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Cañizares-Esguerra's vision is to approach Latin American intellectual history on its own terms, rejecting conceptual and thematic categories forged in provincial European experience, and aiming to recognize true intellectual creativity wherever it may have lain hidden – long overlooked by historians seeking Parisian salons in American forests.

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Esteban Buch. *Beethoven's Ninth: A Political History*. Translated by Richard Miller. Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 2003. 327 pp. \$27.50 (Hard). ISBN: 0226078124

Ludwig van Beethoven's (1770-1827) Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125 is one of the most powerful symbols of Western classical music. The Ninth Symphony's status as an icon of Western classical music is unquestionable, but since its premiere in Vienna on 7 May 1824, it has been subject to many complex and contradictory uses and abuses. While it is viewed by many as a symbol of universal brotherhood and freedom, it has also been used by nationalists to enforce their nation's supremacy and power. French republicans, German nationalists, and many others have, in the course of its history, embraced the piece. It was performed at a concert to celebrate the fall of the Berlin Wall, it was used as Rhodesia's national anthem, Hitler celebrated his birthdays with it, it was embraced by the French who equated it with the ideals of the French Revolution, it is played at the Olympic games and other sporting events, and it is the official anthem of the European Union. How can it be both nationalist and universalist? How is it possible for a single piece of music to generate such divergent interpretations and appropriations?

These issues are central to Esteban Buch's book, originally published in 1999 as *La Neuvième de Beethoven: Une histoire politique* and made available to the English-speaking world through Richard Miller's excellent translation. Buch traces the political and cultural history of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony since its premiere nearly two centuries ago. The book is divided into two parts, the first of which is dedicated to "The Birth of Modern Political Music." These first five chapters set the stage for

the posthumous reception of Beethoven and the Ninth. Buch starts by situating the Ninth Symphony and other Beethoven compositions, such as *Der glorreiche Augenblick* (*The Glorious Moment*), Op. 136 (1814), among the tradition of European political music, of which *God Save the King* and *La Marseillaise* are prime examples. He then explains how Beethoven reacted to the 1814 Congress of Vienna and how the experience of being a composer of official state music for this event influenced him when composing the Ninth Symphony.

The second part of the book deals with the “Political Reception of the *Ode to Joy*” and discusses the reception and different appropriations of Beethoven and Symphony No. 9. This section essentially begins on 26 March 1827, the day Beethoven died. This day marked the beginning of what would become the Beethoven myth. In the remaining seven chapters of the book, Buch discusses the many ways in which the Ninth was received and how Beethoven’s image became the embodiment of greatness. Dilemmas and contradictions abound at ceremonies meant to honor and celebrate Beethoven’s accomplishments – from the 1845 festival at Bonn when Beethoven’s statue was unveiled, to the 1927 commemoration of the centenary of the great composer’s death. Buch explains how Beethoven and the Ninth were both exposed to all sorts of debates between nationalists and universalists throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Beethoven and his music were capable of expressing European, German, and universal values simultaneously.

One of the shortcomings of the book is that Buch focuses almost entirely on the *Ode to Joy* and its innumerable appropriations, and in doing so, fails to explain the significance of the rest of the symphony. However, Buch makes up for this by providing the reader with a very thorough, convincing, and informative argument about the political uses of the piece and of the growth of Beethoven’s posthumous reputation as the musical embodiment of genius. *Beethoven’s Ninth* is a very interesting and well-written book, which should be of interest for both historians and musicologists alike. Any reader interested in reception history, classical music, and Beethoven, of course, will enjoy reading this great book.

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