3 The Symphony in Vienna and Abroad around 1800

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Changing Contexts for Symphonic Performance in the Late Eighteenth Century

By the time Beethoven began composing symphonies, the genre occupied a different position in contemporary musical life from that of a generation previously. The symphonies of Beethoven's predecessors performed various functions, some of which had become obsolete by the time his First Symphony was premiered in April 1800. Eighteenth-century symphonies could function not only as items on concert programmes, but also as overtures or entr'actes in plays and operas, as church music performed between sections of High Mass, as *Tafelmusik* (literally 'table music' performed during formal meals), or as outdoor serenades. A sub-genre of the symphony, sometimes known as the 'Sinfonia pastorella', was specifically associated with church performance. In Austria, symphonies had also played a prominent role in monasteries, which typically supported their own orchestras to perform symphonies in church services and as *Tafelmusik*. In any context, symphonies usually accompanied another entertainment or ceremonial event. Even on concert programmes, symphonies were not usually the main event; rather, they tended to act as 'curtain-raisers' to programmes that featured a range of vocal and instrumental genres.

Professional musical life in and around Vienna changed in several important ways towards the end of the eighteenth century, affecting the role of the symphony in everyday life. From 1782, Joseph II's religious reforms reduced the role of instrumental music in church services, which led to the disbanding of many church *Kapellen* and the gradual disappearance of the 'Sinfonia pastorella'. Even more significant was the general disbanding of *Kapellen* at aristocratic courts towards the end of the century, since many symphonic performances regularly took place in aristocratic households that maintained *Kapellen*. In his 1796 *Jahrbuch der Tonkunst von Wien und Prag*, Johann Ferdinand von Schönfeld lamented the current of state affairs:

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> It was formerly the strong custom that our large princely houses maintained their own house *Kapellen*, among which the most splendid geniuses often developed (evidence of this is our great Haydn), though it is now due to a coldness for the love of art, or a lack of taste, or economy, or other further reasons, in short to the shame of art, that this laudable practice has been lost, and one *Kapelle* after another has been extinguished, so that apart from that of Prince Schwarzenberg hardly any more exist.[1]

Schönfeld was probably correct in citing 'economy' as a factor in the decline of courtly *Kapellen*. Economising became an increasing priority in the early decades of the nineteenth century, when Vienna experienced several periods of severe inflation caused by Austria's involvement in the Napoleonic Wars. Money concerns did not drive the disbanding of *Kapellen* in every case, however. What Schönfeld disparagingly referred to as a 'lack of taste' might be more fairly construed as a change in taste. The cultivation of lavish courtly entertainments characterised the *ancien régime* (as epitomised by the court of Louis XIV), and the French Revolution probably contributed to a shift in attitude among the aristocracy, who began to scale down their entertaining.

Furthermore, the *Harmonie,* a chamber ensemble of wind instruments, came into fashion around the time that orchestras were disappearing from aristocratic households. *Harmoniemusik* was an increasingly popular musical entertainment in late eighteenth-century Vienna, particularly after Emperor Joseph II established the imperial *Harmoniemusik* in 1782. The *Harmonie* came to replace the full orchestra in some private households; Prince Grassalkowitz, for instance, reduced his *Kapelle* to a *Harmonie*.[2] A *Harmonie* was cheaper to maintain than a full orchestra, but could still perform many of the same functions, such as providing *Tafelmusik* and performing at private concerts. *Harmonie* ensembles were also better suited than orchestras to outdoor performance. The *Harmonie* ensemble employed by Prince Alois Liechtenstein (1759–1805) performed outdoor public concerts in Vienna during the summer months, and *Harmonie* ensembles also performed in various outdoor spaces such as the Augarten, the Prater, the glacis (a green belt between the city walls and the suburbs) and even on the city walls themselves. The rise of the *Harmonie* hastened the decline of orchestral music in aristocratic households, and resulted in a shift in the musical repertoire cultivated among court musicians. Court composers were no longer required to produce a steady stream of new symphonies, since the orchestra was no longer the pre-eminent ensemble among private musical establishments. Towards the end of the century there was, by contrast, a marked increase in the composition of new repertoire

for *Harmonie*, especially divertimentos, cassations and arrangements from popular operas.

The symphony did not, however, disappear from private musical entertainments, even in households that had disbanded their *Kapelle*. Although many aristocrats ceased to maintain a full complement of string and wind players among their regular staff, musicians could still be hired on an ad hoc basis. In the 1780s the Viennese music dealers Johann Traeg and Lorenz Lausch placed newspaper advertisements indicating that they could secure musicians for private concerts or balls, as well as offering orchestral music for hire in manuscript form.[3] This service may have catered partly to aristocrats who no longer maintained *Kapellen* but still wished to organise concerts in their homes from time to time. Traeg's advertisement also states that 'There are, to wit, in this town ever more families who entertain weekly by means of large or small musical concerts', suggesting that private concerts by professional performers were on the rise even among non-aristocratic households.[4] Thus, while the number of private concerts may have been decreasing in the houses of the nobility, the practice of presenting such concerts was simultaneously extending to wealthier members of the bourgeoisie.

The practice of hiring music and musicians for one-off private concerts seems to have slowed down after the 1780s, to judge from contemporary newspaper advertisements. In January 1785 Lausch announced that he would no longer lend out performing parts to anyone except to regular subscribers, apparently as a result of 'previous disorderliness',[5] and Traeg eventually stopped offering manuscript music for hire. By 1796, newspaper adverts placed by the Lausch firm (which continued trading after Lorenz's death in 1794) stated that they could supply musicians for house balls, without mentioning private concerts, suggesting that there was a decline in demand for the latter.[6] Private concerts nevertheless continued to play an important role in Vienna's musical life, and numerous patrons are documented as presenting concerts in private households throughout the 1790s and 1800s.[7] The banker Joseph Würth sponsored two substantial concert series in his new palace on the Hoher Markt in 1803–4 and 1804–5, which focused on large-scale instrumental works and included performances of Beethoven's First and Third Symphonies. A third concert series at Würth's palace did not materialise, probably because of the disruption to Viennese life caused by the Napoleonic Wars and the French occupation of Vienna in 1805. Prince Lobkowitz, one of Beethoven's most important patrons, was also a leading figure in the culture of private concerts. Lobkowitz bucked the trend of declining

courtly *Kapellen* by founding a house ensemble in the 1790s. With a core string section of seven players, Lobkowitz could organise regular chamber music concerts, and extra instrumentalists were hired for orchestral performances.[8]

In the larger European cities, public performance emerged as the most frequent context for symphonic performance by the end of the eighteenth century. Vienna's public concert culture, whose origins can be traced back as far as the 1750s, developed sporadically, and will be discussed separately below. Paris and London were Europe's leading centres for concert life in the late eighteenth century, and concerts in these cities were a frequent platform for the performance of Austro-Germanic symphonies. Haydn's symphonies for the Esterházy court became popular in both of these cities, and led to important commissions in the 1780s and 1790s. His 'Paris' Symphonies (Nos. 82–7) and Nos. 90–2 were commissioned for Le Concert de la Loge Olympique, a Parisian concert society founded in 1780 as a rival to the long-running Concert Spirituel. Haydn's greatest symphonic success, however, came from his twelve 'London' Symphonies, composed for his two visits to England in the early 1790s. These visits were made possible by the reorganisation of musical life at the Esterházy court after the death of Prince Nikolaus Esterházy in 1790. Like many aristocrats of the time, Nikolaus's successor Prince Anton dismissed most of the court musicians, and Haydn thereafter had few duties at court (though he continued to receive a nominal salary and a pension). The London visits came at the invitation of the violinist and impresario Johann Peter Salomon, and Haydn's Symphonies Nos. 93–104 were composed for Salomon's concert series at the Hanover Square Rooms.

The changing context of symphonic performance at the end of the eighteenth century inevitably led to a decline in the production of new symphonies. There were fewer salaried *Kapellmeister* who were expected to compose new works for the court orchestra to perform at regular functions and concerts. However, the new emphasis on the symphony as a public concert genre resulted in a rise in its status. The extraordinary success of Haydn's 'London' Symphonies, which were composed on a grander scale than his previous symphonies and quickly became popular elsewhere in Europe, has also been seen as contributing to the shift in attitude towards the symphony at the end of the eighteenth century.[9] Whereas symphonies had traditionally functioned in concert programmes as a framework for vocal and virtuoso items, the 'London' Symphonies were the main attraction at the Salomon concerts.

Developments in Viennese Concert Life

Vienna lagged behind other European centres in the development of a regular and institutionalised public concert culture. There was no organisation regularly leading the city's musical life until the establishment of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, whose official statutes were published in 1814. A major hurdle was that the city did not have a concert hall until 1831, when the Gesellschaft opened its purpose-built premises in the Tuchlauben. Before this, concert organisers could make use of large venues such as theatres, the ballrooms in the imperial palace and the university hall, but only when they were not otherwise in use. Since theatrical entertainments usually took place daily, the theatres were only available on church holidays (so-called *Spielfreie Tage*) when theatrical performances were forbidden by imperial decree. Initially *Spielfreie Tage* encompassed the whole of Lent, most of Advent, and the eve and anniversary of the death of the most recently deceased Habsburg ruler, though the rules were later relaxed so that the theatres could open on certain days during these periods.[10] Other venues used for public concerts included the Mehlgrube (a building in the Neuer Markt that housed a restaurant and a large room used for concerts and balls), Ignaz Jahn's restaurant in the Himmelpfortgasse, and the hall at the Augarten. A regular public concert culture of sorts was established for the duration of Lent and Advent, though this mostly centred on one-off events and the occasional concert series.

The only concerts that were permanent fixtures in the annual calendar were those of the Tonkünstler Societät, an organisation founded in 1771 to provide for musicians' widows and orphans. From 1772, the society usually held four annual benefit concerts in one of the imperial theatres (the Kärtnerthortheater or the Burgtheater), two taking place at Easter and two at Christmas. The programmes at these concerts followed contemporary practice in featuring a miscellany of instrumental and vocal music, though the centrepiece was usually a grand oratorio. All members of the society were expected to perform or else to pay a small fee, which resulted in very large performing forces. Mozart reported enthusiastically to his father that one of his symphonies had been performed at the society's concert of 3 April 1781 by an orchestra that included forty violins, ten violas, eight cellos, ten contrabasses and doubled wind instruments (including six bassoons).[11] It was by no means typical for Viennese concerts to feature such large orchestras, and performances on this scale were only possible at charitable events (including the Tonkünstler Societät benefit concerts) where the musicians supplied their services free of charge.

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On *Spielfreie Tage* the theatres were also frequently hired out to musicians who wished to present their own concerts (known as academy concerts or *Akademien*). The musician, who was usually a virtuoso singer or instrumentalist, would cover the costs associated with presenting the concert, and receive all the profits. Smaller venues were also used for benefit concerts, but the theatres, particularly the prestigious court theatres, could attract and accommodate the largest audiences. Obtaining permission to use the court theatres was not easy, particularly between 1794 and 1806 when they were managed by Baron Peter von Braun (1764–1819), who was notoriously unsupportive of musicians wishing to present concerts. In a letter to Breitkopf & Härtel, Georg August Griesinger reported that Braun 'doesn't easily lend his orchestra for accompanying, or on the day when the concert is supposed to take place, he announces [for performance in the other theatre] a new or very popular piece and ballet, and thereby deprives the poor musician of his numerous public'.[12] The Theater an der Wien, the most prestigious theatre outside the city walls, was also managed by Baron von Braun between 1804 and 1806 (Braun having bought the theatre in 1804). Securing the best venue could be difficult for musicians wishing to present a concert for their own benefit, and those well connected with Baron von Braun and other members of the court organisation tended to fare better than outsiders.

A new addition to Viennese concert life in the 1780s was the subscription series. The pioneer in this realm was Philipp Jakob Martin, who first organised a series of concerts in the Mehlgrube in the winter of 1781–2, followed by several more over the next decade. From 1782, Martin also began organising Sunday morning concerts in the Augarten during the summer, for which a subscription to all twelve concerts could be purchased for two ducats.[13] Mozart participated as a soloist in Martin's subscription concerts in the Mehlgrube and the Augarten, and some of his symphonies were also performed on these occasions. In 1785 Mozart organised his own subscription series in the Mehlgrube during the Lenten season, for which several of his piano concertos were newly composed.

The subscription model of concert organisation was ideal for independent artists such as Mozart, providing regular performance opportunities and insurance against financial losses incurred through hiring the venue and other related expenses. By securing subscriptions in advance, Mozart was even able to hire the professional orchestra of the Burgtheater for his 1785 Mehlgrube concerts, which was unusual for the time; Martin generally engaged unpaid *dilettantes* rather than professional musicians for his subscription concerts. Nevertheless, public subscription concerts apparently declined after these promising ventures of the 1780s. The summer Augarten concerts continued to be a regular fixture in the Viennese

calendar, but concert series organised by independent musicians remained relatively rare. The violinist Ignaz Schuppanzigh (1776–1830) organised the city's first chamber music concerts as a subscription series in the winter of 1804–5, though he was an experienced impresario, having organised the Augarten concerts since 1799. A likely reason for this decline was the difficulty of persuading subscribers to commit to attending multiple concerts, particularly when the city offered so many other forms of entertainment that did not require similar commitment (including opera, theatre and balls).

The subscription series fared better when organised by aristocratic music societies. Beginning in the 1780s, the Gesellschaft der associierten Cavaliers, founded by the imperial librarian Gottfried van Swieten, organised regular performances of large-scale choral works, particularly those by Handel and Haydn. Performances typically took place first for an invited audience, either in the hall of the imperial library or in the palace of one of the society's members, and then for a public audience in one of the theatres. The society's members jointly covered the costs of organising these performances, in what was essentially a form of collective patronage. A similar aristocratic organisation, whose members included Prince Lobkowitz and other leading musical patrons, was established in 1807 with a view to organising orchestral concerts. The result was a highly successful concert series in 1807–8, known as the Liebhaber Concerte, whose programmes centred mostly on symphonies, overtures and concertos. Each of Beethoven's four completed symphonies was performed at least once over the course of the series, and works by Haydn and Mozart were also well represented.[14] The concerts were funded by subscriptions, which were sold among the aristocratic community, rather than sponsored exclusively by the organising committee. Tickets were not made available to the general public, however, and the concert series was also distinguished from regular concerts by its explicit aim to present great musical works, and 'to affirm the dignity of such art and to attain still higher perfection'.[15] Although the series was apparently a success, the disruptions to Viennese life caused by the return to war with France prevented a further season of concerts in 1808–9.

The subscription model of the Liebhaber Concerte differed from that of commercially driven concerts, since patrons bought tickets partly to support an elite and idealistic musical endeavour. Organisers of one-off benefit concerts generally could not afford this kind of musical idealism, since the success of such concerts depended on attracting a broad audience. Fully public concerts therefore continued to present mixed programmes that appealed to popular taste, particularly with favourite arias from the latest operas and virtuoso showpieces. The programmes of the semi-public

Liebhaber Concerte, on the other hand, explicitly focused on grand and serious musical works, and accordingly placed more emphasis on symphonies.

Although the public (or semi-public) concert emerged as the most important context for the symphony after the decline of courtly *Kapellen*, Vienna offered fewer opportunities for symphonic performance than cities with a more established commercial concert culture. Symphonies were of secondary importance on the programmes of the Tonkünstler-Societät concerts (whose emphasis was mostly on large-scale choral works) and in virtuoso benefit concerts (in which the main attraction was the solo performer). The decline of the subscription series after the 1780s also meant that independent musicians and composers wishing to organise concerts could hope, at best, for a one-off benefit in one of the theatres. Whereas Haydn composed six new symphonies for each of his London visits in the 1790s, it would be virtually impossible for a composer in Vienna to present six new symphonies in a single season under the commercial model of concert organising. Concerts supported by the aristocracy were more promising for regular symphony performances, especially with the emergence of an idealistic approach to concert programming exemplified by the Liebhaber Concerte. Nevertheless, aristocratic concert societies provided only intermittent additions to the city's concert life, and a regular public concert life that emphasised symphonies failed to materialise before the establishment of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde.

Symphonies as Sheet Music

Around 1800, music that circulated on the Viennese sheet music market did not consist exclusively of printed music, but also included manuscript copies. Music printing arrived relatively late on the Viennese publishing scene, compared with other European centres. The Artaria publishing firm was the first to run a successful music engraving workshop from the 1770s, printing music from engraved pewter or copper plates. Numerous rival companies were established soon afterwards and music printing quickly became a flourishing industry in the city. Printed music was also imported from other cities such as Amsterdam, Paris and London and sold by Viennese music dealers. Even after the arrival of printed music on the market, however, music copying continued to represent a significant portion of the Viennese music publishing industry. Copyists did a healthy trade in manuscript copies of published music, as well as copying on demand when multiple parts were needed for a performance.

Music engraving functioned most efficiently for works that required a small number of plates, and for which there was a high demand. Unsurprisingly, the catalogues of music publishers such as Artaria were dominated by chamber music and works for solo keyboard. Symphonies and other large-scale works were largely avoided by music engravers, since the effort and expense involved in engraving (and then storing) such a large number of plates for a single work did not make the process worthwhile. The limited opportunities for concert performance also meant there was a relatively small market for orchestral music, and publishers would be unlikely to recover the costs of the engraving process. In 1791 the Viennese publisher Hoffmeister began an ambitious three-year project of publishing a subscription series of all his forty-four completed symphonies, alongside twenty-eight new ones, printed on the finest quality paper.[16] Hoffmeister evidently aimed to lead the market for symphonies in a new direction, away from the practice of manuscript copying. Eventually, however, the project was abandoned after only seven symphonies had been printed, due to an apparent lack of demand. Symphonies continued to circulate on the Viennese market primarily as sets of parts in manuscript form throughout the 1790s. It was not yet customary for symphonies to be published in score, particularly as there was no real need for them in performance since orchestral concerts were usually directed by the concertmaster from the violin.

Most music copyists traded primarily as artisans, working whenever their services were required. However, the copyists Lorenz Lausch and Johann Traeg were also two of the city's most important music dealers in the 1780s and 1790s. Lausch dealt exclusively in manuscript music, whereas Traeg also imported printed music. The Lausch firm eventually came to specialise in transcriptions from popular opera, though Lausch initially also traded in symphonies, as indicated in a *Wiener Zeitung* advert of 1782:

> Lorenz Lausch, who has the honour of providing the symphonies for the current dilettante concerts [Martin's concert series in the Mehlgrube], informs all music lovers that beside the newest symphonies from Herr Haydn . . . other symphonies are also available, as well as cassations for violin and flute, quintets, quartets, trios and duets and keyboard music in manuscript.[17]

As a music dealer, Johann Traeg specialised in instrumental music, and by the 1790s he was undoubtedly Vienna's leading supplier of symphonies. In 1799 he published a catalogue of all the works in his stock, which included more than 500 symphonies by eighty-one different composers, including manuscript as well as imported prints.[18] But by then the market for symphonies had already shrunk significantly since

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the 1780s, when Traeg began trading. The symphonies in the 1799 catalogue are priced much lower than in earlier advertisements in the *Wiener Zeitung*, suggesting that Traeg was selling off stock that was no longer as profitable. Traeg's supplementary catalogue of 1804 confirms that the symphony was of declining importance to his trading: whereas symphonies represented the largest category of instrumental music in the 1799 catalogue, in the 1804 supplement they represented one of the smallest. In the intervening five-year period Traeg had obtained only thirty-three new symphonies, compared with fifty-seven pieces for *Harmonie*. Works for string quartet and solo keyboard are also better represented in the 1804 supplement than the 1799 catalogue, indicating a growing market for works for the salon.

Viennese music dealers and publishers attempted to adapt to the changing market for symphonies in various ways at the end of the eighteenth century. In the early 1780s, Lausch and Traeg launched business ventures in which manuscript parts were offered for hire. Beginning in 1783, Lausch charged a yearly subscription of twelve gulden, payable semi-annually, for which he offered 'a work' every two weeks: this could either be six chamber pieces (i.e., quintets, quartets, trios, duets or sonatas) or three symphonies.[19] Should any customer wish to keep the music they had hired, Lausch could then provide a copy for an additional price. Traeg quickly followed suit with an almost identical subscription system, first advertised in the *Wiener Zeitung* in February 1784.[20] Like Lausch, Traeg offered three symphonies or six chamber works every two weeks for an annual price of twelve gulden, payable in three-monthly instalments. For a quarterly payment of five gulden, customers could also receive twice the number of works (six symphonies or twelve chamber works). The provision of hire materials had clear merits: customers could try out music before committing to buying their own copy, and music-lovers could have access to large quantities of music without having to build up an impractically large personal library. The system was particularly useful for anyone organising performances of symphonies and other large-scale works. Nevertheless, both dealers ceased to offer materials for hire by the end of the decade, indicating an apparent decline in demand for performance parts (evidently corresponding with a decline in private performances of symphonies).

Another way in which publishers adapted to the changing market was to offer symphonies in transcription for small chamber ensembles. In a newspaper advertisement of December 1792, Artaria announced the publication of symphonies by Pleyel arranged as string quartets:

> Of the many Pleyel symphonies, three of the best have been chosen and arranged by Herr Went for a quartet of two violins, viola and cello. This arrangement is so excellent that these symphonies also have the most beautiful and enjoyable effect as quartets, and we hope hereby to offer a treat for quartet-lovers.[21]

Artaria had previously avoided publishing symphonies, specialising instead in chamber music and works for solo keyboard. String quartet arrangements, which primarily targeted Vienna's many amateur musicians seeking to make music in the home, were much more likely to be commercially successful than symphonies in full scoring. Traeg's 1799 catalogue also includes symphonies in arrangements for chamber ensemble, suggesting that such arrangements came into fashion as orchestral performances were in decline. Traeg's stock included fifteen symphonies arranged as quintets (six each by Haydn and Mozart and three by Pleyel). In the string quartet category, Traeg's catalogue includes an entry under J. Haydn of '8 Quartett Sinfonien arrang.'[22] There are also thirty-one works labelled 'Quartet Sinfon.', all by older composers (C. P. E. Bach, Kobrich, Monn and Ignaz Jakob Holzbauer), which may be early symphonies originally composed for four-part string orchestra.[23] Traeg's categorisation suggests that these works were primarily marketable as string quartet music, even if they were technically classed as symphonies.

Around 1800, string quartets and quintets were the preferred medium for symphony arrangements. By 1803, for instance, Beethoven's First Symphony had been issued in string quintet arrangements by publishers in Vienna, Bonn and Paris.[24] Other combinations of instruments were also added to the repertoire of symphony arrangements in the early nineteenth century: Beethoven himself corrected and approved his Second Symphony as a piano trio, and the Offenbach publisher Johann André published a series titled 'Collection de Sinfonies de divers auteurs' that included Beethoven's First and Second Symphonies arranged as nonets.[25] Such arrangements allowed symphonies to have a second life beyond the concert environment (see also Chapter 11). By the middle of the century, piano duet arrangements of Classical symphonies were a core addition to the salon repertoire enjoyed by amateur pianists. Such duet arrangements became an important avenue by which music enthusiasts could become thoroughly acquainted with the symphonies of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, which by then were recognised as central to the canon of symphonic masterworks. In this way piano arrangements of symphonies approached the purpose of a study score, another later nineteenth-century development in music publishing, since they offered a means of learning the important works in the canon.

Beethoven's Seventh and Eighth Symphonies were an important landmark of music publishing when they first appeared in editions by the

Viennese publisher S. A. Steiner & Comp. in 1816–17. Both symphonies were published in several formats, including arrangements for nine-part *Harmonie*, string quartet, piano trio, piano solo, piano duet and two pianos. The Seventh and Eighth Symphonies were also published in full score, marking the first time that a symphony was published in score and parts simultaneously. The arrangements ensured that the publication of the score and parts would not be loss-making overall, as the sales of the more marketable chamber music could compensate for the expense of engraving the parts. Since it was not yet standard practice to conduct a symphony from the score, the publication was evidently underpinned by the emerging notion of the symphony as an object worthy of study, or a text that exists independently from the act of performance.[26]

Overall, nineteenth-century developments in the publishing of symphonies correspond with contemporary developments in concert life, particularly in aristocratic concert societies (especially the Liebhaber Concerte), which consciously sought to promote great and worthy works of art. Ultimately, these trends reflected the increase in the status of the symphony in nineteenth-century musical culture, though the genre's elevated status was by no means solidified by the time Beethoven began his career as a symphonist.

Contextualising Beethoven's Early Symphonies

When Beethoven moved to Vienna at the end of 1792, he found an environment which offered fewer opportunities for symphony performances than his native Bonn. One of his duties as a member of the *Kapelle* at the Bonn court had been to perform as a violist in the court orchestra. As is well known, Beethoven participated as a member of the orchestra in regular opera performances after 1789, when the theatre was re-opened following a five-year interruption. Recent research has also indicated that there was a thriving concert life at the Bonn court by the time of Beethoven's final departure, having been initiated by the music-loving Elector Maximilian Franz in the 1780s.[27] The court had its own dedicated concert venue, the *Grosser Akademiensaal*, located directly above the theatre. Concert life at the Bonn court appears to have been private, as there is little evidence of tickets being advertised or made available to the general public. From the surviving documentation, it is not possible to determine how frequently court concerts occurred. However, when the court ensemble (including the 20-year-old Beethoven) accompanied the Elector to Mergentheim for a six-week stay between September and October 1791, their performances reportedly

included six concerts of orchestral music, suggesting that such concerts were a regular part of the ensemble's activities. Symphonies were undoubtedly core to the orchestra's repertoire: an extensive inventory of Elector Maximilian Franz's music library lists over 650 items of orchestral music, including symphonies, divertimenti, serenades and overtures. The centrality of the symphony is confirmed by the only documented concert programme from the 1791 Mergentheim visit, which included three symphonies (by Mozart, Pleyel and Wineberger respectively) alongside two concertos and two arias. Regular concert performances that emphasised symphonies were evidently a routine aspect of Beethoven's early professional life.

On his first arrival in Vienna, Beethoven was still a salaried member of Maximilian Franz's *Kapelle*, and it was assumed that he would return to Bonn after a period of studying composition (initially with Haydn, later also with Albrechtsberger and Salieri). Had he continued his career as a court musician, his compositions would eventually have included symphonies for the court orchestra to perform. He had in fact already sketched ideas for at least two different symphonies while in Bonn: he sketched a first movement of a C minor 'Sinfonia' as early as 1788–9, and a C major 'Sinfonia' appears among his sketches from 1790.[28] When the Bonn court was disbanded in 1794, following the occupation of Bonn by French forces during the Revolutionary Wars, Beethoven suddenly found himself an independent musician without professional ties to any regular performing ensemble. There was now little reason to expect symphonies to become a core part of his compositional output, as they had been for a previous generation of *Kapellmeister* such as Haydn.

While there were undoubtedly fewer orchestral performance opportunities for an independent composer in Vienna than for a courtly *Kapellmeister*, the city nevertheless offered more opportunities for a composer to win widespread recognition and acclaim. Public concerts were held only infrequently, but one such concert in Vienna could reach a larger and broader audience than the regular private concerts at the Bonn court. Vienna was also home to a large concentration of wealthy music lovers who were willing to support serious music and musicians. Concert societies and series organised by Viennese aristocrats were increasingly underpinned by ideals concerning the promotion of great musical works (evidenced from the 1780s in the concerts of the Gesellschaft der associierten Cavaliers and its emphasis on grand choral works). In these circumstances, a composer working in Vienna might produce only a handful of symphonies, but these works could make a greater impact on the musical scene than they might in a private musical establishment, where symphonies formed part of regular in-house entertainment.

Beethoven began his first attempt at composing a symphony for Vienna in 1795. This was an important breakthrough year for the 24-year-old composer, which saw his public debut as a concerto soloist at one of the Tonkünstler Societät concerts in March, and the publication of his Piano Trios Op. 1. Beethoven sketched ideas for a symphony in C major intermittently until finally abandoning it in 1797, though some of the material was later recycled in his First Symphony. His first opportunity to present a benefit concert in one of the theatres came relatively late: by the time of his first concert in the Burgtheater in April 1800 he had already established himself as one of Vienna's leading musicians. He evidently hoped, though, that public concerts would become a regular feature of his working life. In a letter to his childhood friend Franz Wegeler of 29 June 1801, Beethoven wrote, 'if I stay here for good I shall arrange to reserve one day a year for my Akademie'.[29] This was overly optimistic: in the end, Beethoven only presented further public concerts for his own benefit in the years 1803, 1808, 1814 and 1824. Of these, 1814 was his most successful year of concert-giving, in which he arranged four benefit concerts and a further charity concert whose programmes included the recently completed Seventh and Eighth Symphonies and *Wellingtons Sieg*.

Symphonies composed for grand public concerts were evidently part of Beethoven's long-term compositional plans from an early stage. However, his ambition to compose a symphony as early as 1795 should be viewed in the context of his attempts to make his mark on the Viennese music scene, rather than as reflecting a particular desire to specialise in this genre. In July 1801 Beethoven wrote a long letter to his friend Amenda in which he revealed his despair about his deafness, and also reflected on his achievements so far: 'What is there that I might not accomplish? Since you left I have composed everything except opera and church music.'[30] He tackled these last two genres not long after his letter to Amenda, with his oratorio *Christus am Ölberge* in 1803 (technically a concert work, but nevertheless his first major essay in religious music) and the first version of *Leonore* in 1804. Beethoven evidently aimed to excel in all the major musical genres, as Mozart had done.

Composing symphonies and other large-scale concert works could nevertheless pose serious financial risks for a self-employed musician such as Beethoven. There was little guarantee that a concert venue would be available for its performance, so that composing a symphony might end up being a fruitless venture. Furthermore, whereas an opera might run for several months, a symphony might be performed only once at a public benefit concert, with no promise of future performances. Symphonies were also less attractive to Viennese music publishers than smaller genres that were cheaper to produce and easier to sell. While Beethoven clearly desired

to show himself to be a capable symphonist from early in his career, circumstances in Vienna meant that he could not afford to devote too much time and energy to the genre.

As an independent musician, however, Beethoven was in a more favourable position than most for gaining recognition as a symphonist. He received generous support from music-loving aristocrats from his early years in Vienna, particularly from Prince Lichnowsky, who provided him with accommodation and meals during the 1790s, and paid him an annual stipend of 600 gulden from 1800. This support allowed Beethoven to devote time to ambitious large-scale projects that did not necessarily offer immediate financial reward (symphonies being a prime example). Lichnowsky also actively promoted Beethoven's career, taking him on an extended concert tour in 1796 and introducing him to many of Vienna's leading aristocratic patrons of music. The prince may also have helped Beethoven to secure the Burgtheater and its orchestra for his first benefit concert, perhaps providing additional financial assistance with its organisation. (Beethoven's dedication of his two Piano Sonatas Op. 14 to Josephine von Braun, wife of the court theatre director Baron Peter von Braun, has also traditionally been viewed as an attempt to gain favour with the latter, and therefore to increase his chances of being granted permission to use one of the theatres.) Without the financial support and connections of Lichnowsky, it would have been more difficult for Beethoven to organise his first public concert, or to focus his energies on composing orchestral music.

Beethoven was also well placed for securing his second benefit concert, which included the premieres of his Second Symphony, Third Piano Concerto and *Christus am Ölberge*. In 1803 he was given a temporary appointment as composer at the Theater an der Wien, where he was engaged to compose an opera. One of the perks of this appointment was that he was allowed to use the theatre for a benefit concert, without having to apply through the gatekeeping Baron von Braun (who had in fact turned down Beethoven's request to use one of the court theatres for a concert in 1802). In April 1803 Beethoven was therefore able to present a second benefit concert in the Theater an der Wien, for which he engaged the theatre orchestra. He was furthermore able to raise ticket prices far above those for regular theatre performances (something he was not allowed to do for the premiere of the Ninth Symphony in the Kärtnerthor Theater in 1824), which made the 1803 concert especially profitable. He received further organisational support from Prince Lichnowsky, who attended the rehearsal from its 8 a.m. start on the day of the concert: when the musicians were flagging and tempers were beginning to fray, Lichnowsky

ordered baskets of food and wine for the players, and the rehearsal could resume with much improved general morale.

On the commercial sheet music market, Beethoven also received more support than could usually be expected for the publication of symphonies, particularly from the Second Symphony onwards. He had offered his First Symphony to the Leipzig-based Bureau de Musique for an unspectacular fee of 20 ducats (which was the same price he set for the Septet and the Piano Sonata Op. 22 respectively). That a work on the magnitude of a symphony was priced the same as a piano sonata reflects the relatively low market value of the symphony in music publishing, and highlights the fact that an independent composer wishing to make money would be better off focusing on smaller genres. For the Second Symphony, however, Beethoven was able to secure a much higher fee, receiving 700 gulden for the symphony together with the Third Piano Concerto from a newly established Viennese publishing firm, the Kunst- und Industrie-Comptoir (valuing the works around 77 ducats each).[31] This was a very generous fee for a symphony, given that there was little demand for such works on the market. Like other publishers at the time, the Kunst- und Industrie-Comptoir specialised in smaller genres such as piano and chamber music, and was likely to make a financial loss from the publication of a symphony. David Wyn Jones identifies the firm's publication of Beethoven's symphonies as 'a novel form of patronage', providing the composer with another avenue for earning money from his symphonies that was not available to most other musicians.[32] In 1806 Beethoven also published his own piano trio arrangement of the Second Symphony with the Kunst- und Industrie-Comptoir, enabling him to receive a second publication fee for this work.

By the time Beethoven began concentrated work on the *Eroica* in 1803, he had reasons to be optimistic about securing the performance and publication of a new symphony. He would presumably have assumed that he would be able to secure the Theater an der Wien for another benefit concert the following year, while he was still the in-house composer. (In the event, no such concert happened, as discussed in Chapter 4). Furthermore, he was now recognised as one of the foremost musicians of the day, and news that he was composing a new symphony on a grand scale would be likely to generate serious interest among the music lovers of the high aristocracy. He could therefore reasonably expect at least some kind of organisational or financial support from aristocratic patrons for future performances. These circumstances were fundamentally different from Beethoven's early career as a court musician, when he had first made tentative sketches for a symphony while still in his late teens. Had Bonn not

been overrun by French forces in 1794, Beethoven might have returned to his old post and gone on to compose many more symphonies than the nine he eventually completed. Yet various aspects of Viennese musical life around 1800, particularly the city's high concentration of wealthy patrons who cultivated a serious attitude towards music, both enabled and incentivised Beethoven to compose symphonies that were more monumental and individualistic than those of his eighteenth-century predecessors.

Notes

1. J. F. von Schönfeld, *Jahrbuch der Tonkunst von Wien und Prag* (Vienna: Schönfeld, 1796), p. 77. All translations are the author's own unless otherwise stated.
2. Ibid., pp. 77–8.
3. See advertisements in the *Wiener Zeitung*, 80 (1783), *Anhang* [p. 3] (Lausch) and *Wiener Zeitung*, 17 (1784), p. 421 (Traeg).
4. Cited in D. W. Jones, *The Symphony in Beethoven's Vienna* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 12.
5. *Wiener Zeitung*, 5 (1785), p. 123.
6. *Wiener Zeitung*, 8 (1796), p. 229.
7. See M. S. Morrow, *Concert Life in Haydn's Vienna* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1989), pp. 16–17, and D. Edge, Review of Morrow, *Concert Life*, *Haydn Yearbook*, 16 (1992), pp. 139–66.
8. Jones, *The Symphony*, pp. 43–8.
9. See N. Zaslaw, *Mozart's Symphonies: Context, Performance Practice, Reception* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), pp. 520–1.
10. O. Biba, 'Concert Life in Beethoven's Vienna', in R. Winter and B. Carr (eds.), *Beethoven, Performers, and Critics* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1980), p. 77.
11. Letter of 11 April 1781, cited in D. Edge, 'Mozart's Viennese Orchestras', *Early Music*, 20 (1992), p. 79.
12. Letter of 6 November 1799, cited in J. A. Rice, *Empress Marie Therese and Music at the Viennese Court, 1792–1807* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 170.
13. Letter from Mozart to his father, 8 May 1782, in *Mozart's Letters, Mozart's Life* ed. R. Spaethling (London: Faber & Faber, 2000), pp. 311–12.
14. The programmes of all twenty concerts are listed in Jones, *The Symphony*, pp. 126–8.
15. Cited in ibid., p. 124.
16. Ibid., pp. 29–31.
17. *Wiener Zeitung*, 28 (1782), *Anhang* [p. 3].
18. See Jones, *The Symphony*, pp. 13ff.
19. Advertised in *Wiener Zeitung*, 80 (1783), *Anhang* [p. 3].
20. *Wiener Zeitung*, 17 (1784), p. 421; cited in Jones, *The Symphony*, p. 12.
21. *Wiener Zeitung*, 98 (1792), p. 3318.
22. N. November, *Cultivating String Quartets in Beethoven's Vienna* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2017), p. 72.
23. Ibid.
24. K. Dorfmüller, N. Gertsch and J. Ronge, eds., *Ludwig van Beethoven: Thematisch-bibliographische Werkverzeichnis*, 2 vols. (Munich: G. Henle, 2014), vol. 1, pp. 128–33.
25. Ibid.
26. See L. Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).
27. The details in this paragraph are taken from J. D. Wilson, 'From the Chapel to the Theatre to the *Akademiensaal*: Beethoven's Musical Apprenticeship at the Bonn Electoral Court, 1784–1782', in K. Chapin and D. W. Jones (eds.), *Beethoven Studies 4* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

28. L. Lockwood, *Beethoven's Symphonies: An Artistic Vision* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 2015), p. 231.
29. S. Brandenburg, ed., *Ludwig van Beethoven. Briefwechsel: Gesamtausgabe*, 7 vols. (Munich, 1996–8), vol. 1, no. 65; translation in E. Forbes (ed.), *Thayer's Life of Beethoven* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 283.
30. Brandenburg, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 1, no. 67; translation in Forbes (ed.), *Thayer's Life of Beethoven*, p. 281.
31. Jones, *The Symphony,* p. 163.
32. Ibid., p. 165.