

Beethoven and Rossini: Crossing Musical Cultures

Abstracts

Yael Braunschweig

(University of California, Berkeley)

*Schopenhauer and Rossinian Universality: On the Italianate in
Schopenhauer's Metaphysics of Music*

In his 1870 essay 'Beethoven', Richard Wagner prominently placed the figures of Arthur Schopenhauer and Ludwig van Beethoven side by side. Ever since, critics have paired Schopenhauer and Beethoven when trying to situate Schopenhauer's metaphysics within the context of early nineteenth-century music. At the same time, critics often express bemusement at Schopenhauer's admiration for the Italian operas of Gioachino Rossini. This has led some writers to remark on a seeming incongruity between Schopenhauer's 'musical ideal' (Rossini) and his metaphysics of music. I propose that such an interpretation arises not from an irresolvable tension between Schopenhauer's taste and theory, but from the musicological practice of reading Schopenhauer through a Wagnerian lens. I hope to show that Schopenhauer's depiction of music's grades of objectification and his ideas concerning mimesis and music's ideal relation to a verbal text are indebted to the stylistic conventions of Italian opera. I will end by contextualising the praise Schopenhauer prominently bestows in *The World as Will and Representation* on both Beethoven and Rossini.

Scott Burnham

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Making Overtures

Taking as a starting point Richard Taruskin's brilliantly provocative identification of a Rossini crescendo at the end of the first movement of Beethoven's 'Eroica' Symphony, I would like to explore the mechanics of Rossini's overtures in light of the mechanics of Beethoven's symphonic style. Why does a musical process that operates in a similar fashion for each composer (at least locally) attract such different critical responses? And what light can a fresh exploration of the most notable effects in Rossini's best-known overtures shed on the differing reception histories of these two composers?

Suzannah Clark

(University of Oxford)

Beethoven and Rossini in the Reception of Schubert

The first sentence in Dahlhaus' book *Nineteenth-Century Music* marks out the period under consideration: the nineteenth century begins with 'Beethoven's late works, Rossini's operas, and Schubert's lieder'. Soon, however, Dahlhaus hones in on the notion of twin styles, derived from Kiesewetter's 1834 study, and Schubert drops out of consideration, leaving a dichotomy of cultures and styles represented by Beethoven and Rossini. This paper will focus in particular on Dahlhaus' observations about the values attached to the analysis of Beethoven's music on the one hand, and the assumption of its superfluity in the case of Rossini on the other. As Dahlhaus summarised: 'historically influential listeners' viewed Beethoven's oeuvre as 'their notion of music' whereas they viewed 'any music such as Rossini's [as calling] neither for formal analysis nor for an interpretation of contents'. In returning Schubert into the mix, I shall offer—in true Dahlhausian style—an interpretation of Schubert's reception as the (awkward) synthesis of the Beethovenian/Rossinian dialectic. There remain two strands in attitudes towards analyzing Schubert's music: I shall argue that the deep-seated resistance amongst some critics to analyzing his music is not simply based on the view that his music constituted 'any such music as Rossini's'; similarly, the growing sense amongst other critics that his music makes good fodder for new analytical methods, notably neo-Riemannian theory, does not suggest a conceit that there might be space in the dichotomy for 'anyone such as Beethoven'.

Martin Deasy

(University of Cambridge)

Looking North: Carlo Soliva's Milanese Career

Following the production of his opera *Elena e Malvina* at Milan's Teatro La Scala in the spring of 1824, the composer Carlo Evasio Soliva called on Beethoven in Vienna, on his return route to Warsaw where he had worked as director of the conservatoire since 1821. Despite obstacles of language and deafness, Soliva was cordially received, and departed clutching a canon (WoO 186) dedicated to him by 'suo amico Luigi van Beethoven', a gesture repaying Soliva's dedication to Beethoven of a trio concertant a few years earlier.

Occurring as it does midway through Vienna's Rossini craze, Soliva's visit might seem on the face of it to reproduce in more intimate terms the wider encounter of musical styles being played out in the city. However, this picture is complicated by Soliva's contemporary reputation as a composer who consistently defied the norms of Italian operatic composition. Soliva's approaches to musical declamation and instrumentation differed radically from those of his contemporaries, Rossini in particular. Though Soliva is almost entirely forgotten today, reverberations of his decidedly idiosyncratic, even avant-garde, posture were still being felt in

the late 1820s, in the Milanese response to Bellini's *La Straniera*—a work whose perceived anti-Rossinian aesthetic reminded audiences of Soliva's works of a decade earlier.

This paper considers the position of Soliva's style in the Milanese musical milieu over the period during which Rossinian dominance over Italian opera was established. Paying attention to the (short-lived) Italian rediscovery of Mozart (1816–19), as well as contemporary Milanese politics, the paper excavates behind early twin-styles rhetoric to suggest ways in which Soliva's idiosyncratic approach to melody and musical declamation might encourage a reconsideration of binary constructions of Italianate vs German style. Ultimately, it aims to contribute to the still inconclusive project of historicising Rossini's own style, and the process by which it came to stand for 'Italian music' all told.

John Deathridge

(King's College, London)

The Lives and Afterlives of Beethoven and Rossini

The origins of the out-and-out war between German and Italian music in the eighteenth century before Beethoven and Rossini were at all figures of renown will be touched on in an approach to their biographical and musical reception in the 1820s. I will argue that the idea of 'twin styles' associated only with these composers is an illusion: long before they existed in the public imagination during their lifetimes and beyond, their careers in the minds of commentators had already been significantly determined by a late eighteenth-century polemic about the supposed opposition between two musical cultures, with stark consequences for the sedimentation of German music as a cultural and indeed political concept in the long nineteenth century.

Dana Gooley

(Brown University)

Stormy Weather: Virtuosity between the Twin Styles

My presentation examines Dahlhaus's claim that 'the virtuosity of Paganini and Liszt was nourished on Rossini's notion of music', which appears in his exposition of the 'twin styles'. Rather than challenge this claim from an alternative methodological position, I begin by comparing it with Dahlhaus's other writings about the romantic virtuoso, emphasising contradictions that destabilise the 'immense gulf' between the twin styles. I focus specifically on the expressive and dramatic conventions of *Sturm und Drang* and the improvised keyboard fantasy, where the twin styles problematically meet.

In the section of *Nineteenth-Century Music* devoted to virtuosos, Dahlhaus plausibly traces Lisztian virtuosity back to the figuration of late eighteenth-century keyboard music: 'it was in the rhapsodic, expressive style of the *Sturm und Drang*—a style with free fantasy as its ideal form—that virtuoso pianists found the counterpart to passagework and figuration that

they required in order to raise piano virtuosity to a compositional phenomenon of historical significance' (135). What is most striking about the development described here is that it is attributed to Liszt rather than to Beethoven, who rationalised the dramatic disjunctions and contrasts of keyboard improvisation into a language of compositional argument. Dahlhaus likewise suppresses *empfindsam* or *Sturm und Drang* codes in his analysis of the opening 'Tempest' sonata, which he uses to illustrate the Beethovenian half of the twin styles. By centring his analysis on the Beethoven's subversion of normative formal expectations and ignoring affect, Dahlhaus positions the 'Tempest' as a radical departure from the past, a breakthrough to a new, hermeneutic conception of music that (in his view) eventually supplanted the prevailing conception of music-as-sound associated with Rossini.

To exemplify the criss-crossing of the twin styles through *Sturm und Drang*, I examine two concert transcriptions that Liszt played repeatedly in public: the Scherzo, Storm and Finale from Beethoven's 'Pastoral' Symphony, and the Overture to *Guillaume Tell*. I discuss how Liszt's transcriptions, as well as his performances of them, can be said to reorient the 'storm' idea of both pieces along the axis of the twin styles. The listener's sense of sublime awe or wonder emerges from both the music's encoded storm and the performer's virtuosity, temporarily breaking down the analytical distinction between them. Through the sublime, the romantic virtuoso animates in the listener a sense of critical or reflective distance that changes the meaning of the music's discursive level—an effect that Dahlhaus reserves for the Beethovenian style alone.

Matthew Head

(King's College, London)

'Twin Styles' Conjoined: The Theatrics of Contemplation in Beethoven's Piano Music

James Hepokoski

(Yale University)

Text and Event in the Beethoven-Rossini Stildualismus

Carl Dahlhaus's 1980 adaptation of Kiesewetter's catchphrase *die Epoche Beethovens und Rossinis* ('the era of Beethoven and Rossini') is linked to the larger issue—and for him the more foundationally decisive one—of what he elects to regard as a then emergent 'style dualism' in European music. This dualism separates that era's music into one of two categories: it is either an intellectually deepened 'text' (or a 'work') to be explicated by analysis and/or hermeneutics, or, conversely, it is a mere 'event' in the moment, one that does not call for close inspection in the same way. While Dahlhaus's resuscitation of the *Stildualismus* argument is likely to strike today's scholars as unacceptably reductive and ideologically loaded—as well as procedurally outdated—it is grounded in a network of subconcepts that appear throughout his *œuvre*. To understand Dahlhaus's claim—a necessary step toward assessing it

more knowledgeably—one needs to be aware of the fullness of the ‘subthematic’ postulates that drive his Austro-Germanic-centred historical work. (Consulting the German language original texts is important. On the one hand, Dahlhaus’s ‘conceptual’ word choice is invariably intertwined with longstanding Germanic discussions over the preceding two centuries—discussions and terms with which the reader is presumed to be familiar. On the other hand, some passages of the available translations miss these allusions, at times introducing new implications not present in Dahlhaus—as with Robinson’s rendering of the Halm-alluding ‘zwei Kulturen der Musik’ as ‘the *twin* musical cultures’, proceeding then to translate ‘Stildualismus’ as ‘The *Twin* Styles’.)

This paper discusses some of the sources and ramifications of the text/event (work/event) dualism advanced in Dahlhaus, a dualism that has also, in one guise or another, long been grafted into many of the basic assumptions of traditional musicology and music theory. Much recent work in the field, however, has been challenging the overemphasis on the work/event dualism as one-sided or even misguided. What has arisen is a variety of differing ways of responding to or ‘overcoming’ the claims and interests spawned by this dualism. The second part of this paper outlines four alternative strategies (or better, four strategy *groups* or *clusters* of interrelatable interests) that are currently in play in academic writing on music. These are four differing ‘position takings’, *prises de position* (as Bourdieu would say), within the field of production currently occupied by English language musicology and theory. My purpose in identifying them is less evaluative than geographical. It seeks only to map out a few broad sectors, groups of methodological strategies, within the current field of academic writing about music and to relate them to the work/event (or text/event) dualism articulated in Dahlhaus.

Gundula Kreuzer

(Yale University)

‘Holy Musical Trinity’? Dahlhaus and the Loss of France in 19th-Century German Music Historiography

In 1980, Dahlhaus’s concept of the ‘Stildualismus’ of Beethoven and Rossini advanced the recognition of Italian opera’s seminal presence in nineteenth-century music. Yet I will argue that this binary perpetrated Germanocentrist views, and that it was by no means obvious for early nineteenth-century German music historians—not even for Kiesewetter, from whose 1834 music history it was derived. While his designation of the years 1800-1832 as the ‘Era of Rossini and Beethoven’ might seem to elevate Rossini, it upraised late Beethoven: misrepresenting repertory trends, it made Rossini pale in the context of German idealism and a beginning cult of the artist-hero. Ending his *History* with an ‘Age of Rossini’ would have been more appropriate but, as I will show, highly inopportune; only by positing an Italian-German dualism (and by confining Rossini to the Restoration era) could the purported hegemony of German instrumental music be salvaged in the face of popular ‘Rossini fever’.

Yet this dualism clashed with the traditional notion of Italy, Germany and France being Europe's leading musical nations. The latter part of my paper examines how the Beethoven-Rossini paradigm was linked to the fading of France from the so-called 'holy musical trinity'. French music was increasingly dissected into tendencies that could be associated with either Italian or German music. Lumping together the negative aspects of French and Italian compositions under the rubric of the *welsch*, German writers created a foil for seemingly universal German values. At the same time, they laid the cornerstone for the equation of French and Italian opera that is still pertinent in Dahlhaus's writings.

Nicholas Mathew

(University of California, Berkeley)

The Presence of Beethoven and Rossini: On Being There in 1824

On 23 May 1824, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was performed for the second time, in the großer Redoutensaal of the Hofburg in Vienna. Its premiere, on 7 May, had been heard alongside three movements from the *Missa solemnis* and the overture *The Consecration of the House*. The 23 May concert changed the programme, however: two movements of the mass were dropped to make way for one of Beethoven's early essays in Italian opera, the terzetto 'Tremate, empi, tremate', and 'Di tanti palpiti' from Rossini's *Tancredi*, sung by the famous tenor Giovanni David. Such is the overbearing presence of the Ninth, this change has never been given any serious attention. Following this marginal detail takes us through the fraught cultural politics of 1820s Vienna, the careers of the singers who performed in 1824, the milieu of Kiesewetter and his contemporaries, the polemics of Wagner, to Dahlhaus's 'twin styles' and beyond. The recurring topos in all these contexts—musical, political, historiographical, and critical—is 'presence': the compelling presence of Beethoven's music, and Beethoven's supposedly overbearing presence in Western musical culture. Along the way, it will emerge that this Beethovenian idea of presence can be traced to a particular rhetorical strategy whereby an aesthetic of voice and performance—one closely associated with Rossini and Italian opera—is displaced into the realm of the work and the text. Further, I show that this form of rhetoric is inextricably linked with the political projects of a relatively small coterie of antiquarians and patriots who were present at the Beethoven concerts of 1824.

Roger Parker

(King's College, London)

Twin Styles in 1830s London: 'The form and order of a perspicuous unity'

1830s London has long been known to have staged an important transition in the nature of its music making, one that may seem to have been pre-empted in Paris (always its more alluring sister where modern musicology is concerned) but that had its own peculiarities. Rossini and (worse still) Bellini and Donizetti remained the prestige items at Her Majesty's Theatre, where

wealthy subscribers chattered amongst themselves, occasionally drawing breath to admire ever more elaborate ornaments from foreign lands. English opera continued to flounder with what dignity it could muster. But elsewhere, in the concert hall, a considerable groundswell of interest in Beethoven and Mozart was altering audience patterns, encouraging new subscribers to embrace a new repertoire and a new species of performer, and embrace them with unprecedented forms of attention.

1830s London was, in other words, the site of a formidable array of musical binaries, many of them remaining with us to this day: Rossini vs Beethoven, performer vs work, ornament vs unvarnished truth, etc., etc. But what is equally interesting is the way that certain performers used their skills, both on and off the stage, to cross boundaries, partake of both camps. Like all boundary crossing, the journey could be perilous, snipers from both trenches could be at the ready. The rewards, though, were in some cases spectacular. How else, for example, can we explain the extraordinary celebrity of Maria Malibran, who in 1836 triumphed in *Sonnambula*, was peerless in *Fidelio*, sang Mozart in concert and survived *The Maid of Artois*?

Stephen Rumph

(University of Washington, Seattle)

Beethoven, Rossini, and the Idea of Absolute Language

Emanuele Senici

(University of Rome)

Repetition, Theatricality and Italian Modernity

In 2005 and 2006 I peddled around the musicological circuit a presentation entitled 'Reality and Representation in Rossini's Italian Operas'. The present paper is part 'chapter two' and part 'take two': I continue my investigation into the dramaturgy of Rossini's Italian operas and its possible meanings in early-nineteenth-century Italy, while also revising some of the ideas I proposed back then.

My initial claim is that repetition constitutes a fundamental principle for Rossini's music, the dramaturgy of his Italian operas, and the ways in which these operas were heard and seen in early-nineteenth-century Italy. I then discuss some consequences of this feature, among them a looser connection between reality and its operatic representation, and a perceived lack of differentiation between different lyric genres. On the one hand, I link the special kind of self-referential theatricality that many have detected in Rossini's comic operas to their reliance on repetition; on the other, I claim that such theatricality is at work in the serious operas as well.

My next move is to establish a connection between the consequences of Italy's traumatic meeting with modernity at the turn of the nineteenth century and the dramaturgy and reception of Rossini's Italian operas. In particular, I establish a link between repetition, theatricality and trauma, and interpret them within a loosely psychoanalytic framework. I

then proceed to critique this interpretation in light of such relevant issues as agency and pleasure. By way of conclusion I sketch a possible alternative hermeneutic framework inspired by Gilles Deleuze's theory of modern repetition.

Mary Ann Smart

(University of California, Berkeley)

Prometheus Crosses the Alps:

Beethoven, Salvatore Viganò and Romantic Titanism

The classic characterisation of the twin styles configures Rossini and Beethoven as personifications of an event-centred vs. a text-centred aesthetic, and of music that emphasises visceral impact vs. that whose meaning resides in concealed musical relationships. This paper sets out to question these oppositions by focusing on one of the most ephemeral works in Beethoven's catalogue, the ballet music *Die Geschöpfe von Prometheus*. Although the score survives, only the ballet's overture has established itself in the concert repertoire; of Salvatore Viganò's libretto and choreography all that survives is the synopsis that appeared on the poster for the 1801 première and a brief commentary in an early biography of the choreographer. The bulk of the ballet's music consists of unvarnished minuets, polonaises, and marches, complemented by frenzied scales and sequences that advert Beethoven's enthusiasm for Cherubini and the French Revolutionary style. The ballet's motives and the ways they unfold are closely correlated to movement, and sometimes provide clear hints of the actions they were intended to accompany. The first part of my paper will explore some of these choreographic signals, listening to the unusually embodied Beethoven showcased in *Die Geschöpfe von Prometheus*.

It will not surprise anyone engaged in reconsidering the twin styles that the substantial literature on the ballet has concentrated on more abstract questions, such as allegorical and political subtexts and the famous motivic ties to Beethoven's instrumental music. The connection Constantin Floros has posited between Beethoven's ballet and Vincenzo Monti's Napoleonic ode 'Il Prometeo' would constitute a rare link between Beethoven and Italy; another lies in choreographer Viganò's *second* Prometheus ballet, premièred at Milan's Teatro alla Scala in 1813, with a pastiche score that included only a few passages from Beethoven's 1801 ballet music. This production provoked a storm of pamphleteering and became a flashpoint for the forging of a specifically Italian language of romanticism. In the final section of this paper I will use the controversy around the 1813 Prometeo as a lens through which to examine the differences between Italian and German uses of the Prometheus myth and between national styles of romanticism, as well as the roles assigned to Rossini and Beethoven in each culture.

Benjamin Walton

(University of Cambridge)

Rara avis or fozy turnip: Rossini as celebrity in 1820s London

Rossini's arrival in London in late 1823 marked the moment that Europe's most famous composer reached its most important city. Over the next six months, he sang with George IV, oversaw productions of his own works at the King's Theatre and established himself in high society. He also put on concerts of his music performed by the greatest singers of the day, including a piece in homage to the recently deceased Lord Byron, before departing to take up his new post in Paris during the summer of 1824. That, at least, is one version of the events. An alternative account might instead see Rossini's time in the English capital as a series of cultural disappointments, including a failure to produce promised new operas, a retreat from the public sphere of middle class musical enthusiasts -- represented by such serious institutions as the Philharmonic Society -- into the undemanding world of aristocratic parties, and a devotion, above all, to the accumulation of vast sums of money.

Both narratives have tended to co-exist in later biographical accounts, and this paper will seek less to disentangle them than to examine the tensions underpinning their co-existence. Some of these tensions fit closely enough with polemics elsewhere, such as the idea of Rossini's music as embodiment of contemporary life. These are transformed within the specific cultural context of London in 1824, however, and expanded by the composer's presence to encompass novel ideas about artistic celebrity and its relationship to equally contested notions of compositional genius. Rossini's place in the public sphere thereby becomes curiously malleable, since he embraced his fame yet refused to play the role of the tormented artist, and adopted no straightforward additional creative persona, whether as virtuoso performer or polemicist. Meanwhile, the desire to define the composer -- as man, musical style and mythical construct -- inevitably generated a variety of counter-examples, gradually putting into place the critical framework that soon enough would accommodate Beethoven so comfortably for the rest of the century. Moreover, despite the ongoing negotiations for Beethoven to visit London, I wish to argue that his absence and later death were in themselves crucial in solidifying the eventual opposition between the two composers.

James Webster

(Cornell University)

Beethoven, Rossini—and Others?

Raphael Georg Kiesewetter's 1834 reading of music history from 1800 to 1832 as 'the age of Beethoven and Rossini' was generalised by Carl Dahlhaus around 1980 into the highly influential thesis of the 'twin musical cultures' of the nineteenth century. This binary opposition has been particularised in various ways: Germanic vs. Italian, art as *Kultur* vs. art

in culture, work-concept vs. performance-concept, symphony vs. opera, self-contained melody vs. developmental logic, and so forth.

One limitation of this reading, which however (so far as I see) has scarcely been explicitly addressed in historiographical writings, is: why only *two* cultures? Kieseewetter's reading reflected his experience in Vienna; Dahlhaus's version, despite his vast learning and immense sophistication, was not only a broadening but a reification. But again: if Beethoven (or rather 'Beethoven': what he signifies in reception), or Rossini ('Rossini'), is taken as a point of reference, why should only *one* opposite emerge? Given the richness and multifariousness of 19th-century European music, historians might attempt to construct a pluralistic narrative, instead of a merely dualistic one.

I will adduce various additional 'others' to Beethoven, and to Rossini; and suggest some contexts in which a multiple configuration may improve upon a binary one. Opposite Germanic, one might well place not only Italian, but also French (Spanish? English? Scandinavian?); opposite opera not only the symphony but the lied, the festive choral cantata, the virtuoso instrumental composition, and many other genres. I will also attempt to assess the viability of alternative models for (early) nineteenth-century music history.

Richard Will

(University of Virginia)

Beethoven Lover

Interest in the heroic has obscured other mythologies that shape Beethoven's reputation. Abel Gance's film of 1936, *Un Grand Amour de Beethoven*, distils an alternative conception that manifests itself from the composer's lifetime through to the present. The film depicts Beethoven as a passionate lover and his music as lyrical and sensuous. It also declines to transform his amorous failures into triumph and mostly avoids the familiar equation of musical with psychological development. Beethoven simply struggles along under an insurmountable burden of grief, writing music that alternately idealises, punishes, and mourns his love interests. By giving pride of place to lyrical slow movements, Gance contributes to a tradition of Beethovenian romance stretching from the nineteenth century's eroticisation of the 'Moonlight' Sonata to contemporary 'Beethoven for lovers' audio products. More subtly, his use of short, evocative excerpts to convey dozens of emotional nuances creates a 'discourse' about Beethoven that is less epic than lyrical. Where heroic interpretations tend to rely on the same narrative logic they attribute to the music, Gance's reading more closely resembles the fragmented effusions of Barthes's *Lover's Discourse*. Though they fall outside the canon of Beethoven reception as normally construed, *Un Grand Amour* and related texts speak to an appreciation of his music rooted in values more typically associated with the other side of the Beethoven/Rossini binary. Presence counts as much as process, pleasure as much as ethics, sight and sound as much as language.