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## SCORE REVIEW

Ludwig van Beethoven. *Concerto in C major, for Pianoforte, Violin, Violoncello and Orchestra 'Triple Concerto', Op. 56*. Edited by Jonathan Del Mar. Bärenreiter-Verlag Urtext. Kassel: Bärenreiter-Verlag Karl Vötterle GmbH und Co. KG, 2012. viii, 154 pp., score BA 9027, € 55,00; piano reduction and set of piano, violin, and violoncello parts, 91/44/19/19 pp., BA 9027-90, € 37,95; critical report, 51 pp., BA 9027-40, € 39,95.

Beethoven dedicated his 'Triple Concerto' for piano, violin, violoncello and orchestra, op. 56 (1803–1804) to Prince Joseph von Lobkowitz. Presumably it was intended for Archduke Rudolph, a fine pianist and Beethoven's only composition pupil, violinist Carl August Seidler and cellist Anton Kraft,<sup>1</sup> one of the leading cellists of his time with whom Haydn had collaborated on his great Cello Concerto in D major. The Triple Concerto matched Kraft's virtuosity well, as it set unusually high demands for the cellist and placed the cello on equal footing with the other two soloists; in this way it justified the inscription on the title page: 'grand concerto concertant'.

The new Bärenreiter edition includes a score, piano reduction, solo parts and a detailed critical commentary, the first ever produced for this work.<sup>2</sup> Due to the scattered sources, this edition was a complex undertaking. The autograph score of the final version is lost, so that surviving sources assume considerable significance. These are: two surviving portions of a manuscript score,<sup>3</sup> two solo manuscript parts and the first edition published in parts in 1807. The first edition served as the basis for the first edition of the full score in 1836 and another score of the Breitkopf & Härtel *Gesamtausgabe* of 1864, which in turn was the basis for the first Henle Urtext of 1968.<sup>4</sup> The lack of a score supervised by the composer himself helps explain the shortcomings of the nineteenth-century score editions.<sup>5</sup> One critical issue not addressed by these scores was the use of Solo and Tutti markings, which the manuscript copies Beethoven supervised contain. The new Bärenreiter edition does full justice to these markings for the first time since 1807, which has important implications for timbre, balance and performance practice in this *grand concerto concertant*, a multi-level dialogue between three concertante soloists and the orchestra.

The incomplete Solo–Tutti markings of the 1864 *Gesamtausgabe* score reflect the lax attitude of nineteenth-century editors, who were not timid in adding

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<sup>1</sup> Anton Schindler, *Beethoven As I Knew Him*, ed. Donald W. MacArdle, trans. Constance S. Jolly (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 104; Christian Martin Schmidt, 'Konzert C-Dur für Klavier, Violine, Violoncello und Orchester "Tripelkonzert" Op. 56,' in *Beethoven, Interpretation seiner Werk*, ed. Carl Dahlhaus (Laaber: Laaber Verlag, 1994), 400.

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Del Mar, ed., 'Critical Commentary' to Ludwig van Beethoven, *Concerto in C major, for Pianoforte, Violin, Violoncello and Orchestra 'Triple Concerto', Op. 56* (Kassel: Bärenreiter-Verlag Karl Vötterle GmbH und Co. KG, 2012), 16.

<sup>3</sup> Only one leaf of the first movement and much of the third movement. See 'Critical Commentary', 12.

<sup>4</sup> Ludwig van Beethoven, *Neue Gesamtausgabe* (Munich: Henle, 1968).

<sup>5</sup> 'Critical Commentary', 16.

other markings, assuming that they reflected the composer's intentions. One example concerns articulation markings – early editors added 'literally thousands of [...] staccato [dots]', which were retained in brackets in the 1968 Urtext.<sup>6</sup> But most striking for this work are the Solo–Tutti markings, incompletely understood in the nineteenth century and not fully realized until this new 2012 edition.

To begin with the obvious: Solo–Tutti markings appear in all three solo parts to mark the solos of each instrument. The complexities emerge when one considers the soloists' role in non-solo passages. Here the problems of the nineteenth-century scores become obvious and reflect changes in performance practice after Beethoven's time, when soloists had been expected to play the Tutti or at least an 'allowance was made in the edition' that they were assumed to take part in the Tutti.<sup>7</sup> For example, a cue for the first violin orchestral part typically appeared in non-solo sections of the solo part in the original sources, and these were subsequently often ignored in later sources. Furthermore, the soloists were given information about whether a Tutti was simply an orchestral Tutti or a passage in which a fellow soloist had a solo (in which case the accompanying soloist, say the violinist, would find the cue 'Pf Solo' or 'Vc Solo'). The implications of such markings are significant. Whereas for the violin and cello soloists Tutti would mean playing in a manner that blended with the respective orchestral sections, these two soloists would surely play more delicately, or not at all, in cases where their Tutti coincided with another soloist's presentation of thematic material.<sup>8</sup>

For the solo pianist the markings in non-solo passages are complicated by two factors. Reflecting back on the baroque basso continuo tradition, the pianist's left hand would be expected to double the bass line, whereas the right hand would feature cues of orchestral Tutti sections or, in cases when the solo cello or violin had solos, the relevant cues from these solos lines. All together, three levels of markings were required in the solo parts to represent accurately the composer's intentions: the actual Tutti and Solo markings, markings such as 'Vc Solo', 'Vln Solo' and 'Pf Solo' to inform the soloists when their Tutti overlapped with important passages of a fellow soloist, and the cue for the respective Tutti section (for the piano the bass line for the left hand, and melodic orchestral cues for the right hand or cues for solos of the violin and cello). Many nineteenth-century editions omitted these multilayered markings, so that highly relevant information for the performers was lost. Most specifically, these markings enabled the soloists to adjust their dynamics in order to not to cover up a fellow soloist's passage, not infrequently an issue in this concerto.

Contrary to some views,<sup>9</sup> these markings would not have implied a reduction of players, as may well have been the case in earlier works, such as Mozart's piano concertos K.466 in D minor and K.595 in B-flat, and even Beethoven's first three piano concertos.<sup>10</sup> Rather, the Solo–Tutti markings of the Triple Concerto hint at its hybrid generic nature: three concertante soloists take turns standing in the spotlight and vanishing again to become part of the whole. These alternating roles are typical of this work, which impresses as neither a standard concerto nor a Sinfonia concertante but something between the two.

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<sup>6</sup> 'Critical Commentary', 15.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

The title page of a surviving fragment of an early version of the Triple Concerto first betrays the work's concertante manner: it reads *Concerto Concertanto*.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the title pages of two surviving solo manuscript parts for the violin and piano again hint at the double-generic title: the solo violin part reads *Violino Concertante* whereas the solo piano part reads, in Beethoven's own hand,<sup>12</sup> *Klavierstimme/vom Konzertant/Konzert*. Finally, the first edition of the parts reads: 'Grand Concerto Concertante pour Pianoforte, Violon et Violoncelle', with, again, an extra 'Concertante' added to the solo violin and cello parts, incorporated in the new edition.<sup>13</sup> But what, exactly, *concertante* or *Konzertant* meant for Beethoven is not entirely clear. Historical antecedents include the baroque concerto grosso, where the *ripieno* (*tutti*) alternates with the concertante (solo) instruments<sup>14</sup> and the French 'concertante quartet', or 'quatuor concertant', an eighteenth-century genre in which all four instruments shared equal status.<sup>15</sup>

While the title 'concerto concertante' designates a genre not commonly used, its close relative 'Sinfonia concertante' would have been familiar enough to Beethoven. Its heyday came in the last decades of the eighteenth century, especially in Paris.<sup>16</sup> Defined as a symphonic work with two or more soloists – winds, strings, or mixed – and orchestra, by 1800 the 'Sinfonia concertante' had lost much of its popularity<sup>17</sup> because it did not sufficiently cater to the new cult and celebrity of virtuosi. With its emphasis on dialogue rather than virtuosity, the older Sinfonia concertante made a pale comparison to new concerti.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, obvious similarities between the Sinfonia concertante and the Triple Concerto can hardly be overlooked, such as a common reliance on two-movement plans (the relatively short second movement of the Triple Concerto with its roughly 50 measures seems a compromise between the Sinfonia concertante and the concerto), the consistent use of the major mode, the 'happy' mood,<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>13</sup> Schmidt, 'Konzert C-Dur für Klavier, Violine, Violoncello und Orchester 'Tripelkonzert' Op. 56', 400; 'Critical Commentary', 14.

<sup>14</sup> 'Concertante', *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 2nd ed. rev. *Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press, accessed November 27, 2012), <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t237/e2334>.

<sup>15</sup> 'Concertante', *The Oxford Companion to Music*. *Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press, accessed November 27, 2012), <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e1540>.

<sup>16</sup> Barry S. Brook and Jean Gribenski, 'Symphonie concertante', *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press, accessed November 25, 2012), <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/27252>.

<sup>17</sup> Although in France the period from about 1767 to 1830 did produce some 570 works by some 200 composers entitled 'symphonie concertante', 'sinfonia concertante' or simply 'concertante' [...], half of them French. See: Barry S. Brook and Jean Gribenski, 'Symphonie concertante', *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press, accessed November 30, 2012), <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/27252>.

<sup>18</sup> Wendy Thompson, 'symphonie concertante', *The Oxford Companion to Music*, *Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press, accessed November 30, 2012), <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e6594>.

<sup>19</sup> Leon Plantinga, *Beethoven's Concertos* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 182.

and the choice of a rondo for the last movement.<sup>20</sup> However, in op. 56 Beethoven adopted from the eighteenth-century genre only *concertante*, while jettisoning *Sinfonia* and instead invoking the *Concerto*. But in fact the resulting hybrid of concerto and sinfonia concertante was not the first to display the concertante manner.

Besides Beethoven's insignificant WoO 37 (1786), a concertante piece for piano, bassoon and flute,<sup>21</sup> the term appears in one more work, the weighty Kreutzer Sonata, op. 47, the title page of which reads *Sonata scritta in un stilo* (crossed-out: brillante) *molto concertante quasi come d'un concerto* (see *Eroica* sketch book).<sup>22</sup> Here the term *concertante* could be interpreted as giving the violin equal status to the piano and distinguishing it from the earlier accompanied keyboard sonata, which treated the violin as a quasi *ad libitum* addition rather than an obligatory part (as in the early sonatas by the Mannheim composer Johann Schobert and Mozart's early works K.6–9). All of Beethoven's sonatas, even the early op. 12, clearly deviate from the 'accompanied' predecessor, which Beethoven's humorous letter of 15 December 1800 to a publisher concerning the Septet op. 20 certifies. Here Beethoven speaks of 'a Septet for violin, viola, violoncello, contra-bass, clarinet, horn, bassoon' [...] – 'tutti obligati', and adds, 'I am incapable of writing anything that's not obbligato, because I was born already with an obbligato accompaniment'.<sup>23</sup> The issue of equal status was nevertheless on Beethoven's mind when he composed the Kreutzer Sonata (1802–03), which celebrates a new type of dialogue between piano and violin, evidenced through the phrase 'et un violon' on the title page in lieu of the earlier 'avec un violon'.<sup>24</sup> This new equality of the two instruments was perhaps a consequence of the *Neuer Weg* that Beethoven had announced to Czerny in 1802,<sup>25</sup> the year of the *Heiligenstadt* Testament. The new path was born out of dissatisfaction with previous works,<sup>26</sup> and reinforced in the composer's urge to conceive works of increasingly large scale.

The use of *concertante* in op. 47 points ahead to op. 56: all three soloists enjoy equal status and a concertante virtuosity, especially the cellist, whose prominence (the cello begins all three movements) and display of virtuosity offer a hint of

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 182; Schmidt, 'Konzert C-Dur für Klavier, Violine, Violoncello und Orchester "Tripelkonzert" Op. 56', 401.

<sup>21</sup> Joseph Kerman, et al., 'Beethoven, Ludwig van', *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed January 5, 2013 (<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40026>).

<sup>22</sup> *Das Werk Beethovens Thematisch-Bibliographisches Verzeichnis seiner sämtlichen vollendeten Kompositionen*, ed. George Kinsky and Hans Halm (Munich: Henle, 1955), 111.

<sup>23</sup> 'Am 15. Dezember 1800 bot Beethoven dem Verleger Friedrich Hofmeister "ein Septett per il violino, viola, violoncello, contra-Bass, clarinet, corno, fagotto" an – "tutti obligati", und bemerkte dazu: "Ich kann gar nichts unobligates schreiben, weil ich schon mit einem obligaten Accompagnement auf die Welt gekommen bin"'. Carl Dahlhaus, *Beethoven*, 192; Ludwig van Beethoven, *Sämtliche Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, ed. Fritz Prelinger (Wien; Leipzig: C. W. Stern, 1907), vol. I, 61.

<sup>24</sup> Among the ten Beethoven violin sonatas, op. 47 is the first whose title suggests an equal treatment of the two instruments, in comparison to op. 12 and 30, which were released 'pour le Piano Forte avec un Violon'. See further, *The Beethoven Violin Sonatas*, ed. Lewis Lockwood and Mark Kroll (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 61–82.

<sup>25</sup> Carl Czerny, *Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben*, ed. Walter Kolneder (Strasbourg: P. H. Heitz, 1968), 43; Carl Dahlhaus, ed., *Beethoven, Interpretation seiner Werke*, 208.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 208.

how a Beethoven cello concerto might have looked.<sup>27</sup> The concertante mode helps define the Triple Concerto, as it does op. 47: both explore a new hybrid genre on a grand scheme. Some insight into Beethoven's new vision can be gained from a letter from his nephew Carl to a publisher that announces the composer's interest in large-scale works such as the opera and the oratorio:

If you should want three pianoforte sonatas, I could provide them for no less than 900 florins [...], and you could not have these all at once, but one every five or six weeks, because my brother does not trouble himself much with such trifles any longer and composes only oratorios, operas etc.<sup>28</sup>

Op. 56 represents this new tendency toward grand conceptions, with its involved dialogue of three soloists and the orchestra.

By giving equal status to the three soloists, Beethoven stresses the 'moment of concertizing'<sup>29</sup> but, at the same time, betrays one weakness of the concerto. Its impressive stock of melodies – many incorporating dotted-quaver and semiquaver rhythms – often unfold in threefold fashion, with each soloist enjoying a full statement, which in the case of the first movement yields a structure of large dimensions.<sup>30</sup> Because Beethoven juxtaposes themes featuring a harmonically traditional tonic–dominant, question–answer pattern reminiscent of fugal expositions, the overall tension of the music is weakened, as if connecting tissue between the melodies is missing. As a result, the sense of contrast depends on differences in timbre, provided by the various instrumental combinations of the soloists and orchestra in the Solo–Tutti dialogue.

Another weakness of the concerto's 'triple' focus concerns the physical nature of the solo parts. The sectional architectural design makes each solo begin and end rather abruptly, as one soloist clears the stage for the next, without much preparation. This feature is most clearly displayed in the solo cello at the beginning of the first movement, where Beethoven writes in a singular way, never revisited in any of his other six concertos: the cellist begins immediately with the theme, 'without any introductory or transitional material.'<sup>31</sup> Most solo entries suddenly emerge, demanding from the soloist a confident presence from the very first note, which surely challenged the performers of Beethoven's time. A review of the second documented performance, in the Augarten concert series in May 1808, raises this issue:

Es besteht fast nur aus Passagen, welche auf die drey Instrumente ziemlich gleich vertheilt sind, mit der Zeit aber, für den Zuhörer, wie für den Spieler, gleich ermüdend werden; indem weder das Ohr des Erstern, noch die Hand des Letztern die Ruhe finden können, um gleichsam zu sich selbst zu kommen.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Anthony Hopkins, *The Seven Concertos of Beethoven* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996), 95.

<sup>28</sup> Barry Cooper, *Beethoven* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 132; Kaspar Karl van Beethoven an Johann Anton André in Offenbach, 23 June 1802, in Ludwig van Beethoven *Briefwechsel Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Sieghard Brandenburg, 7 vols. (Munich: G. Henle, 1996–98), 1: 113.

<sup>29</sup> Schmidt, 'Konzert C-Dur für Klavier, Violine, Violoncello und Orchester 'Tripelkonzert' Op. 56,' 401.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 404.

<sup>31</sup> Michael Steinberg, *The Concerto, A Listener's Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 79.

<sup>32</sup> *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* No. 39 (23 June, 1808), 623.



As the reviewer stresses, passages of the concerto are equally divided among the instruments and make it difficult for the performer to 'come to oneself'. Perhaps the reviewer was hinting at the characteristic Solo-Tutti design of the work, in which the brisk succession of solos allows no time to prepare for the spotlight. Still, notwithstanding the reviewer's concern, Beethoven's intention all along may have been not to come to oneself, but rather to all three.

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