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**THE RECEPTION AND PERFORMANCE
OF LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN'S
INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN "VILLE LUMIÈRE"
FROM THE LATE 1820S THROUGH THE MID-1840S**

Abundant French periodical literature of the first half of the nineteenth century portrays France as vibrating with music and Paris as aspiring to be the hub of the most sublime and finest European music. Conscientious critics set out to form an elite audience and elevate "the musical intelligence of the masses", to sensitise professional musicians to the direction which "modern music" should take and to encourage skillful amateurs to dare to perform compositions that may not have been appealing upon first being heard. These goals could be achieved by constantly confronting all these groups as well as conservative critics with compositions of an unconventional artist who had become the subject of great controversy in Europe's main music centres. What composer then could be better than the "bizarre" Beethoven? This "impudent man triumphing through violence"¹ whose late works were described as depicting more the heavens than the earth, characterised as vague or downright unintelligible, or even as monstrous and detestable by composers desiring to remain loyal to their own conservative dogmas and therefore perceiving Beethoven's music as threatening their careers? In the French periodical literature Beethoven was therefore omnipresent through texts devoted to his works as well as his life and personality.

¹ This is how Fétis characterised Beethoven. See [F.-J.] Fétis, "École royale de Musique. Société des Concerts", in: *Revue musicale*, vol. III, 1828, p. 317. All the excerpts cited are the present author's translations from French.

Critical reception and performance of Beethoven's compositions in France through the eyes of the nineteenth-century French press have been studied by a number of researchers². The most comprehensive treatment of the subjects is by far Beate Angelika Kraus's book *Beethoven-Rezeption in Frankreich: Von ihren Anfängen bis zum Untergang des Second Empire*. However, a few threads within these topics still need a closer examination through extensive study of the press sources from the 1830s to the mid-1840s. Therefore, the purpose of the present article is to contribute towards musicological studies on the reception of Beethoven's instrumental music³ by the elite Parisian audience and the French peculiarities in the performance of Beethoven's music from the late 1820s to the mid-1840s⁴, draw-

² For the studies on the critical reception and performance of Beethoven's music in France through the eyes of the French, mainly the music press, see, among others, P.A. Bloom, "Critical Reaction to Beethoven in France: François-Joseph Fétis", in: *Revue belge de Musicologie / Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Muziekwetenschap*, vol. 26/27 (1972/1973), pp. 67–83; P.A. Bloom, *François-Joseph Fétis and the 'Revue musicale' (1827–1835)*, Ph.D. Diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1972; K. Ellis, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France. 'La Revue et gazette musicale de Paris', 1834–80*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1995; I. Grempler, *Das Musikschritftum von Hector Berlioz*, Ph.D. Diss., Göttingen, 1950; B.A. Kraus, "Beethoven and the Revolution: the View of the French Musical Press", in: *Music and the French Revolution*, edited by M. Boyd, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2008, pp. 302–314; B.A. Kraus, *Beethoven-Rezeption in Frankreich: Von ihren Anfängen bis zum Untergang des Second Empire*, Verlag Beethoven-Haus, Bonn 2001; B.A. Kraus, "Zum religiösen Verständnis von Beethovens Musik in Frankreich", in: *Kirchenmusikalisches Jahrbuch*, 99. Jahrgang 2015, edited by O. Freudenreich, U. Konrad, Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, Paderborn 2017, pp. 111–126; *Le Dessous des notes. Voies vers l'ésosthétique. Hommage au Professeur Manfred Kelkel (29 janvier 1929–18 avril 1999)*, edited by J.-J. Velly, Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, Paris 2001; D.B. Levy, *Early Performances of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony: A Comparative Study of Five Major Cities*, Ph.D. Diss., University of Rochester, 1979; R. Wallace, *Beethoven's Critics: Aesthetic Dilemmas and Resolutions during the Composer's Lifetime*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1986.

³ However, the present author deems it useful to take into consideration the finale of the Ninth Symphony, all the more so since this decision is justified by French Beethoven criticism of the time. Hector Berlioz regarded the use of voices as another means of diversifying Beethoven's symphonic structure enabling him both to surpass the point he had reached with instrumental technique alone in his symphonies and to observe the law of crescendo within the Ninth by adding voices only in the second part of this "drama". See H. Berlioz, "Symphonie avec Chœurs de Beethoven", in: *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* n°9, 4 mars 1838, pp. 97–98.

⁴ In 1828, the Société des concerts du Conservatoire (renowned for promoting Beethoven's instrumental works) was founded by François-Antoine Habeneck in Paris. By the mid-1840s, the image of Beethoven as a learned composer was consolidated through the French press.

ing equally on the contemporary music and non-music press targeting a highly diverse readership. Adopting this broad research approach leads to further elaborations of the subjects by completing the findings of previous studies either focused on a close scrutiny of only one periodical (see, for instance, Bloom's studies⁵ or Ellis's book⁶) or limited to a detailed examination of a few press titles (as in the case of Wallace's book discussing writings mostly from the mid- to late 1830s⁷ or Kraus's aforementioned monograph drawing only on important rival specialised magazines for the time period from the 1830s onwards⁸). The present article is therefore divided into two sections that jointly depict a complex picture of assimilating and evaluating Beethoven's music as well as adapting it to French performance conventions in the period under consideration.

THE REACTIONS OF THE ELITE PARISIAN AUDIENCE TO BEETHOVEN'S MUSIC

Audiences' perceptions of Beethoven's works were widely discussed in the press. Especially the elite Parisian audience, attending concerts given by the Société des concerts du Conservatoire⁹, received extensive press coverage. Beate Angelika Kraus's careful and detailed examination of six historical periodicals (*La France musicale*, *Gazette musicale de Paris*, *Le Ménestrel*, *Le Monde musical*, *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, and *Revue musicale*) resulted in a separate section entitled "Das Publikum der Conservatoire-Konzerte" included in her monograph *Beethoven-Rezeption in Frankreich: Von ihren Anfängen bis zum Untergang des Second Empire*¹⁰. In this section she covered various aspects, such as critics' positive and negative evaluations of the audience (the latter mainly triggered by their deep conviction that following fashion was the main reason for attending the concerts by the Parisian elite), the audience composition and the exclusivity of the concerts given by the Société des concerts du Conservatoire (presented in social context), the distinction between the Conservatoire audience and

⁵ P.A. Bloom, "Critical Reaction to Beethoven in France: François-Joseph Fétis", *op. cit.*; P.A. Bloom, *François-Joseph Fétis and the 'Revue musicale' (1827-1835)*, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-207.

⁶ K. Ellis, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France*, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-126.

⁷ R. Wallace, *Beethoven's Critics*, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-125.

⁸ See B.A. Kraus, *Beethoven-Rezeption in Frankreich*, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

⁹ In the repertory of the orchestra of the Société des concerts du Conservatoire Beethoven's compositions occupied the central position.

¹⁰ B.A. Kraus, *Beethoven-Rezeption in Frankreich*, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-144.

lyrical theatre-goers as well as the use of religious terminology by music critics¹¹. Still, this complex picture can be enriched thanks to a close scrutiny of other historical periodicals, as the relevant information is provided also by: *Le Figaro*, *L'Indépendant*, *Journal des débats*, *Le Pianiste*, *La Quotidienne*, *Revue générale*, *Revue de Paris*, *Revue du théâtre*, *La Romance*, *Le Salon musical*. Such an extensive study carried out by the present author has resulted in treating the subject of elite audience's reactions to Beethoven's music from other perspectives, for instance, against the background of instrumentalists' and critics' own struggles to comprehend and appreciate the German composer's musical masterpieces. Furthermore, the present large-scale study indicates that music critics' mixed evaluations of the audience were common for quite a long period of time. Therefore the conclusions stating that positive assessments are clearly in the majority or that music critics' evaluations of the audience only initially offer contradictory statements¹² should be treated with caution or regarded as simplistic.

In *Le Pianiste* of 5 January 1835, Charles Chaulieu decried the French public's lack of sufficiently high level of music education, though he granted that its perception of Beethoven's more challenging compositions was improving¹³. In the late 1830s and early 1840s, music critics continued to express their irritation because of audiences' unwillingness—as they believed—to appreciate Beethoven's works. Still, Henri Blanchard observed a paradoxical phenomenon. In his opinion, the Parisian public lacked sound judgement in music: "As much the French, Parisian public is able to judge dramatic works, as much it has a formed taste, the sense of convention, the intelligence of great and delicate things, an instinctively open and brilliant mind towards literature, which, after all, is one of the main elements of its education, as it is indecisive, inept, uninspired, and wrong in its judgements concerning musical aesthetics and the science of sound"¹⁴. Nonetheless, all the great German and Italian artists, with the aim of securing their European success, sought the favour of this public and its stamp of approval. Still in the second half of the century, critics did not fail to recall the elite audience's struggle with Beethoven's music. In the *Revue générale* of 1884, Élie Poirée wrote: "Beethoven's Ninth Sympho-

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² Cf. *Ibidem*, pp. 131, 137.

¹³ [Ch.] Chaulieu, "Luigi van Beethoven considéré comme pianiste (Suite et fin, voir le n^o1^{er})", in: *Le Pianiste, journal spécial pour le Piano, les Théâtres lyriques et les Concerts* n^o5, 5 janvier 1835, p. 34.

¹⁴ H. Blanchard, "Symphonie poétique. M Douay", in: *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* n^o9, 26 février 1843, p. 67.

ny, for instance, which in 1834 was regarded as incomprehensible even by the dilettanti of the Conservatoire, is nowadays enthusiastically acclaimed by a large mass of the public, composed of various constituents that are constantly renewed"¹⁵. However, focusing only on the elite Parisian audience's struggle to appreciate Beethoven's music would result in a distorted image of these elite dilettanti, as their perceptions of Beethoven's works must have been largely shaped by music professionals' own perceptions. It is from historical press that one can draw this inference. Musicians' comprehension and acceptance of Beethoven's works were not considered entirely satisfactory by the critics. The process of becoming thoroughly familiar with Beethoven's music could only be regarded as complete, if crowned by musicians' ability to skillfully convey their comprehensive understanding of it to an audience. The critics would regard this ability as crucial to a concert's ultimate success, and deplored that it was not common among French musicians. D'Ortigue described this ability in the *Revue de Paris* as "a spontaneous correspondence" between the performers' feelings, impressions and those of the audience, thanks to which "all of them are lifted up into the same sphere"¹⁶. In the *Gazette musicale de Paris* he depicted it as a "relation of sympathy that is built between the performers and the audience; this kind of harmonic vibration which spreads, like a magnetic fluid, from the composer's soul to the souls of those who are to interpret his thought, and from their souls to the souls of those who listen, in order for this mass of men to be immersed in the same and deep impression and make them experience the same influence"¹⁷. Moreover, in *La Quotidienne*, d'Ortigue noticed the importance of such communication not only during the performance but also just before it, naming such a connection as "an extraordinary being which at the same moment gives rise to the same feeling in a crowd"¹⁸ and "the power which makes that crowd, that collective being, one being, and conveys to it not only the same thought, but also the same series of emotions and impressions"¹⁹.

¹⁵ É. Poirée, "La Musique en 1884. La Nouvelle école et ses tendances", in: *La Revue générale littéraire, politique et artistique* n°7, 1 avril 1884, p. 156.

¹⁶ J. d'Ortigue, "Conservatoire. - Second concert", in: *Revue de Paris*, vol. XXVI, 1836, p. 186.

¹⁷ J. d'O[rtigue], "Concerts du Conservatoire. Quatrième séance. Symphonie en la. - Ouverture de la *Flûte enchantée*. - Ouverture d'*Euryanthe*. - *Laudi spirituali* du 16^e siècle. - M. Mazas", in: *Gazette musicale de Paris* n°11, 16 mars 1834, p. 88.

¹⁸ J. d'O[rtigue], "Revue musicale. Société des Concerts. - Deuxième séance. - Concert du Théâtre Italien. - Opéra Comique. - *Les Souvenirs de la Fleur*, opéra en un acte de M. Halévy. - Nouveaux quatuors de M. Georges Onslow. - Anniversaires de la mort de Beethoven", in: *La Quotidienne* n°71, 12 mars 1833, p. [2].

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

It was particularly the audience's reaction to Beethoven's symphonies that critics assessed. The Fifth, Sixth (called by Maurice Bourges "the sublime hymn to the glory of nature"²⁰) and Seventh Symphonies were frequently mentioned in the periodical literature as being both understood and liked by the elite Parisian audience²¹. The audience's enthusiasm for the Fifth Symphony performed by the Société des concerts was such—as François-Joseph Fétis described—that they would give it three rounds of applause upon hearing its movement, burst out into unanimous cheers during the execution²², or demand an encore²³. With regard to the audience's reaction to the Sixth Symphony, François Stœpel's description, which appeared in the *Gazette musicale de Paris* of 2 March 1834, is noteworthy, since it conveys the quality that contemporary music critics eagerly awaited in the public's reaction—sincerity: "And if I am unable to depict to the readers this great joy with which all the delighted crowd was shining, if I am unable to describe these passionate cheers which filled every brief pause (for there was no scanty applause forced by conventionality, the personal interest in the composer, or any other reason rather than by the composition itself), then how could they [the readers] appreciate my highly favourable review and passionate praise?"²⁴. As for the audience's adoration of the Seventh Symphony, Hector Berlioz's review in the *Gazette musicale de Paris* of 27 April 1834, depicting genuine enthusiasm, captures it well: "The effect of this miraculous elegy [the Allegretto] on the audience is almost incredible. Having burst into thunderous applause three times, the fatigued audience remained in silence for a while, but was bubbling over with excitement, and again exploded [into applause]: the whole room, getting up, demanded that the orchestra prove, for the second time, the existence of this marvel"²⁵.

²⁰ M. Bourges, "Troisième Concert du Conservatoire", in: *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* n°8, 19 février 1843, p. 62.

²¹ See, for instance, "Concerts du Conservatoire. Deuxième concert", in: *La Romance, Journal de Musique* n°7, 14 février 1835, p. 25; "Concerts, soirées et matinées", in: *Le Ménestrel* n°18, 2 avril 1843, p. [2]; J. d'Ortigue, "Société des concerts. Quatrième séance", in: *La France musicale* n°10, 10 mars 1844, p. 73.

²² [F.-J.] Fétis, "École royale de Musique. Société des Concerts. 3^{me} séance", in: *Revue musicale*, vol. III, 1828, p. 274.

²³ [F.-J.] Fétis, "École royale de Musique. Société des Concerts", in: *Revue musicale*, vol. III, 1828, pp. 372, 374.

²⁴ F. Stœpel, "Concerts du Conservatoire. Troisième concert", in: *Gazette musicale de Paris* n°9, 2 mars 1834, p. 72.

²⁵ H. Berlioz, "Concerts du Conservatoire. Cinquième, sixième et septième concerts", in: *Gazette musicale de Paris* n°17, 27 avril 1834, p. 134.

As Victor Schœlcher aptly noted in the *Revue de Paris* of 1835, Beethoven's symphonies must be heard repeatedly for the listener to grasp their essence²⁶. Joseph Louis d'Ortigue's review, which appeared nine years later in *La France musicale*, succinctly resuming the audience's predilection for the Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Symphonies, in fact confirmed Schœlcher's remark: "I repeat this: the audience has accepted the Symphonies in C minor, in A [major] and the 'Pastoral' Symphony. These are the titles that resound in their ears, which evoke their memories [...]"²⁷. Schœlcher's and d'Ortigue's observations imply that the music professionals had not won the hearts of the listeners with this repertoire overnight. Among the three symphonies, the Fifth had proved to be especially challenging for the audience. In the *Journal des débats* of 18 April 1835, Berlioz captured the turnabout in the public's reaction to this work, giving the following very vivid description:

During the first five or six performances of the [first] movement [of the Fifth Symphony], the public did not seem to experience strong emotions upon hearing the cries of the disheveled artist. They did not understand yet. This passionate style was too far beyond their predilection for instrumental music. However, last year one could already see a significant progress in their education; and the last time, the quiver which the audience in the stalls felt was such that at the moment of the peroration—as the second violins, joining the first ones in a thunderous unison, seemed to rise above the instrumental mass to fall upon it with all their weight, like the blazing rocks thrown out of the volcanoes—they could barely contain themselves and thundered their excitement. [...]

It has not happened even once since this symphony was performed in France that the audience in the stalls, hearing the fourth bar of the finale, have not risen as one and drowned out with their cries the resounding voice of the orchestra. Often some performers, themselves paralysed by the emotion they experienced, became incapable of continuing their parts and holding their bows, which fell out of their hands. At that moment, in the first boxes, many young and graceful faces hid to stifle convulsive sobs; some young people howled with laughter, others tore their hair out, made a thousand extravagant contortions. Mrs Malibran, on hearing this piece for the first time, six or seven years ago, was stricken by nervous attack so violently that she had to be taken out of the room; at that very moment, another lady also felt obliged to leave in tears, while an old soldier, raising his hands to heaven, exclaimed filled with awe: "It's the Emperor! It's the Emperor!", and a famous French composer, who until then had regarded Beethoven as an uninspired musician, admitted, trembling in every limb, that he was afraid he would go mad²⁸.

²⁶ V. S[œ]lcher, "Salon de 1835. Dernier article", in: *Revue de Paris*, vol. XVII, 1835, p. 184.

²⁷ J. d'Ortigue, "Société des concerts. Quatrième séance", *op. cit.*, p. 73.

²⁸ H. [Berlioz], "Sixième concert du Conservatoire", in: *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, 18 avril 1835, pp. [1-2].

Still, music critics observed a flaw in the audience's adoration of the Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Symphonies: the inability to equally appreciate all the movements of each of these symphonies. For this reason in France one often heard such phrases as: the finale of the Fifth Symphony, the storm of the 'Pastoral' Symphony, or the Allegretto of the Seventh Symphony, as Berlioz stressed with clear irritation²⁹. If one were to enumerate individual symphonic movements which were to the audience's most delight, then also the second movement of the Eighth Symphony should be included, as its encore performance was frequently demanded, as evident from historical press³⁰.

As regards Beethoven's symphonies that did not make an impression on the elite Parisian audience, the music critics most often mentioned the Fourth Symphony³¹ as well as the Third Symphony³²; the latter mostly because of its too long and thus exhausting finale, however with the exception of its *Funeral March*, which was often much applauded³³. The audience's negative reaction does not come as a surprise, if considered in the context of the critical evidence demonstrating the French musicians' incomprehension of (and sometimes even disdain for) Beethoven's orchestral music, which was perceived by the press as a quite common phenomenon in the early nineteenth century. Still in the 1840s music critics would recall instrumentalists' earlier reaction to Beethoven's music. In *Le Salon musical* of 25 April 1844, Jean-Joseph Bonaventure Laurens reminded its readers of this lack of comprehension among musicians: "[...] Did not our

²⁹ H. Berlioz, "Symphonies de Beethoven. 3^e Article", in: *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* n°6, 11 février 1838, p. 64.

Berlioz himself, however, played a part in perpetuating this phenomenon, by conducting only the Fifth's finale during the Grand Festival de l'Industrie in 1844. See "Festival de l'Industrie", in: *Le Ménestrel* n°35, 28 juillet 1844, p. [1]; "Festival de l'Industrie", in: *Le Ménestrel* n°36, 4 août 1844, p. [1].

For studies on the popularity of the finale of the Fifth Symphony and the Allegretto of the Seventh Symphony in nineteenth-century France, see B.A. Kraus, "Beethoven and the Revolution: the View of the French Musical Press", *op. cit.*, pp. 304–314.

³⁰ See, for instance, "Société des concerts. 3^e concert", in: *Figaro* n°67, 7 mars 1832, p. 3; "3^e concert du Conservatoire", in: *L'Indépendant, journal de littérature, de beaux-arts, d'industrie et d'annonces*, 22 février 1835, p. 3.

³¹ See, for instance, J. d'Ortigue, "Société des concerts. Quatrième séance", *op. cit.*, p. 73.

³² See, for instance, "Concerts, soirées et matinées", *op. cit.*, p. [2].

³³ J. d'Ortigue, "Société des concerts. Quatrième séance", *op. cit.*, p. 73.

Still, one may find reviews depicting enthusiastic reactions of the audience to the Third and Fourth Symphonies, like the one written by Castil-Blaze in the *Journal des débats* of 19 March 1828 vividly depicting the audience's reaction to the Third Symphony, or by Berlioz describing the public's reception of the Fourth Symphony in the *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* of 30 January 1842.

respectable Paris Conservatoire originally aim at proving that Beethoven – this great master of the symphony – had been deaf and blind while being confronted with these works of art which it appreciated later on? [...]”³⁴.

The critics would explain the audience's enthusiasm for or reserve to a given symphony by comparing it to another one which had provoked the opposite reaction of the public. *La Romance* of 14 February 1835 made such a comparison between the Seventh and Third Symphonies:

It's the Symphony in A [major] that did the honors at the concert. Some of Beethoven's works are understood better and preferred by the public. The Symphony in A [major] is counted among such compositions. How can this be explained? It is because this composition, without being less learned, is less complicated, the inspiration is more naïve, the ideas and feelings expressed by the composer are simpler, more accessible, without being less sublime or less passionate. You will not find in this symphony those serious, austere and gloomy accents of the 'Eroica', for it conveys what music can produce of the most tender, melancholic, caressing and charming through cheerfulness full of grace³⁵.

The Ninth Symphony had proved to be especially challenging for the elite audience. The *Revue musicale* of 2 February 1834 informed its readers that the Société des concerts du Conservatoire, in a bid to make this Symphony more accessible to the audience, divided its execution into two parts during the concert on 26 January that year: the instrumental part, first, with the *Allegro ma non troppo, un poco maestoso* that seemed to evoke Dante's description of hell – “*Lasciate ogni speranza, / o voi ch'entrate*” (“All hope abandon, / ye who enter in!”); and the choral part, that is, the finale resembling an oratorio because of its changes in tempo and time signatures³⁶. Indeed, the audience needed more time to appreciate the Ninth Symphony. Several years later, music critics continued to lament over it. To justify, at least to some degree, this incomprehension on the audience's part, one may recall that the Société des concerts du Conservatoire itself spent more than two years studying the score and rehearsing in order to prepare the rendition of this Symphony at a level comparable to the interpretations it offered of Beethoven's other symphonies. What is more, the audience's reaction in the late 1830s to the Ninth Symphony can be accurately gauged only against the background of reviews unveiling critics' own struggles with appreciating this work in its entirety at that time. Berlioz's review that appeared in the *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*

³⁴ J.-B. Laurens, “Critique musicale. Félix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy. Introduction”, in: *Le Salon musical* n°34, 25 avril 1844, p. 2.

³⁵ “Concerts du Conservatoire. Deuxième concert”, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

³⁶ B., “Premier concert du Conservatoire”, in: *Revue musicale* n°5, 2 février 1834, p. 39.

of 15 April 1838 serves as an example. In his belief, the audience of Paris Conservatoire were genuinely moved hearing both the Scherzo and Adagio from this Symphony; but, to his disappointment, he could not say the same about their reaction to the Allegro. However, the subsequent sentences from this review prove that Berlioz (who admitted that analysing this symphony was a difficult and dangerous task, a reckless attempt which he had long hesitated to undertake³⁷) tried to justify not only the audience's lack of enthusiasm for the last movement but also his own³⁸.

Music critics appreciated the gradual change in the elite audience's attitude towards Beethoven's music. As early as 1831, this shift must have been noticeable, since one reads in the *Revue musicale* of that year that Beethoven's ultra-romanticism no longer frightened a public governed only by fashion, reminding readers that just five years before Beethoven's name had been barely allowed in the salons³⁹. Another article in the same periodical of 1831 describes the process of becoming familiar with Beethoven's symphonies: "At first, one was astonished: one voiced objections, then came the training, then the flaws – which had shocked – ended up looking beautiful, for they were part of the individual physiognomy of the great artist. This is how things are now. Once the innovations of a genius have been accepted by the public, once they have become popular, their effect on art must be regarded as a *fait accompli*"⁴⁰. Though in the 1830s – as mentioned at the beginning of this section – the critics decried the level of music education among the audience, their reviews written in the consecutive years of that decade prove their constant undisguised satisfaction at the audience's reactions to Beethoven's music. *La Romance* of 3 May 1834 points out the very important change that the critics had for several years eagerly awaited from the public, that is, abandoning the pursuit of fashion: "But what I find even more amazing than all this is that Beethoven's music, the Beethoven orchestra succeeded in forming an audience among us

³⁷ H. Berlioz, "Symphonie avec Chœurs de Beethoven", *op. cit.*, p. 97.

³⁸ H. Berlioz, "Concerts du Conservatoire et de la rue Saint-Honoré", in: *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* n°15, 15 avril 1838, p. 161. In his previous article, Berlioz had already admitted it had taken him a long time to understand and develop a taste for this "colossal score". See H. Berlioz, "Symphonie avec Chœurs de Beethoven", *op. cit.*, p. 100.

Several years before François-Joseph Fétis had already expressed his perplexity regarding Beethoven's intention in the final movement. See [F.-J.] Fétis, "Cinquième concert du Conservatoire. Symphonie avec chœurs de Beethoven", in: *Revue musicale* n°9, 2 avril 1831, p. 69.

³⁹ "Publications classiques", in: *Revue musicale* n°3, 19 février 1831, p. 23.

⁴⁰ "Sixième concert du Conservatoire", in: *Revue musicale* n°11, 16 avril 1831, pp. 84–85.

in France, in Paris; and a genuine audience that is not guided by fashion, but by taste, that both understands and applauds much. I do not think that in the most elegant halls in Italy, or the most smoke-filled halls of Germany, his motherland, Beethoven has more obstinate admirers of his talent than at the cramped hall of the Conservatoire"⁴¹. Berlioz's review, printed in the *Journal des débats* of 25 January 1835, confirms the elite Parisian audience's interest in Beethoven's "modern school" compositions performed by the Société des concerts du Conservatoire (for these concerts – as Berlioz observed – the boxes were reserved a year ahead)⁴².

As the audience generally got used to Beethoven's "extravagancy", they coolly received not only other composers' works, but also Beethoven's compositions devoid of his characteristic bizarreness, as evident from the reviews written as early as 1831. The following telling review, which appeared in the *Revue musicale*, depicts one such reaction to Beethoven's overture from *König Stephan* Op. 117:

The sixth concert at the Conservatoire offered more than one novelty to its regulars, because we heard for the first time an overture by Beethoven which was announced in the programme under the title *Overture of King Stephen*. I don't know which King Stephen it is about, but I regret that Beethoven wrote an overture for him, which is not so good, and which seems to be a work from his youth. The enthusiasm which the audience usually show for the works of this great artist has not found in this composition the slightest opportunity to manifest itself. The directors of the [Société des] concerts du Conservatoire were right in satisfying the curiosity of music lovers by making them hear an unknown piece of Beethoven; but I think they had better not repeat it⁴³.

Obviously accepting Beethoven's challenging works by the elite public of Paris Conservatoire did not necessarily imply a complete understanding or that a strong liking for them would develop⁴⁴, as this task was difficult even for music critics themselves. Yet, this proved their willingness to repeatedly listen to his late works, as well as their pride which prevented them from allowing themselves be impressed by some lesser compositions⁴⁵.

⁴¹ "Concerts du Conservatoire", in: *La Romance* n°18, 3 mai 1834, p. 69.

⁴² H. [Berlioz], "Société des concerts du Conservatoire. Premier concert", in: *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, 25 janvier 1835, p. [1].

⁴³ "Sixième concert du Conservatoire", *op. cit.*, p. 85.

⁴⁴ This was deplored by the critics. See, for instance, H. Berlioz, "Conservatoire de musique. 9^e et dernier concert", in: *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* n°17, 29 avril 1838, p. 173.

⁴⁵ To critics' delight, this shift in elite audience was parallel to that occurring in "the masses" who, although indulging themselves in contradances and waltzes performed under the direction of Alexandre-Charles Fessy at Saint-Honoré Street in Paris and in quadrilles offered by Philippe Musard's orchestra operating at Vivienne Street

Numerous press sources which appeared by the first half of the nineteenth century showed a gradual change towards accepting Beethoven and the blossoming sense of pride the critics took in Paris being one of the main centres of popularising his compositions. Nevertheless, one finds reviews of the late 1830s and early 1840s still marked by indignation at the public's and musicians' indifference to some of his works. One may briefly characterise the cause of this long (in the opinion of enlightened critics) process of assimilating Beethoven's music and developing a taste for it, by paraphrasing d'Ortigue's words: for Beethoven, the source of inspirations no longer came from earth, but from the sphere of the infinite; therefore one should not perceive in his compositions only a simple transformation, since it could not take place on its own, for it represented an external realization of a thought which arose and developed at the heart of art⁴⁶.

PECULIARITIES IN THE PERFORMANCE OF BEETHOVEN'S MUSIC

A great deal of attention was paid in the periodical literature to conductors and instrumentalists adapting Beethoven's music. Most often the press would focus on their tendency towards considerably multiplying the number of instruments in the original performance medium, or towards adding a kind of instrument which did not figure in the original score. In her comprehensive book *Beethoven-Rezeption in Frankreich: Von ihren Anfängen bis zum Untergang des Second Empire*, Beate Angelika Kraus repeatedly addressed French performance practice. She noted that Beethoven's Septet in E-flat major Op. 20, set in an orchestral arrangement, had enjoyed considerable popularity among the audience and his string quartets (considered as a compressed form of a symphony) had been performed in Tut-

in Paris, eventually succumbed to Beethoven: "It is difficult to faithfully describe the deep impression left by Beethoven's music on the audience at Vivienne hall. And to think that only a few years ago the works of this great master were barely understood by the artists themselves; one is astonished at the immense progress in musical taste among the masses". See, "Une louable activité..." [incipit], in: *La France musicale* n°26, 27 juin 1841, p. 231. See also H. Prévost, "Revue musicale. Séances de MM. Allard, Dancla, Croisilles et Chevillard", in: *Revue du théâtre* n°3, 10 janvier 1838, p. 50.

Still, the light music must have continued to have a loyal audience, since the second day of the Grand Festival de l'Industrie in 1844 was set aside for – as Berlioz pointed out – polkas, quadrilles, overtures and waltzes, so dear to this part of the public who were afraid of great music. See "Festival de l'Industrie", 28 juillet 1844, *op. cit.*, p. [1].

⁴⁶ J. d'Ortigue, "Conservatoire. – Second concert", *op. cit.*, p. 187.

ti-Besetzung, double basses involved⁴⁷. In considering these two performance practice issues, Kraus referred to only three historical periodicals: *La France musicale*, *Le Ménestrel*, and *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*. Therefore, the aim of the present author was to conduct a more extensive examination in order to collect data from numerous historical periodicals and thus to add valuable information to the study presented by Kraus. The aim proved to be valid, for a close scrutiny of abundant periodical literature resulted in: specifying critics' views on performing Beethoven's chamber music in an orchestral arrangement, identifying the reasons for this performance practice and elaborating on other peculiarities in the performance of Beethoven's music. The present author gathered the most relevant data from the following press titles: *Le Courrier français*, *L'Europe littéraire*, *Le Figaro*, *La France musicale*, *Gazette des salons*, *Le Globe*, *L'Indépendant*, *Journal des artistes et des amateurs*, *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, *La Mélodie*, *Le Ménestrel*, *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*, *Revue musicale*, *Revue du Nord*, and *Revue de Paris*.

It was particularly Beethoven's Septet in E-flat major, Op. 20 that was subjected to multiplying its performing forces. The research carried out by the present author has shown that music critics' opinion was sharply divided over such performance practice of this work. Still, positive opinions predominated. For instance, the *Journal des artistes* of 1838 contains a favourable view on this tendency: "Beethoven's Septet performed by all violins, violas, cellos, double basses, clarinets, horns and bassoons [of the orchestra of the Société des concerts], has made – as one may say – an indescribable impression"⁴⁸. Édouard Monnais in *Le Courrier français* of 4 February 1837 offered an equally appreciative take: "two movements of his admirable Septet [were] performed by the full orchestra, with so much perfection that if each part were not meant for one artist, they would serve as a basis for a musical building"⁴⁹. Berlioz himself was very impressed with the performance of the

⁴⁷ B.A. Kraus, *Beethoven-Rezeption in Frankreich*, *op. cit.*, pp. 112–113, 129–130, 152, 234–235, 333. For a consideration of Beethoven's instrumental music being performed too fast by the Société des concerts du Conservatoire, see B.A. Kraus, *Beethoven-Rezeption in Frankreich*, *op. cit.*, pp. 120–121.

⁴⁸ C. Lecorbeiller, "Concert du Conservatoire", in: *Journal des artistes. Revue pittoresque consacrée aux artistes et aux gens du monde* n°18, 6 mai 1838, p. 255. See also "Concerts du Conservatoire", in: *L'Indépendant, furet de Paris, littérature, beaux-arts, théâtre, librairie, industrie et annonces*, 21 janvier 1837, p. 3; "Conservatoire. – Credo de M. Elwart", in: *Le Ménestrel* n°14, 4 mars 1838, p. 1.

⁴⁹ É. M[onnais], "Musique. Société des Concerts. – Séance de musique instrumentale donnée par MM. Liszt, Urhan et Batta", in: *Le Courrier français* n°35, 4 février 1837, p. [1].

Septet by Habeneck's orchestra of the Société des concerts operating at the Hall of Menus-Plaisirs at du Conservatoire Street⁵⁰. Henri Valentino's orchestra performing at the hall at Saint-Honoré Street as well was praised for executing the composition (which up till 1838, as informed the *Journal des artistes* of that year, had been performed in an orchestral arrangement only at Paris Conservatoire by Habeneck's orchestra⁵¹) with such precision and ability as to render the nuances that seemed "to reduce from sixty to seven the number of skillful performers"⁵².

A negative opinion regarding this practice was expressed, for instance, in the *Gazette des salons* of 1 February 1837, which reminded its readers that such manner of performance of Beethoven's Septet had already been in fashion for several years in France. Even if the style and conception of the composition could be captured, this "tour de force" was regarded as harmful to art⁵³, and not as an "artistic tour de force", as the favourable reviews had it. Whatever the press may have said about it, this performance practice continued to please the audience. "The Septet, performed by all instruments, bowed string and wind, produced its usual effect; but it seems to us that the frame in which this piece has been placed is too large for its proportions. The public will probably ignore this criticism, and they will do well"⁵⁴, we read in *L'Indépendant* of 1844 with regard to the execution by the orchestra of the Société des concerts. To formulate an opinion on this practice nowadays, one should keep in mind that its primary purpose in the nineteenth century was nothing other than to prove the orchestra's utmost precision, harmonious blending and attention to the smallest details in execution. This explains a great number of positive reviews of the time.

Neither did Beethoven's string quartets escape this *en masse* practice (as the French called it) involving double basses as well, on which critics looked most often favourably. "Mr. Habeneck tried what only a deft general, confident of the excellence of his soldiers, would dare do. Beethoven's quartet [in C major Op. 59, No. 3] performed [on 18 March 1832] by fifty bowed string instruments with most painstaking precision is an incredible thing in this prosperous time for music. No orchestra in the world has ever

⁵⁰ H. Berlioz, "Symphonie avec Chœurs de Beethoven", *op. cit.*, p. 101.

⁵¹ X.Y.Z., "Revue musicale", in: *Journal des artistes. Revue pittoresque consacrée aux artistes et aux gens du monde* n°15, 7 octobre 1838, p. 216.

⁵² H. Blanchard, "Concerts", in: *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* n°9, 31 janvier 1841, p. 70.

⁵³ "La première séance de la société des concerts..." [incipit], in: *Gazette des salons, journal de musique, de littérature et de modes*, 1 février 1837, p. 487.

⁵⁴ B.D., "Les Concerts", in: *L'Indépendant*, 25 avril 1844, p. 2.

been so severely tested. The most minute details, the fugue in all its developments, were rendered by this mass of instruments with as much perfection as by four virtuosos⁵⁵, reported *Le Figaro* of 21 March 1832. A year later *L'Europe littéraire* likewise expressed its admiration: "a fragment of a string quartet in C minor [Op. 18, No. 4] by Beethoven was performed [on 14 April 1833] by all the bowed string instruments of the orchestra [of the Société des concerts] with precision and an admirable delicacy: the Andante [scherzoso quasi Allegretto] in 3/8, which begins with the entry of the second violin, and the finale that follows it"⁵⁶. The popularity of this "curious attempt to modify Beethoven's thought"⁵⁷ in string quartets continued, as evidenced, for instance, by Paul Merruau's review in *Le Courrier français* of 25 April 1840⁵⁸.

Doubts were voiced about this manner of performance of Beethoven's quartets in *Le Ménestrel*, where an equivocal review appeared suggesting, on the one hand, a carefree, even a dismissive approach to this musical genre, and, on the other hand, that such execution was a challenge to which the orchestra of the Société des concerts du Conservatoire could rise⁵⁹. Serious misgivings were expressed unequivocally in the *Revue musicale* as to the appropriateness of continuing such practice in the case of slow movements in string quartets. High precision in timing was not enough, since the instruments must "sing", which required free expression (impossible to attain by several individuals rendering the same part) in order to sustain attention and incessantly arouse the audience's interest⁶⁰. Otherwise, such a movement "was no more than a symphony stripped of the variety of voices and accents that wind instruments throw into it"⁶¹. This remark, however, did not apply to the fugue in a fast tempo which required mainly precise timing and harmonious blending, and therefore—as the *Revue musicale* and the *Journal des artistes et des amateurs* noted—its flawless execution in these

⁵⁵ "Société des concerts. Quatrième concert", in: *Figaro* n°81, 21 mars 1832, p. 3.

⁵⁶ "Conservatoire de Musique. Concert de Paganini", in: *L'Europe littéraire, journal de la littérature nationale et étrangère*, 19 avril 1833, p. 90.

⁵⁷ "Le quatrième concert du Conservatoire..." [incipit], in: *Revue musicale* n°7, 17 mars 1832, p. 54.

⁵⁸ P. Merruau, "Musique. Les Martyrs. – Les concerts spirituels du Conservatoire. – La matinée de M. Listz. – Quelques nouvelles publications musicales", in: *Le Courrier français* n°116, 25 avril 1840, p. [1]. See also "Cinquième et sixième concerts du Conservatoire", in: *La Mélodie* n°36, 1 avril 1843, p. 2.

⁵⁹ "Concerts, soirées et matinées", *op. cit.*, p. [2].

⁶⁰ "Concerts du Conservatoire. Quatrième concert (18 mars)", in: *Revue musicale* n°8, 24 mars 1832, p. 59.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*.

aspects could bring out an enthusiastic reaction from the audience of Paris Conservatoire, even elevating them into sheer ecstasy⁶².

What provoked music critics' strong objections was the conductors' practice of adding brass instruments to the original performance medium in compositions written by French as well as foreign composers in order to considerably increase the sound volume. Beethoven's works were no exception to this. In the *Figaro* of 28 October 1837, Valentino was chided for doubling the double bass part in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony with an ophicleide that was frequently used by opera composers at the time in France: "this instrument which may serve in a fanfare but in this context seems heavy, crushing and spoils the effects combined by the composer. It's with regret that we have witnessed this profanation to which the excellent orchestra has been an accomplice. [...] Saint-Honoré orchestra is composed of distinguished artists and one has to profit from this fact in order to shape the taste of the public and not to corrupt it"⁶³. In spite of music critics' clear manifestation of growing discontent, French conductors continued this practice. Two years later, in the article *De l'instrumentation moderne* printed in the *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* of 20 January, Blanchard also sought to demonstrate the negative consequences of this deep-rooted practice, at the same time identifying factors enabling its existence:

The different natures of the bassoon, oboe, flute, and clarinet make the listener's ears gain in sensibility and capture the charm of the beautiful Andante of the Symphony in C minor by Beethoven. A frequent and extensive use of brass instruments in our modern operas awakes and enlivens people's vulgar feelings and dulls the sensitivities of our lyrical theatre-goers, since – after having been astonished by the noise – they end up wanting to hear an even louder noise...

If you attended this year's prize distribution at the Conservatoire, this event adorned with the necessary ministerial speech on the progress in art and the progress made by the students, you must have been struck by the number of prizes awarded to young instrumentalists who played the trombone, trumpet, horn, ophicleide. [...] most young students who envisage a good job and applause of the public at quadrille concerts, study only trumpet, trombone or horn [...]⁶⁴.

Berlioz as well expressed strong opposition to introducing brass instruments, namely to substituting an ophicleide for a contrabassoon in grandiose and energetic compositions, such as the finales of Beethoven's

⁶² *Ibidem*. "Musique. – Théâtre", in: *Journal des artistes et des amateurs, ou revue pittoresque et musicale* n°14, 1 avril 1832, p. 262.

⁶³ "Lorsque les concerts de la rue St-Honoré..." [incipit], in: *Figaro* n°14, 28 octobre 1837, p. [2].

⁶⁴ H. Blanchard, "De l'instrumentation moderne", in: *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* n°3, 20 janvier 1839, pp. 17–18.

Fifth and Ninth Symphonies⁶⁵. Because of the different playing range and timbre of the ophicleide compared to those of the contrabassoon (an instrument that was not taught at Paris Conservatoire), he believed that, in most cases, it would be better to do without the contrabassoon part than to resort to such a substitution. Berlioz also criticised other peculiarities in the performance of the Fifth Symphony, those typical of Habeneck and Paris Conservatoire, such as performing the finale without the repetition and removing the double bass part at the beginning of the Scherzo⁶⁶. Berlioz was not alone in his admiration for Beethoven's treatment of this instrument in the Fifth Symphony. Auguste Bourjot's opinion, expressed in the *Journal de artistes*, serves as an example: "What Beethoven did for each instrument is unheard-of. The double basses, destined for supporting the orchestra, were liberated from their low status by him; the entire Symphony in C minor was composed for these bass instruments"⁶⁷.

Press reviews demonstrate that the process of assimilating Beethoven's compositions into the repertoire of the leading Parisian orchestras implied their adaptations to the most firmly entrenched local performance practice of orchestral music, to a given conductor's taste and – in the case of executing Beethoven's chamber works by an orchestra – to the common desire to prove technical perfection and high precision in the timing of an orchestral ensemble. On the basis of numerous historical French press sources, one may conclude that the negative comments on the above discussed manners of altering Beethoven's compositions stemmed from the general conviction that he had had the keenest feel for every instrument. Beethoven had captured the spirit and studied the language of every instrument and therefore sensed the exact moment in which a given instrument should appear and in what relationship with other instruments⁶⁸.

⁶⁵ H. Berlioz, "De l'instrumentation (Quatrième article)", in: *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* n°63, 12 décembre 1841, p. 551.

⁶⁶ H. Berlioz, "Des fêtes musicales de Bonn", in: *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, 22 août 1845, p. [4]. See also *Mémoires de Hector Berlioz comprenant ses voyages en Italie, en Allemagne, en Russie et en Angleterre 1803–1865*, fourth edition, Calmann Lévy Éditeur, Paris 1896, pp. 92, 291.

⁶⁷ A. Bourjot, "Un dernier mot sur les symphonies de Beethoven [sic!]", in: *Journal des artistes. Revue pittoresque consacrée aux artistes et aux gens du monde* n°12 [it should be: n°13], 1 avril 1838, p. 170.

⁶⁸ See [A.] B[ourjot], "Sur les symphonies de Beethoven [sic!]", in: *Journal des artistes. Revue pittoresque consacrée aux artistes et aux gens du monde* n°6, 11 février 1838, p. 80; "Beaux-arts. Bulletin musical. Moïse. – Mademoiselle Albini. – Ethelwina. – Beethoven", in: *Le Globe, recueil philosophique et littéraire* n°2, 7 avril 1827, p. 10; "Concerts du Conservatoire", in: *Revue musicale* n°6, 10 mars 1832, p. 46; "Sur l'état de la musique, particulièrement en Allemagne", in: *Revue du Nord* n°2, février 1837, pp. 268–269.

There still remains one question to ask: how else could the tendency to this *en masse* practice be explained apart from the desire to prove technical perfection and high precision in an orchestra's timing? The historical press intimates that this practice was likewise supported by the French music professionals' perceptions that the major genres cultivated by Beethoven were all imbued with the symphonic idea implying a symphonic structure (thus, for instance, Beethoven's quartets or "slightest sonata" were perceived as containing "symphonic material"⁶⁹). Therefore, it may be inferred that the practice of considerably multiplying performing forces was not widely regarded as harmful to the original expression.

Were progressive music critics' efforts fruitful in educating an elite audience as well as professional performers on the importance of appreciating Beethoven's instrumental music? A close scrutiny of historical periodicals shows that Beethoven's works, especially those from his final compositional period, were understood and fully admired by few. At the same time, they came to be widely respected among critics to the point that harsh criticism in the press⁷⁰ was most often viewed as inappropriate⁷¹. Readers of the time were thus gradually compelled to accept this "new German school of composition". Enlightened music critics drew readers' attention to its foundation emerging from Kant's philosophy in order to present Beethoven as a learned composer and fix such an image of him in their minds, which proved quite difficult due to conservative composers propagating, after Jérôme-Joseph de Momigny, the thought that Beethoven's works should be classified as products of his "learned ignorance"⁷².

⁶⁹ A. Guérout, "De l'enseignement de la musique vocale dans l'armée", in: *Revue de Paris*, vol. XXXII, 1836, p. 52; A. Adam, "Stabat Mater à quatre voix, avec chœur et orchestre, par Rossini", in: *La France musicale* n°45, 7 novembre 1841, p. 386.

⁷⁰ Like the one that appeared in *The Harmonicon* of March 1828 published in London, in which the Ninth Symphony was described as "[Beethoven's] worst, his most absurd work", as "a whimsical composition, which all of his admirers, who possess any critical acumen, most reasonably and earnestly wish had never escaped out of his portfolio". This comment was chastised by the Parisian *Revue musicale*. See "Extracts from the *Diary of a Dilettante* (Resumed from page 37)", in: *The Harmonicon* [n°3 March], part the first containing essays, criticisms, biography, foreign reports, and miscellaneous correspondence, 1828, p. 56; "On lit dans l'*Harmonicon*..." [incipit], in: *Revue musicale*, vol. III, 1828, pp. 176-177.

⁷¹ See, for instance, H. [Berlioz], "Société des concerts du Conservatoire. Premier concert", *op. cit.*, p. [2].

⁷² [J.-J.] de Momigny, "Sonate", in: *Encyclopédie méthodique. Musique*, publiée par MM. Framery, Ginguené, de Momigny, vol. II, Paris, chez M^{me} veuve Agasse, 1818, p. 396.

Still, in the French press of the first half of the nineteenth century Beethoven emerged as a towering figure whose music was popularised not only in Paris among music professionals, but also in the south, mainly among amateurs.

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The Reception and Performance of Ludwig van Beethoven's Instrumental Music in "Ville Lumière" from the late 1820s through the mid-1840s

Abstract

Ludwig van Beethoven emerged as a towering figure in the French press during the first half of the nineteenth century. His "bizarre" music served as an excellent tool for contemporary progressive critics, helping them to form an elite audience and elevate "the musical intelligence of the masses", to show professional musicians the direction which "modern music" should take and to encourage skillful amateurs to dare to perform compositions that may not have been captivating upon first being heard. Readers of the time were thus gradually compelled to accept the "new German school of composition". It was mainly in promoting Beethoven's instrumental music in Ville Lumière that the French press saw a strong argument for portraying the city as the hub of the most sublime and finest European music. The purpose of the present article is to contribute towards musicological studies by depicting a complex picture of assimilating, interpreting, and evaluating Beethoven's music as well as adapting it to French performance conventions. All these points are considered through the lens of the music and non-music press targeting a highly diverse readership during the first half of the nineteenth century. The article is divided into two sections. The first section focuses on the reception of Beethoven's instrumental music by the elite Parisian audience, while the second one discusses the French peculiarities in the performance of Beethoven's music from the late 1820s to the mid-1840s.

Keywords: Ludwig van Beethoven, instrumental music, reception, performance, Paris, late 1820s to mid-1840s, press sources

Recepcja i wykonawstwo muzyki instrumentalnej Ludwiga van Beethovena w Ville Lumière od schyłku lat 20. do połowy lat 40. XIX wieku

Streszczenie

Ludwig van Beethoven jawi się jako wiodąca postać w prasie francuskiej pierwszej połowy XIX wieku. Jego „dziwna” muzyka służyła jako doskonałe narzędzie ówczesnym postępowym krytykom, pomagając im w kształtowaniu elitarniej publiczności i rozwijaniu „muzycznej inteligencji mas”, ukazywaniu profesjonalnym muzykom kierunku, w którym powinna podążać „nowoczesna muzyka”, i zachęcaniu utalentowanych amatorów do wykonywania kompozycji, które mogły nie wydawać się urzekające w pierwszym odbiorze. Czytelnicy tamtych czasów byli więc stopniowo zmuszani do zaakceptowania „nowej niemieckiej szkoły kompozycji”. To głównie w promowaniu instrumentalnej muzyki Beethovena w Ville Lumière prasa francuska dostrzegła silny argument za przedstawieniem tego miasta jako centrum wielce wyrafinowanej i najlepszej muzyki europejskiej. Celem niniejszego artykułu jest dopełnienie muzykologicznej literatury dzięki przedstawieniu złożonego obrazu przyswajania, interpretacji i oceny muzyki Beethovena, a także dostosowania jej do francuskich konwencji wykonawczych. Te zagadnienia są rozpatrywane przez pryzmat prasy muzycznej i niemuzycznej, skierowanej do bardzo zróżnicowanego grona czytelników pierwszej połowy XIX wieku. Artykuł jest podzielony na dwie części. W pierwszej części autorka koncentruje się na odbiorze instrumentalnej muzyki Beethovena przez elitarną paryską publiczność, w drugiej omawia osobliwości francuskiego wykonawstwa muzyki Beethovena od schyłku lat 20. do połowy lat 40. XIX wieku.

Słowa kluczowe: Ludwig van Beethoven, muzyka instrumentalna, recepcja, wykonawstwo, Paryż, schyłek lat 20. do połowy lat 40. XIX wieku, źródła prasowe