

SCORE REVIEWS

Ludwig van Beethoven, *Streichquintette* (String Quintets) edited by Sabine Kurth (G. Henle Verlag, Munich, 2002), 147pp. £9

Beethoven's output for string quintet is limited to two original works – the Quintet in C op. 29, composed in 1801 and published in the following year, and the Fugue in D op. 137, composed in November 1817 and published posthumously in 1827 – and two arrangements: op. 4 (1795, published 1796) is a reworking of the Wind Octet that Beethoven had completed in Bonn by 1792 and revised in Vienna in 1793; it was published, as op. 103, only in 1830, while op. 104, Beethoven's revision of an existing transcription (by one Herr Kaufmann) for string quintet of the Piano Trio in C minor op. 1 no. 3, again dates from 1817. To these four completed works may be added a fragmentary composition, the *Quintettsatz* in D minor, Hess 40, which acts as a slow introduction to an incomplete fugue in the same key. As has been known since Nottebohm's time, the fugue subject is bound up with Beethoven's early sketching for the Scherzo of the Ninth Symphony; Hess 40 is contemporaneous with op. 137.

Not a major part of Beethoven's output, then, but nonetheless interesting for that. The one major contribution to the genre, op. 29, needs no defence. Op. 4 is of more scholarly interest than op. 104 inasmuch as, rather than being essentially a transcription of its source work, it represents a thorough recomposition of op. 103 and thus offers important insights into Beethoven's compositional development in those crucial first years following his arrival in Vienna. The fugal endeavours represented by op. 137 and Hess 40 form part of the context to the composition of the 'Hammerklavier' Sonata, with its extraordinary fugal finale; into this mix one should also throw the quintet arrangement (though using two cellos and only one viola) of the five-voice fugue in B flat minor from *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier I*, and even the recently discovered quartet movement in B minor, the autograph score of which bears the same date (28 November 1817) as one of the surviving autographs of op. 137. Nor should we forget Beethoven's intended return to the quintet medium right at the end of his life, as witness the fragmentary materials for another quintet in C from 1826–27.

The five core works (opp. 4, 29, 104, 137, and Hess 40) were published together in 1968 as part of the then relatively new Beethoven *Gesamtausgabe* (*Beethoven: Werke*, Abt. 6, Band 2), which had been inaugurated in 1961. In common with the other volumes, this one promised a *kritischer Bericht*, or Critical Report which, in the event, was a very long time in coming. When it finally appeared, some 30 years later, it was the work not of Johannes Herzog, editor of the 1968 edition, but rather Sabine Kurth, whose dissertation on the Beethoven quintets had been published in 1996 (*Beethovens Streichquintette* (Munich, 1996)). And it is Kurth who has now re-edited all five works on the basis of that work, and published them in an attractive study-score edition as well as in parts. The editorial matter at the beginning and end of both versions is identical, though it is provided only in the part for Violin 1; while the Preface appears in German, English and French, the concluding critical notes appear in

only the first two of these languages. (References below are to the study-score version.)

It hardly needs saying that much has happened in Beethoven scholarship in the years between Herzog's and Kurth's editions. Arguably one of the most important developments affecting the present edition will have been the re-emergence in Kraków, towards the end of the 1970s, of a large number of manuscripts removed from the former Preussische Staatsbibliothek, among them the autograph score of the Quintet op. 29. The new availability of this source is all the more important given the relatively complex textual history of the work: although Beethoven promised it to Breitkopf & Härtel in Leipzig, who published it in December 1802, an unauthorized and error-ridden edition appeared early in November in Vienna, published by Artaria. Beethoven, although initially furious at the situation (see his letter to Breitkopf & Härtel dated 13 November 1802: *Beethoven: Briefe*, ed. Sieghard Brandenburg (Munich, 1996), vol. 1, no. 110), subsequently proofread two copies (now lost) of this edition, so that Artaria was subsequently able to issue a new edition, 'Revû et corrigé par [Beethoven] lui-même'. Kurth, who adopts the autograph as her *Hauptquelle*, notes that the relationship between it and the Breitkopf and (revised) Artaria editions is not straightforwardly hierarchical, owing to the differing standard of Beethoven's proofreading of each of the latter.

The period 1968–2001 (the date appended to Kurth's critical notes) has also seen a major rethinking of certain aspects of the Beethoven *Gesamtausgabe*, which seems to have been revived during the 1990s under the general editorship of Ernst Hertrich. Aside from the fact that volumes are appearing with much greater frequency, it has also become the norm for the *kritischer Bericht* to be published as an integral part of the volume itself; moreover, the largely contextual, prefatory introduction to each work within a volume has been considerably expanded. But there is more. The original general *Vorwort* by Joseph Schmidt-Görg accompanying Herzog's 1968 edition claimed that the text of the new edition 'shall reproduce Beethoven's intentions as exactly as possible'. Such naïve faith in the stability of the 'work' is out of place today, and this has affected editorial policy. Thus Hertrich's *Vorwort* recognizes that sources betray differences and inconsistencies of articulation and dynamics both internally and in comparison with one another; attempts at rationalizing and conforming such passages are to be resisted, since they bring the danger of presenting a chimerical 'smooth, problem-free text' that misrepresents the sources themselves.

The same criteria guide Kurth's edition; indeed, she even reproduces some of Hertrich's vocabulary. Thus, for example, comparison of bars 33–5 in the first-movement exposition of op. 4 with the corresponding passage in the recapitulation (bars 195–7) reveals no attempt to make the phrasing and articulation match. Examples could be multiplied, and are frequently alluded to in the critical notes.

Although this edition does not appear in the *Gesamtausgabe*, then, it is clear that it effectively supersedes Herzog's 1968 volume. In addition to the new availability of the op. 29 autograph, it should be noted that Kurth has also consulted the London edition, by Lavenu, of op. 104. In his *The Authentic English Editions of Beethoven* (London, 1963), 108–9, Alan Tyson had doubted but not altogether ruled out the possibility that this edition should be regarded as authentic, which probably accounts for its having been ignored by Herzog. But in his subsequent essay 'The Authors of the Op. 104 String Quintet' (*Beethoven*

Studies 1, ed. Alan Tyson (New York, 1973), 172), Tyson revised this opinion, concluding that the Lavenu edition 'is authentic and is textually independent of the Viennese edition of Artaria'. Kurth has been able to take advantage of this later research.

Welcome though it should be to players, this new edition may prove somewhat frustrating to scholars. The critical notes at the end of the study-score are useful and informative, but they are by the author's own admission (see p. VII) incomplete relative to the *kritischer Bericht* she has provided to Herzog's edition. But that *Bericht* (which was unfortunately unavailable to this author at the time of writing) refers to an edition which in certain cases (most obviously op. 29) chooses *Hauptquellen* other than Kurth's own, which will presumably make for complications if one tries to read it against Kurth's new edition. A better, if more costly, solution, might have been to redo the *kritischer Bericht* complete in association with Kurth's edition. As for the notes themselves, there are some slight errors and unclarity to be negotiated. On p. VIII, 1807 is given as the date for op. 104; the correct year, 1817, is given in the German and French translations. The suggestion (p. 146) that source B for op. 137 'was obviously copied from an earlier autograph score that has survived intact' leaves one wondering whether that score is presumed to be Kurth's source A (the Paris autograph score) or whether we are to assume the existence of a third autograph no longer extant, or lost. (The commentary to *Beethoven: Briefe*, vol. 4, no. 1194 suggests that B was indeed copied from A; much earlier, Kinsky–Halm¹ had erroneously reversed the relationship of these two sources.) The description on p. 134 of 'a third set of handwritten parts' for op. 4 gives the impression that this presumed *Stichvorlage* is extant, an impression that is reinforced by the remarks on the Trio II at the bottom of p. 135; only on p. 136 is clear reference made to 'the lost engraver's copy'. Finally, the English translation claims that this lost set of parts 'was prepared at the same time [as the original edition by Artaria]'; the German text, however, refers to 'ein dritter, gleichartiger handschriftlicher Stimmensatz' (emphasis mine): not quite the same thing.

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Johannes Brahms, *Klavierquintett f-moll Opus 34* (Piano Quintet in F minor op. 34) edited by Carmen Debryn and Michael Struck, fingering of piano part by Hans-Martin Theopold (G. Henle Verlag, Munich, 2001), 77pp. £24.75

After the death in 1894 of Philipp Spitta, one of the pioneers of the emerging discipline of musicology, Brahms wrote to Joachim lamenting the loss to 'your beautiful undertaking, to clean up our classic composers – from so much rubbish! – for the schools'. The production of source-critical editions, free of the extraneous performance instructions or editorial amendments that had sometimes supplemented and sometimes obscured the composer's original text, was seen as a pious duty by many serious-minded musicians in the second half of

¹ Georg Kinsky, *Das Werk Beethovens. Thematisch-bibliographisches Verzeichnis seiner sämtlichen vollendeten Kompositionen*, ed. Hans Halm (Munich, 1955), 417.