’s motivic procedures and formal structures differed from those of Wagner: “Motivic associations across large stretches of a work, and the formal integration of motives within individual closed-form numbers, are, to a very great extent, mutually exclusive.”<sup>17</sup> In this view, Beethoven created motivic-dramatic associations within numbers, while Wagner’s use of open-ended structures defined by Leitmotifs proved antithetical to individual numbers altogether.

Although I shall contest Dahlhaus’s conclusion, my concern with motives is less how they were used within a work than how the symbolic significance that motives have in one work can derive from a like significance in another. In some cases, motives achieve a topical identity by virtue of a particular rhythmic profile or instrumental association, as in military or pastoral music. And in some cases a particular motivic contour such as a tritone or an intervallic pattern such as a chromatic descending tetrachord can convey a general dramatic association (although not at all as uniformly as Deryck Cooke suggests).<sup>18</sup> But in many cases the meaning of a motive depends on an association with a text or specific dramatic situation, regardless of the musical function(s) that the motive will serve within a composition. Whether a Leitmotiv in *Tristan* or a so-called reminiscence motive in

15. Ernst Bücken, *Der heroische Stil in der Oper* (Leipzig: F. Kistner and C. F. W. Siegel, 1924); Winton Dean, “Beethoven and Opera,” *The Beethoven Companion*, ed. Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune (London: Faber, 1971), pp.353–57 and 373–81; Erich Schenk, “Über Tonsymbole in Beethovens *Fidelio*,” in *Beethoven-Studien*, ed. Erich Schenk (Vienna: Hermann Bohlhaus, 1970), pp.223–52; Philip Gossett, “The Arias of Marzelline: Beethoven as a Composer of Opera,” *BJ* 10 (1978/1981), 141–83, esp. 174–78; and Carl Dahlhaus, *Ludwig van Beethoven: Approaches to His Music*, trans. Mary Whittall (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), pp.188–93.

16. Dahlhaus, *Ludwig van Beethoven*, p.188.

17. *Ibid.*

18. Deryck Cooke, *The Language of Music* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1959). Cooke’s examples of general textual associations for different motivic patterns omit contrary examples, particularly when he includes motives from works written before 1600. But even for music written after 1770, he ignores the possibility that a single sequence of pitches (rhythm mattered less to him) can have multiple textual associations. Like motives can convey different textual implications by virtue of differences in rhythm, and also in orchestration, dynamics, and tempo.

*Fidelio*, motives could have textual associations. As with any aspect of a musical work—formal structure, subject matter, orchestration—motives could be derived from an earlier composition, either by the same composer or by an admired colleague or predecessor.

For amateur and professional musicians in the nineteenth century, the boundaries between texted and untexted music were crossed much more frequently, and less self-consciously, than they are today. Songs could be performed in public without words, as when Brahms and Joseph Joachim included a song by Schumann in a concert they gave, or as with Liszt's many piano versions of Schubert Lieder; instrumental works were given vocal titles such as *Ballade*, or *Lieder ohne Worte*; and instrumental works of all sorts could be published or sung in public with a text, as happened with a C-Minor Fantasia by C. P. E. Bach, or as Chopin and Pauline Viardot-Garcia did with mazurkas by Chopin. It was not at all uncommon for slow movements of Beethoven sonatas and symphonies to be given sacred and secular texts and performed as motets or choral songs, in the United States as well as Europe; thus the choirmaster of Grace Church in New York set Psalm 30 ("O lord, thy mercy") to the variation theme of Beethoven's Sonata op.26 and published it in 1852, along with similar textings and retextings of works by Spohr, Mozart, Bellini, and others.<sup>19</sup> This was hardly the first texting of the op.26 variation theme. According to Franz Wegeler, Beethoven himself had asked him (Wegeler) to text it, because Beethoven was impressed with his previous texting of the Adagio from the Piano Sonata, op.2, no.1.<sup>20</sup> And Friedrich Silcher had also included a version of it with a text entitled "Sehnsucht" in his set *Melodien aus Beethovens Sonaten und Sinfonien zu Liedern* sometime soon after 1829.<sup>21</sup>

The texting of previously composed instrumental works is an extreme form of

19. William A. King, *New York Grace Church Collection of Sacred Music Selected and Arranged from the Classical and Sacred Works of Great Composers and Adapted to the Psalms and Hymns of the Protestant Episcopal Church* (New York: Thos. N. Stanford, 1852), pp.10–11.

20. Bonds, *Wordless Rhetoric*, p.173. Regarding various associations of texts, programs, and narratives with instrumental music in the nineteenth century, Bonds has much of interest (pp.169–76). See also R. Larry Todd, "'Gerade das Lied wie es dasteht': On Text and Meaning in Mendelssohn's *Lieder ohne Worte*," in *Musical Humanism and Its Legacy*, ed. Nancy Kovaleff Baker and Barbara Russano Hanning, Festschrift Series, no.11 (Stuyvesant, N.Y.: Pendragon, 1992), pp.355–79.

21. See Paul Mies, "Friedrich Silchers Liedbearbeitungen Beethovenscher Melodien," *BJ* 3 (1957–58), 111–26. And I concur with William Ashton Ellis and Klaus Kropfingher that this same variation theme lies behind the first theme of Wagner's "Wesendonck" Sonata; see Klaus Kropfingher, *Wagner and Beethoven: Richard Wagner's Reception of Beethoven*, trans. Peter Palmer (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991), pp.183–84.

an association between text and music. The impulses to supply a narrative or to underlay a text to instrumental works are considered peripheral to the creative process because, however distinguished the individuals who set the text—A. B. Marx and Jérôme-Joseph de Momigny as theorists, Johann Friedrich Reichardt (a friend of Goethe) and Grétry as composers—they had not composed the works and they had supplied their texts after the works had been completed, at times long afterward. Yet it is wrong to separate the impulses evident in what is essentially an act of criticism (“this piece is appropriate for this text”) from the processes we imagine to shape the act of composition, particularly in an age when composers also functioned as critics. Mark Evan Bonds is correct to see a link between the impulse to supply textual interpretations and the musical importance of thematic elaboration. That poetic readings of instrumental works began to occur more frequently after about 1780 is indicative of a new degree of thematicism evident from the 1770s onward.<sup>22</sup>

Composers have always been readers and, if anything, more sensitive to the techniques and accomplishments of their immediate predecessors than critics. As Schumann explained it, reading the works of others was an important source of ideas: “Another way of progressing and of enriching oneself for new creations is the study of other great individuals.”<sup>23</sup> Musical compositions with or without texts are often seen to respond to specific earlier works; lately these responses are portrayed as evidence of Bloomian anxiety, with composers struggling against their recent predecessors, attempting to forge a sense of individuality out of a musical language that has numerous and influential models.<sup>24</sup>

A text added to an instrumental work participates in whatever critical tradition exists for a work in books, articles, letters. This is as true for individual motives as it is for entire works, as when Peter Cornelius texted the first-movement Allegro con brio theme of Beethoven’s Third Symphony in his *Beethoven-Lied*—his contribution to the Beethoven centenary of 1870. The text, his own, adheres to the then well-established programmatic tradition for this movement of the symphony, albeit

22. Bonds, *Wordless Rhetoric*, pp.169–70.

23. *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker von Robert Schumann*, ed. Martin Kreisig, 2 vols. (5th rev. edn. Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1914), I, 389. I have slightly altered the translation found in *Robert Schumann: On Music and Musicians*, ed. Konrad Wolff, trans. Paul Rosenfeld (New York: Norton, 1969), p.75.

24. Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*, and *A Map of Misreading*; Straus, *Remaking the Past*; Korsyn, “Towards a New Poetics of Musical Influence”; Bonds, “*Sinfonia anti-eroica*”; and Taruskin, “Revising Revision.”

adding a nationalistic voice to the warrior's heroic struggle for truth, love, and freedom.<sup>25</sup> Beethoven's opening motive appears three times at progressively higher intervals with the following verses (in italics), which conclude three separate stanzas:

*Kampf um Licht in ewigem Krieg,  
Sieg der Liebe, Freiheit dein Sieg!  
Schönheitsmacht aus göttlichem Drang,  
Das war unsres Beethoven Sang!*

*Deutsches Herz, du Sieger im Feld,  
Deutsches Volk, du Führer der Welt!  
Führ zur Freiheit Ost und West,  
Das sei dann dein Beethovenfest.*

*Sel'ge Zeit! dir strahlet das Licht,  
Lieb' und Freiheit Kronen dir Flicht;  
Deutscher Herzen glühendster Schlag  
Grüsse dich am Beethoventag!*

In this application of a heroic text to a motive from the *Eroica*, Cornelius followed Wagner, who did so with far greater musical subtlety—and different musical aims—in act III, sc.1, of *Tristan und Isolde*, finished in July 1859. There Wagner recalls not the opening E $\flat$ -major idea, but its E-minor transformation as the new theme of the development. He does so just as the dying Tristan bids Kurvenal farewell, thanks him for his loyalty, and calls him “Mein Schild, mein Schirm in Kampf und Streit.” Wagner varies the meter and modality of the motive (as shown in ex.3), but rhythmic details remain close (both in the accentual position of the pivotal notes and in the rhythm of the closing notes), and the register is identical; moreover, his text is consistent with published interpretations of this movement. The use of this theme for a dying Tristan accords as well with the interpretation that Wilhelm von Lenz proposed in 1860, when he composed a poetic analog for Beethoven's new theme: “I feel I have lived for all ages / And hitched my fame to the stars. / The world shall know that the lion now dies.”<sup>26</sup>

25. Regarding hermeneutical interpretations of the Third Symphony in the nineteenth century, see Burnham, “The Programmatic Reception,” pp.1–24; and Martin Geck and Peter Schleuning, “Geschrieben auf Bonaparte” *Beethoven's “Eroica”*: *Revolution, Reaktion, Rezeption* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1989).

26. “Ich hab' gelebt, ich fühl's, für alle Zeiten / Und an die Sterne knüpft' ich meinen Ruhm. /



express himself symphonically for once, and that had led to *Tristan*.”<sup>30</sup> That Wagner drew not only on symphonic models for some of his musical ideas but on the specific model of the *Eroica* is suggested by an incident that occurred in August 1859, a month after completing act III of *Tristan*. On “a very hot August afternoon,” Wagner expounded to a musical houseguest, the young composer Felix Draeseke, about the “inexhaustible” melodic flow of the *Eroica*. According to Draeseke, Wagner “began to sing the first movement of the ‘Eroica.’ He fell into a violent passion, sang on and on, became very overheated, quite beside himself.”<sup>31</sup> As Lockwood recently observed, this anecdote also relates to Wagner’s subsequent declaration that the success of his dramatic music depended on a symphonic approach to composition: “The art work is a thorough web of basic themes, which, as in a symphonic movement, relate to one another.”<sup>32</sup>

### III

*Fidelio* has always attracted opinions about its musical influences. Mendelssohn’s evaluation quoted at the outset of this study mixes praise for the “profound effect” of the musical ideas with observations about Beethoven’s specific stylistic debt. That passage continues: “I look at the score and listen to the performance, and everywhere I find Cherubini’s dramatic musical style,” an assessment many have seconded, citing in particular the operas *Lodoïska* and *Les Deux Journées*.<sup>33</sup> Among other influences critics have proposed are Pierre Gaveaux’s *Léonore, ou L’amour conjugal* (1798), Ferdinando Paër’s *Leonora, ossia L’amore conjugale* (1804), Étienne Méhul’s *Hélène* (1803), and, not to be overlooked, Mozart. Berlioz recognized in Marzellina’s first aria “the style of the best samples of Mozart.” And several writers have elaborated on Edward Dent’s opinion that *Fidelio* was “the natural sequel” to *Die Zauberflöte*. Gossett observed links to Mozart and *Die Zauberflöte*, comparing Marzellina’s aria, as it began the 1805 version, to Tamino’s C-major aria in the act I

30. *Cosima Wagner’s Diaries*, ed. Martin Gregor-Dellin and Dietrich Mack, trans. Geoffrey Skelton, 2 vols. (London: Collins, 1978–80), entry of 11 December 1878; this passage and others like it are quoted in Dieter Borchmeyer, *Richard Wagner: Theory and Theatre*, trans. Stewart Spencer (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), p.116.

31. Quoted from Lockwood, “*Eroica* Perspectives: Strategy and Design in the First Movement,” in his *Beethoven: Studies in the Creative Process* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1992), p.121.

32. Ibid.; and Wagner, “Ueber die Anwendung der Musik auf das Drama,” in *Richard Wagners Gesammelte Briefe*, ed. Julius Kapp, 14 vols. (Leipzig: Hesse and Becker, 1914), XIII, 290–91.

33. Lobe, “Conversations with Felix Mendelssohn,” p.193. *Lodoïska* (1791) premiered in Vienna in 1802, the first French rescue opera to do so. It is often cited as a major influence on *Fidelio*; Todd, *Mendelssohn and His World*, p.204, n.8; and Dean, “Beethoven and Opera,” pp.333–35 and 373–77.

finale. This finding supplements a longer-standing awareness that Beethoven had also recalled *Die Zauberflöte* in the act I trio, when Marzellina sang of the day when she and Fidelio would be a couple. At that moment Beethoven quotes the duo of Papageno and Papagena, thereby alluding to not only an earlier operatic couple but a particularly unsophisticated couple. The image conveys his assessment of what sort of pair Marzellina and Fidelio would make.<sup>34</sup>

Two passages are commonly recognized as thematic quotations of material from Beethoven's own early works, neither of which would have been known to his Viennese audiences. Of his two sources, one was from *Vestas Feuer*, the opera to a libretto of Emanuel Schikaneder that he began and then discarded in 1803; the other was his remarkable work from Bonn, the Cantata on the Death of Emperor Joseph II (WoO 87) from the spring of 1790. In both cases, the dramatic ideas in *Fidelio* closely followed those of the earlier works. From *Vestas Feuer* Beethoven lightly reworked the G-major duet "Nie war ich so froh wie heute / niemals fühlt' ich diese Freude!" as his equally ecstatic G-major duet "O namen-, namenlose Freude!"<sup>35</sup> Similarly, at the text "O Gott, welch ein Augenblick," the F-major,  $\frac{3}{4}$  section of the second finale quotes a melody from an aria with chorus in his early Cantata. Many scholars have realized not only the musical significance but also the dramatic, noting that the aria text—"Da steigen die Menschen an's Licht"—provided an ideal image for the moment of Florestan's rescue from the dark recesses of the dungeon.<sup>36</sup>

A third and more elaborate self-reference occurs at the very beginning of the act I finale. Beethoven alludes to *Mailed*, op.52, no.4, a song probably written in the early 1790s but only published in the year that *Leonore* premiered, 1805. To start the finale, the prisoners sing reverently of how wonderful it is to be outside in the fortress garden, breathing "free air": "O welche Lust, in freier Luft den Athem

34. Hector Berlioz, *A Critical Study of Beethoven's Nine Symphonies, with a Few Words on His Trios and Sonatas, a Criticism of Fidelio, and an Introductory Essay on Music*, trans. Edwin Evans (London: Wm. Reeves, 1958 [1913]), p.141; Edward J. Dent, intro. to his trans. of *Fidelio, or Wedded Love* (London: Oxford UP, 1938), p.xiv; this passage is quoted in Dean, "Beethoven and Opera," p.379; Gossett, "The Arias of Marzelline," pp.174–78; and Mark Brunswick, "Beethoven's Tribute to Mozart in *Fidelio*," *MQ* 31 (1945), 29–32.

35. For musical examples and a brief discussion, see Dean, "Beethoven and Opera," pp.354–55.

36. Ludwig Schieder, *Der junge Beethoven* (Leipzig: Quelle and Meyer, 1925), pp.398–410; Willy Hess, *Beethovens Oper Fidelio und ihre drei Fassungen* (Zurich: Atlantis, 1953), pp.158–64; and Maynard Solomon, *Beethoven* (New York: Schirmer, 1977), p.49. This passage would later interest Brahms as he wrote his first Piano Concerto (see below, p.161).

## Example 4:

a. Beethoven, *Fidelio*, act I,  
no. 10.

b. Beethoven, *Mailed*, op. 52,  
no. 4, transposed from E♭.

a.

in frei-er Luft den A-them leicht zu he-ben

b.

Wie herr-lich leuch-tet mir die Na-tur

leicht zu heben” (ex.4a).<sup>37</sup> The B♭ motive they sing also begins *Mailed*, where it appears in E♭ but also with a text praising nature: “Wie herrlich leuchtet mir die Natur, wie glänzt die Sonne, wie lacht die Flur!” Although Beethoven ornamented it for the vocal part, the piano accompaniment presents the line unadorned over substantially the same bass line (ex.4b).

But, as Thayer long ago realized, the music of *Mailed* also appears with few changes in an unpublished orchestral aria, “O welch’ ein Leben,” one of two written ca. 1796 for the Singspiel *Die schöne Schusterin* by Ignaz Umlauf.<sup>38</sup> Again nature and this motive are linked, here at the third and final stanza, which speaks of hills, valleys, moon, and sun: “Auf steilen Höhen, im stillen Thal, beim Licht des Mondes, im Sonnenstrahl.” Thus Beethoven turned to this motive on three separate occasions when texts described nature. In *Fidelio* he may have been further reminded of his unpublished aria by the similarity of the opening words: “O welch’ ein Leben” and “O welche Lust.”

Several apparent allusions in *Fidelio* depend on Mozart, including one to a

37. On the ideological character of this scene, see Paul Robinson, “*Fidelio* and the French Revolution,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 3 (1991), 23–48, esp. 29–30. Regarding a date of the early 1790s for *Mailed*, see Barry Cooper, *Beethoven and the Creative Process* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), pp.60–61.

38. Thayer-Forbes, p.194. Thayer assumed that Beethoven had derived *Mailed* from “O welch’ ein Leben.”



## Example 5:

a. Mozart, *Abendempfindung*,  
mm.49–55.

a.

Andante

dann an mei-nem Gra-be wei - nen, trau - ernd mei - ne A - sche seh'n,

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a vocal line in G major, 4/4 time, marked 'Andante'. It consists of 7 measures. The melody starts on G4, moves to A4, then B4, and then descends stepwise through C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, and C4. The lyrics are 'dann an mei-nem Gra-be wei - nen, trau - ernd mei - ne A - sche seh'n,'.

b. *Fidelio*, act I, no. 5.

b.

LEONORA: bitt' - re, bitt' - re Thrä-nen, bitt'-re Thrä - - - - - nen

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a vocal line in G major, 4/4 time. It consists of 7 measures. The melody starts on G4, moves to A4, then B4, and then descends stepwise through C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, and C4. The lyrics are 'LEONORA: bitt' - re, bitt' - re Thrä-nen, bitt'-re Thrä - - - - - nen'.

phrase from Mozart's song *Abendempfindung* (K. 523). At the end of the trio in act I, after Rocco agrees to hire Fidelio, he has Leonora and Marzellina join hands to pledge their union, at which point the three sing of three different kinds of tears: tears of joy (Rocco), sweet tears (Marzellina), and bitter tears (Leonora). Leonora takes the lead in singing a motive that relates closely to an internal phrase from *Abendempfindung*, the first lines of stanza 4: "Werd't ihr dann an meinem Grabe weinen, / trauernd meine Asche seh'n" (ex.5). The musical similarities extend over seven measures of Mozart's song and include details not only of contour but also of steps and leaps and rhythm. The ascending fourth is by step, the descending fourths by leap, and the long stepwise descent through a seventh is rhythmically related. For this moment in *Fidelio*, Mozart's motive provides a symbol of tears, of death, and appropriately, given the job Leonora had just taken, of graves.

If Beethoven's allusion to *Mailed* and through it to "O welch' ein Leben" can be described as an instance of Beethoven alluding to Beethoven quoting Beethoven, another motive in *Fidelio* appears to allude to both Haydn and Mozart. Leonora's act II aria "Komm, Hoffnung" begins with the distinctive theme of Haydn's part-song, *Abendlied zu Gott*. Composed ca. 1796 to a text by Gellert, it was published in 1803 by Breitkopf and Härtel and in 1804 by both Artaria and André.<sup>39</sup> The best estimate of when Beethoven composed Leonora's aria is summer 1805, based on the position of the sketches at the end of Mendelssohn 15.<sup>40</sup> Beethoven wrote an E-major Adagio that uses Haydn's head motive and takes over aspects of the harmonization, such as the appoggiatura on the ninth (ex.6a and b). In Haydn's text the poet thanks God for life and for the undeserved loyalty that God has shown him this day. Beethoven may have intended this as the background for Leonora's aria, which is itself a prayer: "Come, hope, let the last star of the weary not fade, shed light on my goal." An evening song to God of a different kind, it is a prayer that the audience could assume with confidence would be answered. As Beethoven had

39. Anthony van Hoboken, *Joseph Haydn Thematisch-bibliographisches Werkverzeichnis*, vol.II (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1971), pp.236–37.

40. JTW, pp.150–51.

## Example 6:

a. Haydn, *Abendlied zu Gott*.b. *Fidelio*, act I, no.9.c. Mozart, *Don Giovanni*,  
no.19.

a. *Poco Adagio*

Herr, der du mir das Le - ben bis die -

b. *Adagio*

Komm, Hoffnung, lass den letz-ten Stern, den letzten Stern

c. *Andante*

So-la so - la in bu - io lo - co, pal - pi - tar

alluded to Mozart to provide a subtle commentary on what sort of couple Marzellina and Fidelio would make, so could he incorporate a recently published song of Haydn to indicate that Leonora's wishes would be fulfilled.

Yet behind Haydn's *Abendlied* lies a textually and musically related motive from *Don Giovanni*. The sextet (no.19) "Sola, sola in bujo loco" (Einsam hier an dunkler Stätte) begins with Donna Elvira waiting fearfully, heart pounding, in a darkened atrium (ex.6c). The descending leap is a minor seventh rather than a fifth, and the harmonization is different, but the rich orchestral colors of each section supports the motivic and dramatic parallels. Mozart uses two horns and Beethoven three, and both double the soprano with strings that begin with the voice and then become syncopated. Mozart's darkened hall may have provided the backdrop for both Haydn's evensong and Beethoven's nocturnal prayer, or Beethoven may have recognized the similarities in motive and dramatic situation of two unrelated works by his esteemed Viennese predecessors.

A final instance of Beethoven drawing on Mozart for *Fidelio* again raises the issue that interested Dahlhaus; namely, the extent to which Beethoven related motives in separate numbers of a larger work. His examination of motivic symbolism in *Fidelio* focused on various permutations of a single chromatic idea, in the process overlooking a more significant and rhythmically consistent motivic symbol. Ex-

## Example 7:

a. *Fidelio*, no.9b. *Leonora*, no.8c. *Fidelio*, no.18d. *Fidelio*, no.16e. *Leonora*, no.11.

a. *Allegro con brio*

LEONORA: Ich folg' dem innern Trie-be ich wan-ke nicht, mich stärkt die Pflicht der treu-en Gat - - -

b. *Allegro con brio*

PIZARRO: Er sterb' in sei-nen Ket-ten, zu kurz war sei-ne Pein!  
ROCCO: Ver-hung-ernd in den Ket-ten, er-trug er Lan-ge Pein.

c. *Allegro molto*

LEONORA: Ja, gehn wir ihm ent-ge-gen, er en-det un-sern Harm,

d. *Molto vivace*

CHOIR: Be-stra-fet sei-der Bö-se-wicht, der Un-schuld un-ter drückt!

e. *Allegro con brio*

LEONORA: könn-ich zur Stel-le drin-gen,

ample 7 presents a motive that appears in various intervallic forms, but maintains a striking rhythmic profile with a measure-long dotted pattern leading to two eighth notes and a quarter (or half) note, all of them sung *Allegro con brio*, *Allegro molto*, or *Molto vivace*. The first of these motives to be heard (ex.7b) is sung by Pizarro and Rocco with texts that anticipate respectively Florestan dying or starving in his cell. In the 1805 version of *Leonore*, this was followed by ex.7e, with Leonora wishing she could comfort her husband, shackled by malice. Although omitted from *Fidelio*, this passage led in *Leonore* directly to ex.7a. In the context of the previous associations of the motive, Leonora's resolve in ex.7a has to be understood psychologically as her attempt to conquer her own fears: she is driven by conjugal duty no matter what her chances of success. In the finale of *Leonore*, Beethoven also included a statement of this motive that he subsequently removed from *Fidelio* (ex.7c), at which point Leonora had been united with Florestan, but death for both seemed certain; ultimately, Beethoven reverses both the direction of the pitches (ex.7d) and the sentiment: innocence triumphs, evil will be punished.

## Example 8:

a. Mozart, *Idomeneo*, no.4.b. *Idomeneo*, no.6.c. *Idomeneo*, no.21d. *Idomeneo*, no.5.

a. *Allegro assai*

Tut-te nel cor vi sen-to, vi sen-to, vi sen-to, fu-rie del cru-do a-ver-

b. *Allegro di molto*

Di tor-men-to que-sto co-re quan-te vol-te mo-ri-ra,

c. *Allegro*

mor-te eer-can-do al tro-ve,

d. *Allegro assai*

Il ciel, il ma-re, il ven-to ci op-pri-mon di spa-ven-to.

But as Winton Dean tentatively suggested, Beethoven may have derived this motive from Mozart's *Idomeneo*. Broad dramatic parallels support the notion of a musical link between *Fidelio* and *Idomeneo*. Although *Idomeneo* does not feature one spouse freeing another, Idamante also liberates his love (and bride-to-be) Ilia from imprisonment on the isle of Crete. And the futile love that Marzellina feels for Fidelio corresponds to that which Elektra professes for Idamante.

Dean described a "striking rhythmic resemblance" between the beginning motive of the Allegro con brio of Leonora's "Ich folg' dem innern Triebe" and a motive in Elektra's first aria, "Tutte nel cor vi sento." Noting that the motive "runs like a coloured thread" through *Idomeneo*, he considered Beethoven's usage potentially "an unconscious echo" of Mozart.<sup>41</sup> Dean, however, was unaware of the multiple occurrences of this motive in *Fidelio*. Those may be compared with similar variants in *Idomeneo* (ex.8). Each permutation of the motive that Beethoven had devised is also present in *Idomeneo*. Thus both exs.7b and 8b lead to a stepwise cadential pattern; exs.7c and 8c continue upward sequentially; exs.7d and 8d move downward sequentially; and most intricately, in exs.7a and 8a, although the initial motive reverses direction, both vocal lines continue upward on a tonic triad leading to a large leap, while the orchestras sustain a pedal and embellish the tonic triad in

41. Dean, "Beethoven and Opera," p.380.

eighth-note figurations, crescendoing from *piano* to *forte* or *fortissimo* and then quickly back to *piano*. And, as in *Fidelio*, this motive occurs with texts that refer to torment or impending death, although with more consistency; there is no Beethovenian transformation to victory. Beethoven's debt to Mozart is thus twofold: he assumed from Mozart a motive with its specific symbolic significance and also Mozart's internal use of this motive at dramatically related moments throughout the opera.

After the failure of *Leonore*, Beethoven reduced the presence of this motive in *Fidelio* by eliminating two occurrences (exs. 7c and 7e). Whether he did so for musical reasons—he may have wanted to lessen the musical prominence of this motive—or for dramatic reasons—he may have felt the texts that accompanied this motive were ineffective—the result was to diminish the similarity of his musical symbolism to that in *Idomeneo*, where the motive is far more prominent, indeed, where motivic interconnections in general are more pronounced.<sup>42</sup> That Dahlhaus did not consider this motive in his discussion of motivic symbolism in *Fidelio* is indicative of how little this motive stands out in the revised version. But, more detrimental to Dahlhaus's argument about the impact of motivic recurrences on the formal integrity of closed-form numbers, he fails to consider Mozart and therefore limits his ability to assess the full range of possibilities for pervasive motivic symbolism in large works.<sup>43</sup> Mozart and also Gluck, and not just French revolutionary opera, provide a necessary context for evaluating Beethoven's practices. In comparison to Wagner's Leitmotiv technique, the motives presented in exs. 7 and 8 are repeated with greater variation in interval patterns, and they often occur in formally neutral places, i.e., not at the beginning of important formal divisions of an aria.

#### IV

Examples of passages from *Fidelio* that provided later composers with musical-textual symbols have received comparatively little attention, excepting most notably Schumann's untitled miniature for piano in his *Album für die Jugend*, op. 68, no. 21. One of three pieces in this set to be designated with three asterisks rather than titles, this short work has been recognized as an improvisation on "Euch

42. Mozart's use of recurring motives in *Idomeneo* is discussed in Julian Rushton, "'La vittima è Idamante': Did Mozart Have a Motive?" *Cambridge Opera Journal* 3 (1991), 1–21. This motive is not among those considered.

43. Regarding Dahlhaus's failure to consider Mozart in other analytical contexts, see James Webster, "Dahlhaus's *Beethoven* and the Ends of Analysis," *Beethoven Forum* 2 (1993), 211–12.

## Example 9:

a. Schubert, Mass in G Major,  
Credo, mm. 1–8.

b. *Fidelio*, no. 10

a. Allegro moderato

Cre - do in u - num De - - um, Pa - trem om - ni - po - ten - tem

b. Allegro ma non troppo

PRISONERS: Wir wollen mit Vertrauen auf Gottes Hülfe bauen,

werde Lohn in bessren Welten.”<sup>44</sup> Certainly in comparison with the piano sonatas, the Ninth Symphony, or *An die ferne Geliebte*, *Fidelio* cannot compare in the number of works for which claims of motivic influences have been made.

And yet the influence of the 1814 version was immediate: Schubert, while still an adolescent, derived the beginning of a Credo from a passage in the Chorus of Prisoners in the finale of act I. He composed his Mass in G in early March 1815, nearly a year after the May 1814 revival, and a half year after Artaria had published a piano-vocal score in August 1814. As shown in ex. 9, the first phrase of Schubert’s Credo paraphrases the G-major solo with the text: “Wir wollen mit Vertrauen auf Gottes Hülfe bauen” (We want to build with faith in God’s help). Schubert slightly varied the music of this passage to set the text “Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem” (I believe in one God, Father almighty).<sup>45</sup>

The musical parallels are several: both are in G; the melodies are very close, even in matters of rhythm; the harmonies and voice leading correspond—including the

44. Regarding this association, see below, p. 161 and ex. 13. It was asserted in the Kalmus edition (published sometime during the 1940s) of this piece. Robert Schumann, *Album II for Piano*, ed. Clara Schumann, rev. Alexander Lipsky (New York: E. F. Kalmus, [n.d.]); and in Robert Schumann, *Jugend-Album, opus 68: Faksimile nach der im Besitz des Robert-Schumann-Museums Zwickau befindlichen Urschrift*, notes Georg Eismann (Leipzig: Peters, 1956), p. 4: “Das Stück ist eine Paraphrase über das Thema ‘Euch werde Lohn in bessren Welten.’” In Paris at the end of the century, Paul Taffanel used the same aria as the basis for the slow movement of his Woodwind Quintet in G Minor.

45. David Cairns has independently and long ago noticed this appropriation by Schubert of Beethoven; see Cairns, “Schubert: Promise and Fulfilment,” in his *Responses: Musical Essays and Reviews* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1973), p. 200. I am grateful to David Cairns for informing me of his insightful essay.

secondary dominant at the end of the second measure and the parallel thirds or sixths in the upper voices—as does the staccato walking bass, which probably symbolizes the firm foundations of the prisoners' faith and the worshipers' belief; and Beethoven specifies *Allegro, ma non troppo* and *piano*, Schubert *Allegro moderato* and *pianissimo*. Walking basses are not unusual at the start of Credos, as for example in Bach's Mass in B Minor. An operatic text strikingly similar to this moment in *Fidelio* exists in Mozart's *Entführung aus dem Serail*, at Belmonte's aria "Ich baue ganz auf deine Stärke, vertrau', o Liebe." Mozart arrived at a similar response for the accompaniment, with the tonic E $\flat$  insistently reiterated for four measures on each quarter note.

Nevertheless, the similarities are so compelling that Schubert cannot merely have been employing a musical convention, but rather a specific motive that symbolized the steadfast faith of Beethoven's political prisoners. As Napoléon's demise in April 1814 was the background for the successful revival of *Fidelio* in May, Napoléon's escape from the island of Elba and his return to France on 1 March 1815 may have suggested to Schubert the particular symbolism of this particular faith motive from the Chorus of Prisoners, just at the time he composed his Mass in the first week of March. When the international Congress of Vienna convened in late September to settle terms of peace, the inaugural entertainment had included a performance of *Fidelio*.<sup>46</sup> Since the Congress was still in session in March, the antityrannical message of the opera would have had renewed political relevance and perhaps also an audience capable of recognizing the musical reference.

Schubert did not so much allude to Beethoven as quote him. In the following examples of Schumann appropriating ideas from *Fidelio*, not only is the musical material transformed but also the dramatic. Thomas Grey recently observed essentially the same sensibility in Schumann's music criticism, in a reworking of an early hermeneutic interpretation of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. Schumann's review of the Seventh purports to quote an earlier account when in fact it is, in Grey's words, a "thoroughly ironic transformation" of it.<sup>47</sup> It is indicative that Wagner misconstrued the ironic tone of Schumann's review, criticizing it as if it were intended seriously. Wagner's musical debts to Beethoven are, from the standpoint of their symbolic content, also very literal.

The first act finale of *Fidelio* may have provided Schumann with a suitable

46. Thayer-Forbes, pp. 594–97.

47. The review is in the third of his "Schwärmbriefe an Chiara," discussed by Thomas Grey in "Metaphorical Modes in Nineteenth-Century Music Criticism: Image, Narrative, and Symbolism," in *Music and Text: Critical Inquiries*, ed. Steven Paul Scher (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992), pp. 99–100.

Example 10:

a. Schumann, "Süsser Freund."

b. *Fidelio*, no. 10.

a.

Weißt du nun die Tränen, die ich weinen kann,  
sollst du nicht sie sehen,

b.

LEONORA: Nein! Ich muss ihn sehn, den Armen sehen,

Notes present in Schumann's bass line (transposed)

dramatic image for his song cycle *Frauenliebe und Leben*. At the point in *Fidelio* when Rocco has second thoughts about taking his new assistant down into the dungeon with him, Beethoven provides a rising chromatic line for Leonora over a pulsating accompaniment in the strings (ex. 10). Leonora, fearful and impatient to see her Florestan, sings "Ich muss ihn sehn, den Armen sehen, und müsst' ich selbst zu Grunde gehen." Schumann adapts the melodic line and the accompaniment in his song "Süsser Freund, du blickest mich verwundert an" at the text "Weisst du nun die Tränen, Die ich weinen kann, Sollst du nicht sie sehen, Du geliebter Mann?" (Now that you know the tears that I can cry, should you not see them, you beloved man?). The sequential chromaticisms are present in the voice and the accompaniment, and the pulsating piano always anticipates the singer's chromatic inflection just as in *Fidelio* (underneath the passage from *Fidelio*, I have isolated the chromatic intervals that appear in two different voices in Beethoven, but together in the left hand of Schumann's accompaniment). And as Beethoven directs Leonora to sing *innig* (tenderly, sincerely), Schumann has *mit innigem Ausdruck*.



Schumann played on the drama of Beethoven's scene in several ways. Least important, although not irrelevant, is his identification of himself with Florestan and Clara with Leonora. A few years earlier in 1837, Robert had exhorted Clara to emulate Leonora: "Adieu mein Fidelio . . . und bleib so treu wie Leonore Ihrem Florestan deinem Robert."<sup>48</sup> More immediate is the parallel between the desire of Leonora to *see* the man she loves and Schumann's "Süsser Freund" actually "looking" at his mate in the song "Sweet friend, you look at me with surprise" (du blickest mich verwundert an). Schumann's song begins not only with Beethoven's falling diminished fourth but also with the rhythmically staggered chromaticism in the accompaniment. At the moment of greatest musical similarity, however, the pregnant wife in Schumann's song is not looking but crying, revealing her tears to her "geliebter Mann." This is a dramatic inversion—a parody in Linda Hutcheon's use of the term—of the scene in *Fidelio*.<sup>49</sup> Leonora, questioning her own ability to endure the descent into the dungeon, begins to cry to herself while singing "o welch' ein Schmerz!" Rocco, suddenly unsure of his new assistant, sings "mir scheint, er weine, mir scheint, mir scheint, er weine" and offers to go alone. Kindred dramatic situations thus motivate this musical borrowing. Schumann reinterprets Leonora's furtive tears of pain as proud tears of joy. While Leonora fears Rocco and wants to hide her tears, the pregnant wife loves her husband and wants to share them.

Another of Schumann's songs plays textually and musically with the aria that Beethoven wrote for Florestan at the start of the second act of *Fidelio*. Florestan, facing execution, opens act II with "In des Lebens Frühlingstagen," an aria that Schumann alludes to in his Lied *Frühlingsankunft* (see Table 3).<sup>50</sup> Schumann alters the metric placement of Beethoven's motive and omits the grace note, but the obvious textual echoes reinforce the musical resemblance (ex. 11). Moreover, the second phrase, "Zerissne wolken," clearly echoes the notes of the motive that Florestan sings leading into this aria at his outburst "O schwere Prüfung" (O difficult trial). Together these two motives provide almost all of the motivic material in Schumann's strophic Lied, each being sung and then echoed in the piano, six times in all (ex. 12). Schumann's text mirrors Beethoven's, with the images shared, but reversed. The one is a preparation for life's end, the other a celebration of new

48. Berthold Litzmann, *Clara Schumann: Ein Künstlerleben nach Tagebüchern und Briefen*, 3 vols. (Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1920), I, 154.

49. Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, pp.5–6. Hull discusses Hutcheon's theories in *Brahms the Allusive*, pp.39–40 and 50–52.

50. On the composition of "In des Lebens Frühlingstagen," see Michael C. Tusa, "The Unknown Florestan: The 1805 Version of 'In des Lebens Frühlingstagen,'" *JAMS* 46 (1993), 175–220.

Table 3: Texts of Beethoven, “In des Lebens Frühlingstagen” and Schumann, *Frühlingsankunft*

*Beethoven, Fidelio, act II, sc.1*

In des Lebens Frühlingstagen  
Ist das Glück von mir gefloh'n.  
Wahrheit wagt ich kühn zu sagen,  
Und die Ketten sind mein Lohn.  
Willig duld' ich alle Schmerzen,  
Ende schmällich meine Bahn;  
Süßer Trost in meinem Herzen:  
Meine Pflicht hab' ich getan.

(In life's springtime days,  
Is happiness flown away from me.  
The truth was I bold to say,  
and chains are my reward.  
Gladly do I bear all pain,  
shamefully I end my life;  
The sweet comfort in my heart:  
I have done my duty.)

*Schumann, Frühlingsankunft, op.79, no.19*

Nach diesen trüben Tagen,  
Wie ist so hell das Feld!  
Zerrissne Wolken tragen  
Die Trauer aus der Welt.  
  
Und Keim und Knospe mühet  
Sich an das Licht hervor,  
Und manche Blume blühet  
Zum Himmel still empor.

Ja auch sogar die Eichen  
Und Reben werden grün!  
O Herz, das sei dein Zeichen!  
Werde froh und kühn!

– *A. H. Hoffman von Fallersleben*

(After these overcast days,  
how bright is the field!  
Wisps of clouds bear away  
the sadness of the world.

And seed and bud struggle  
towards the light,  
and many flowers blossom  
quietly up towards heaven.

Yes also even the oaks  
and vines turn green!  
O heart, let that be your sign!  
Be glad and bold!)

## Example 11:

a. Schumann,  
*Frühlingsankunft*,  
mm. 1–2.

b. *Fidelio*, no. 11.

a. Nicht schnell

Nach die-sen trü - ben Ta - gen.

b.

FLORESTAN

In des Le - bens Früh - lings - ta - gen

## Example 12:

a. Schumann,  
*Frühlingsankunft*,  
mm. 5–6.

b. *Fidelio*, no. 11.

a.

Zer-riß - ne Wol-ken

b.

O schwe - re Früh-fung

life. For Florestan, *happiness* flies away; for Schumann, it is “the sadness of the world” that flees, carried away by wisps of cloud. Schumann’s text locates the tribulations previously expressed in Beethoven’s aria in the past tense. Florestan had been imprisoned in his youth, “in the spring days of life.” Chained in a dark dungeon, he was soon to be freed, escaping literally up from darkness to light, just as described in stanza 2 of “Spring’s Arrival.”

By setting this text to motives previously used by Florestan in his moment of greatest despair, Schumann relates the poem of Hoffman von Fallersleben to Beethoven’s rescue drama. Nature imagery is thereby cast in political terms, an interpretation perfectly in keeping with the well-known political viewpoints and personal history of the poet Hoffman von Fallersleben (who had been imprisoned for his political beliefs) and also with the very recent events in Schumann’s own life. Schumann wrote *Frühlingsankunft* and the other twenty-seven songs of his *Lieder-Album für die Jugend* between 21 April and 13 May 1849, that is, in the very weeks that civil war broke out in Dresden. This particular song evidently stems from the days immediately following his escape with Clara through the garden of their house in Dresden. Clara—more like Leonora than at any other time in her marriage—returned to embattled Dresden a day later to rescue the three children they had had to leave behind, perhaps able to cross barricades and brave the open rebellion precisely because she was seven months pregnant. Robert’s devotion to the *Lieder-Album für die Jugend* at just this time has always been taken as a sign of his withdrawal from the world around him; yet when read in light of the evident allusions to *Fidelio*, Robert may have turned to the symbolic language he new best

to celebrate not so much his own personal escape as the birth of a new republican order.<sup>51</sup>

As Schumann, so Brahms. I have in an earlier study argued that Brahms also portrayed Clara Schumann as a faithful Leonora, beginning the slow movement of the First Piano Concerto—which he described as a “gentle portrait” of Clara—with two motives representing Clara and Robert. In this case, the recognition of the motive from Beethoven’s opera (discussed above because of its origins in the Joseph Cantata) was supported by a letter to Joseph Joachim in which Brahms associated a specific musical moment with Clara, describing her as looking exactly like “the F-major  $\frac{3}{4}$  movement in the finale of *Fidelio*.”<sup>52</sup> As in most of the allusions discussed, the similarity of motive is supported by other musical means: the motives are both presented over pedals; and both Brahms and Beethoven score the motive for solo oboe. The discovery of earlier borrowings by Schubert and Schumann strengthens my earlier argument only because it establishes *Fidelio* as a source of inspiration, as a kind of musical quarry, for Beethoven’s devoted followers.

Finally, to conclude this section with an instrumental example based on *Fidelio*, Schumann’s untitled miniature in the *Album für die Jugend*, op.68, no.21, apparently employs a pair of motivic allusions to reinforce a single poetic idea. It begins with a rhythmically and intervallicly strict citation of the motive that begins Florestan’s “Euch werde Lohn in bessren Welten.” I have compared the two motives in ex.13a and b, transposing Beethoven’s motive up a minor third. Schumann omits the first three notes (as Florestan does when he repeats this phrase in mm.11–14). In the final phrase, Schumann introduces a new cadential motive, one that resembles the concluding phrase of Schubert’s Lied *An die Musik* (compared in exs.13c and d, where Schubert’s motive is transposed down a major second). More striking than the musical similarities between the stepwise ascent or the pair of descending sixths, the text of Schubert’s motive reinforces Beethoven’s: “in eine bessere Welt entrückt!” Thus Schumann seems to have created a brief musical statement drawing on motives from different composers that express a common idea, the vision of a better world.

51. It is conventional to contrast Schumann’s apparent disconnection from the rebellion with Wagner’s embrace of it. See, for example, Robert Schaufner, *Florestan: The Life and Work of Robert Schumann* (London: Henry Holt, 1945), pp.211–13: Schumann was “so deep in his growing introversion that he paid but slight heed to the violent rush of events” (p.211).

52. Reynolds, “A Choral Symphony by Brahms?” 19CM 9 (1985), 3–25, esp. 6. Brahms also used this motive in the second of the Ballades, op.10, where it appears together with his first use of the F–A–F motto (p.21).

## Example 13:

a. Schumann, op.68, no.21,  
mm.1-4.

b. *Fidelio*, no.13.

c. Schumann, op.68, no.21,  
mm.16-18.

d. Schubert, *An die Musik*,  
mm.17-19 (transposed from  
D major).

a. *Langsam*

b. *Moderato* (transposed from A)  
Euch wer - de Lohn in bes - sern Wel - ten

c.

d. (transposed from D)  
in ei - ne bess - re Welt ent - rückt

## V

The examples of musical allusion assembled in this study comprise a wide range of motivic-dramatic symbols: tears (furtive, joyful, bitter), heroism, joy, nature, evening prayer, faith, torture and impending death, and hope for a better world. While some have been noted before, most have not. If presented individually, as such symbolic references usually are, it is customary and easy to explain them (away) as coincidental motivic similarities or unconscious borrowings. One purpose of assembling them together is to establish a context for viewing such resemblances as purposeful, meaningful, and unexceptional, both from the standpoints of drama and compositional technique. I consider untenable the possibility that three composers working in a single city within twenty years of each other could independently arrive at a single motive to connote both evening and prayer (or a prayerful demeanor). Haydn was too aware of Mozart, Beethoven of Haydn and Mozart.

Any allusion invokes possibilities for different degrees of reference. Beethoven's double allusion to Haydn's *Abendlied* and *Don Giovanni* in ex.6 is no more involved than the first measures of Brahms's Sonata op.1, which alluded to the opening rhythms and texture of one sonata by Beethoven and to the pitches and formal structure of another. A richer complex of references exists in ex.9. Schubert came close to quoting Beethoven's Chorus of Prisoners for his Credo, yet the type of walking bass involved is common for Credos, virtually a topic for faith, resolve, and strength—the very traits that Beethoven desired for the prisoners. Thus Schubert's specific citation of Beethoven includes a much more general reference to a broad category of liturgical works. And in this instance, the text of the prisoner's chorus—

“Wir wollen mit Vertrauen auf Gottes Hülfe bauen”—echoes more distantly Belmonte’s aria “Ich baue ganz auf deine Stärke, vertrau’, o Liebe.” The notion of trust and building may have reminded Beethoven of Mozart’s bass line, or, I think more probable in this instance, it is a case of both opera composers drawing on a religious topic as a symbol of faith.

The critical stance of a composer or writer to the appropriated material varies from composer to composer to an extent that this study can only begin to suggest. Wagner’s allusion to the *Eroica*, like Schubert’s Credo citation of *Fidelio*, incorporate the symbols almost literally; yet Wagner took greater effort to assimilate his symbols of heroism than Schubert did his of faith. Schumann seems to have worried less about assimilating the motivic ideas that he borrowed, perhaps because he also seems less willing to incorporate them literally. This is evident in a comparison of the two examples of motivic symbols for tears, Beethoven alluding to Mozart (ex. 5) and Schumann to Beethoven (ex. 10). In this case as in the others, Schumann took greater liberties with the dramatic context of the motivic symbol: he transformed the anguished tears of a wife hoping to rescue her husband into the joyful tears of a newly pregnant wife. Of all the other examples cited, the most similar in its spirit of transformation was Brahms’s Sonata op. 1. Having defined the old path in the exposition, Brahms sets out on a new path in the recapitulation, completely reworking the harmonic and structural plan of Beethoven that he had so closely followed in the exposition.

In every instance I have attempted to relate biographical information to the music, an attempt that most Romantic writers—who held that works of art should speak for themselves—would not condone. Yet my emphasis on biographical contexts, on understanding as far as possible the circumstances that influenced a composer during the creation of a specific work, is an emphasis that August Wilhelm Schlegel acknowledged in a 1797 review: “It is certain that one does not have the authority to judge until one completely understands an artwork, until one has penetrated deep into the sense of that artwork and that of its creator.”<sup>53</sup> It is one thing for a Romantic like Schumann to eschew programs and even some suggestive titles because they constrain his own responses as a reader or listener, his “freedom of imagination.” To him this wariness was a Germanic trait: “The German, with his delicacy of feeling and his aversion to personal revelation, dislikes having his

53. “Es ist gewiss, man ist nicht eher befugt zu richten, bis man ein Kunstwerk ganz versteht, bis man tief in seinem und seines Urhebers Sinn eingedrungen ist” (quoted from a review of Wilhelm Wackenroder’s *Herzensergiessungen* in Ralph W. Ewton, *The Literary Theories of August Wilhelm Schlegel* [The Hague: Mouton, 1972], p.83).

thoughts so rudely directed.”<sup>54</sup> His stance is not a rejection of programmatic content, but of the loss of personal freedom that occurs when those programs are made public. It is another thing for us, who read and listen from a different and very less delicate sensibility, to avoid studying the biographical and symbolic sources of earlier music. Extrinsic information of all kinds affects our responses. In the particular case of Schumann and *Fidelio*, such extrinsic data as Schumann’s identification with Florestan and a note in his diary from 1837—“*Fidelio über Alles*”—are relevant to the musical debts discussed here because they document an affinity with a work that is deep enough to generate numerous musical responses.<sup>55</sup> Schumann’s many readings of *Fidelio* are as evident in his music as they are in his prose.

Nineteenth-century German composers worked within a creative tension between two seemingly conflicting cultural values: the desire to be part of an increasingly nationalistic musical heritage that reached back to Bach (and for Brahms to Schütz); and an association of originality and genius, evident in criticism and perhaps also in the capitalistic notion that composers owned their musical creations, a notion codified in copyright laws of the 1830s. For literature, references and allusions to works by earlier writers who were regarded as masters or geniuses have been held to be a hallmark of German Romantic culture, one that increased as the body of canonical works expanded.<sup>56</sup> And in England, even Wordsworth, who proclaimed the value of originality in unequivocal terms, is now seen to be a compulsive spinner of echoes and allusions, using the literary tradition he inherited to establish a continuity with the past, but also to adapt it to new purposes.<sup>57</sup>

What the examples I have discussed have in common is the extent to which the sources have been reworked and shaped into new—even original—musical statements. The difference between good composers like Spohr and Hummel and great ones like Beethoven or Schumann is not *whether* they modeled and alluded, but whether the source material lost its earlier identity in the new context. This applies no less to motives than it does to harmonic and formal plans. Tradition enhanced originality; originality—as long as it could be maintained in tonal music—sustained the tradition.

54. Schumann, “A Symphony by Berlioz,” in Hector Berlioz, *Fantastic Symphony: An Authoritative Score, Historical Background, Analysis, Views and Comments*, ed. and trans. Edward T. Cone (New York: Norton, 1971), p.246.

55. The diary entry is from March 1837, the same year as his admonition to Clara to be like Leonora (cited above in n.48); see Robert Schumann, *Tagebücher, Bd. II, 1836–1854*, ed. Gerd Nauhaus (Leipzig: Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1987), p.32.

56. Herman Meyer, *The Poetics of Quotation in the European Novel*, trans. Theodore and Yetta Ziolkowski (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1968), pp.6, 8–9, and 128–29.

57. Edwin Stein, *Wordsworth’s Art of Allusion* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State UP, 1988).