



optical devices prior to the period in question. As already mentioned, in chapter 5 they are cast as sharing 'strategies for producing meaning and pleasure' (215). But even so, the establishment of these musical meanings could sometimes be supported by fuller illustration. In chapter 1 Loughridge states that the association of muted tone with the prosthetic mode in the Haydn and Grétry operas is not established by convention but by a specific combination of other musical features and the dramatic context (37); her reading of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 5, on the other hand, assumes that muted tone has become sufficiently associated with prosthesis to call forth the attitude without that dramatic context. This is something of a leap, both temporal and geographical, to the canonical examples thought necessary by the author: only Mozart's muted music in *Idomeneo* has been provided (in the Introduction) to bridge the gap, and that march was interpreted as signalling distance, rather than spectatorship. More instances of this combination of meanings and musical techniques could be provided here (there are plenty in the music of spoken theatre, for instance), and elsewhere, along with slightly more information indicating the relative distribution and consumption of the audiovisual technologies in question.

I will end by being clear about the relative weight of my own observations: these issues do not detract from the achievements of Loughridge's book. Her research is a joy to discover, and her work offers many stimulating arguments and approaches that open up both new understandings of the period and new avenues of enquiry.

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NANCY NOVEMBER

*CULTIVATING STRING QUARTETS IN BEETHOVEN'S VIENNA*

Woodbridge: Boydell, 2017

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This book serves as a kind of companion to Nancy November's recent *Beethoven's Theatrical Quartets: Opp. 59, 74 and 95* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). That earlier book sketches in the Viennese context for Beethoven's middle-period quartets, arguing that that context – both the ideology and practice of quartets specifically and the habits and preferences of Viennese musical life more broadly, in particular that city's passion for theatre and opera – is embedded in Beethoven's middle quartets far more pervasively than has been recognized. It then moves on to a focused series of analyses supporting this point. *Cultivating String Quartets in Beethoven's Vienna*, by contrast, stays with the wider context, overlapping with, but extending, the cultural context provided in the earlier volume. The new book is dedicated to 'putting the real agents of chamber music back into [its] history'; these agents include the performers (both amateur and professional) the less canonized composers, the publishers and music sellers, the arrangers and the audiences. In this aim it serves as a location-specific companion to Marie Sumner Lott's *The Social Worlds of Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2015), which has a broader chronological and geographical purview, and Christina Bashford's *The Pursuit of High Culture: John Ella and Chamber Music in Nineteenth-Century London* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007), which, though focusing on later years and a different venue, also describes canonization processes similar to those at work in early nineteenth-century. November devotes significant attention to the violinist and quartet leader Ignaz Schuppanzigh, who was an important figure in Vienna's quartet culture; in this she builds on work by John Gingerich ('Ignaz Schuppanzigh and Beethoven's Late Quartets', *The*



*Musical Quarterly* 93/3–4 (2010), 450–513) and John Moran ('Techniques of Expression in Viennese String Music (1780–1830): Reconstructing Fingering and Bowing Practices' (PhD dissertation, King's College London, 2001)).

November describes her methodology as a series of 'snapshots' rather than a grand narrative with a single central thread. Thus a chapter on the varied (and variously theatrical) careers of Wrانitzky, Gyrowetz and Förster co-exists with others including one on the market for chamber music, judged by various catalogues of the time, one on the venues for chamber music, one on the different groups of 'chamber-music friends' – amateurs, virtuosos and connoisseurs and one on the relationship of music criticism to the practical life of chamber music. This snapshot method (for which November cites Hanslick's history of musical life in Vienna as an inspiration) seems to me the right way to acknowledge the many facets of any rich musical culture, and a healthy alternative to the socially ungrounded, Haydn-Mozart-Beethoven-and-beyond kind of history that has been the norm until pretty recently. It does, however, run the risk of diffuseness, which November does not entirely avoid; it is not clear to me, for example, that the thumbnail biographies of the 'Kleinmeister' add much to the general picture, since the particularities of their lives are not really picked up later. (But perhaps I'm betraying an atavistic desire for something closer to a grand narrative.)

However, the snapshot method does allow November to paint a picture of an extremely complex and rich quartet culture in Vienna between about 1800 and the late 1820s. The richness and complexity arise partly from the sheer number and variety of interested 'agents', and partly from the changes in the economic, social and political circumstances of the city during this time. But the complexity of Viennese quartet culture also arose from the plethora of cultural and aesthetic currents – many of them expressible as binary oppositions – flowing through the city (as through Europe more generally) at this time. Professional versus amateur performers form one binary, and public versus private performance another, for example. The nature and behaviour of audiences (invited or not, participatory or not, musically educated or not, safely apolitical or not) provide fodder for other oppositions. Broader questions of repertory and musical ontology also appear as potential binaries – for example, 'popular' versus 'serious' music, original works versus arrangements, canonized works versus less revered pieces and works in the strong sense versus more functional and flexible entities. This stew of oppositions forms the most important conceptual through-line of the book. November makes it admirably clear that these ideas are mostly somewhat modern intellectual artefacts, not unrelated to early nineteenth-century thinking, but always in need of some qualification. For example, we moderns tend to think of silent listening as denoting attentiveness, and noise-making during a classical concert as disruption – a clear binary – but November cites a number of sources that describe applause in the middle of works, encore-requesting and audible vocal responses to the good bits as evidence of active and welcome engagement with the music. We have long understood this about historical opera cultures, but November deepens our understanding of the nature of chamber music in the past by blurring the edges of this opposition.

One set of binaries that November plays with particularly subtly is the set that opposes professional performance of canonical works to the amateur performance of less culturally elevated pieces. She not only blurs the distinctions between professional and amateur and between canonical and non-canonical works, arguing in part that the fully formed quartet canon came into being after Beethoven's death, but she also complicates the usual historical argument about the inexorable evolution of the canon. She points out, for instance, that while Schuppanzigh was essential to the classicizing of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, the later instantiations of his chamber music series had, to keep its audience, to gravitate to more varied fare, in terms of both the composers represented and the kinds of repertory performed. November also fruitfully complicates the binary between canonized 'works' in the strong sense and 'ephemeral' arrangements (which constituted a huge proportion of the chamber-music market, especially for amateurs) by pointing out that the chamber performance of symphonies, at a time when full-scale symphonic performances were not numerous, did in fact function as a kind of canonization.

Having raised and then complicated a number of overly simple and partly anachronistic conceptual oppositions, November devotes her penultimate chapter to another one: Beethoven versus Schubert. She



describes Beethoven as the representative of the aristocratically supported, publicly performed, professionally played, worshipfully listened-to, increasingly canonized thread in Viennese chamber-music culture, and Schubert, unsurprisingly, as representing private, bourgeois domestic chamber-music culture, especially with his earlier quartets, which reflect his own family quartet playing. But then she juxtaposes Beethoven's Op. 132 with Schubert's late A minor quartet, D804. She points out that this work of Schubert was played by Schuppanzigh in similar venues to the late Beethoven quartets. Her main argument is that both works embed more common elements of Viennese quartet culture than one might expect. In particular, she argues that both works speak of personal pain and suffering in ways that would resonate with a close circle of connoisseurs: Schubert's Minuet quotes a song, 'Die Götter Griechenlands', whose text evinces a longing for death, and the third movement of Beethoven's Op. 132 is entitled 'Holy Song of Thanksgiving by a Convalescent'. Both refer to recent illnesses of the composers, known, November argues, only to close friends and associates. This may be true (though embedding the melody of a song seems to me like a very different kind of reference than providing an autobiographical title). However, using (or recognizing) coded references to personal events extends the definition of 'connoisseur culture' that November has used up to this point in the book, and in some ways weakens it, since her essential argument is that musical connoisseurship (the capacity that allowed listeners to appreciate Beethoven's quartets) had to do with relatively abstract understandings of musical processes rather than with hidden personal narratives. November also argues that 'an emphasis on song and vocality is the common denominator' in these two works. This seems to me like a rather forced argument, and not particularly useful in linking this pair of works to Viennese culture in particular. Schubert's invocation of *lieder* and its private world of the salon, in combination with the intimate, cipher-like use of 'Die Götter Griechenlands', seems to me quite distinct from Beethoven's much more theatrical references to vocality in his allusions to recitative, and his evocation of the public world of church in the hymn of thanksgiving. Vocality and song are not the same, and her argument would have been stronger had she teased out the relationship between them more extensively. November acknowledges the differences between the salon and the theatre, but she seems so eager to complicate the too-simple binary by which Beethoven was the public and Schubert the private composer that she goes a little overboard.

Overall, this book provides not only a useful corrective to the canon- and work-centred grand history of The String Quartet, but also a fine-grained look at specifically Viennese quartet culture in all its multifarious complexity. What confounds November a bit, as it has other scholars, is the enormously difficult process of reading specific elements of this hugely messy culture into individual works.

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JEFFREY S. SPOSATO

*LEIPZIG AFTER BACH: CHURCH AND CONCERT LIFE IN A GERMAN CITY*

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The rise of urban public concert life in the eighteenth century remains a touchstone of music-historical enquiry, and many accounts continue to rely, implicitly and explicitly, on the related decline of church musical life as an explanation. What, then, would it look like, as a kind of test case, to trace a city's public concert life through the church rather than apart from it? Which city might best meet the conditions for this test? In