



Still, readers from various backgrounds will find much to enjoy here. The book is filled with informative tables, maps, musical examples and reproduced images of sources, venues and performers. At the end of the book, the author provides four appendices. The first catch-all appendix contains ‘Abbreviations, Spelling, Pitch System, Currency, Conversion Rates, Cost of Living, Glossary’, the second provides further musical examples from a Luso-Brazilian pasticcio, *Demofonte* (c1780), the third gives a chronology of musical and theatrical performances in Portuguese America from 1565 to 1807, and the fourth provides a chronology of musico-dramatic performances in Rio de Janeiro from 1808 to 1822. Nine further musical scores, relating to material in chapters 2, 3 and 6, can be found on the book’s companion website. These sources, and the many others included throughout the book, make this study an important read for students of Brazilian opera as well as readers interested in learning about theatrical life in the Atlantic world.

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MARK FERRAGUTO
BEETHOVEN 1806

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This year’s sesquicentennial celebrations have seen a refocused critical examination of Beethoven’s long-standing musical and cultural legacies. Few would deny that the ‘Beethoven myth’, however one may wish to understand the term, still endures. While at one level *Beethoven 1806* serves to nuance the historiography of the composer’s middle period, Mark Ferraguto is also aware that there is more at stake. The works of 1806–1807 – here the Fourth Piano Concerto (Op. 58), ‘Razumovsky’ Quartets (Op. 59), Fourth Symphony (Op. 60), Violin Concerto (Op. 61) and Coriolan Overture (Op. 62), plus the Thirty-Two Variations on an Original Theme for Piano (WoO 80) – might seem like a strange starting-point for demystifying Beethoven: they hardly need rescuing from obscurity, either in scholarship or in concert halls. Yet as Ferraguto reminds us, these more lyrical compositions of 1806 do not sit comfortably within the usual heroic paradigm of Beethoven’s middle period. Given the primacy of this paradigm in the preservation of the Beethoven myth, *Beethoven 1806* not only complicates the heroic within the composer’s middle period, it also seeks to introduce new ways of thinking about the historical examination of Beethoven’s well-known works. For Ferraguto, this begins with ‘making unfamiliar the familiar’ (3): that is, eschewing the grand narratives and traditional dichotomies of Beethovenian discourse in order to look afresh at the composer’s work in context.

To achieve this Ferraguto proposes a microhistorical approach to 1806, striving to encounter each piece ‘on its own terms’, rather than with reference to a predetermined stylistic, biographical or aesthetic framework. Over chapters 2 to 6, Ferraguto presents and elucidates the networks of salient contexts and actors that mediate each genre of the 1806 oeuvre. ‘Mediation’ is the key concept here for Ferraguto, which he adopts from Bruno Latour’s *Reassembling the Social* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). Although there is no extended discussion of Latour in this book, the broad definition of a mediator given by Latour serves as a productive jumping-off point. It is also worth quoting here: mediators – which can be objects, events, beings, ideas, discourses, practices, assemblages and so forth – ‘transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry’ (9–10, citing Latour, 39). For *Beethoven 1806*, this means a relational approach to the works that emphasizes the relationships between texts and mediating contexts, linking the



'aesthetic' and the 'social' (9). Given the current popularity of actor-network theory and mediation in the humanities, the implementation of Ferraguto's proposed methodology deserves special attention in this review.

The Introduction having succinctly laid out this methodological agenda, the first chapter acts as a sort of secondary introduction, this time to the personal and political background to Beethoven's 'stylistic turn' in 1806. Much of this chapter is therefore given over to what Ferraguto identifies as the main characteristics of the 1806 orchestral works that do not conform to perceptions of the heroic style. Although it provides a solid historical framework for the rest of the study, especially for those unfamiliar with Beethoven scholarship, one cannot help but feel that such overarching stylistic observations are largely contrary to the author's previous approbation of microhistory and mediation. The remaining chapters, each framed by the relationship of a work or genre to a particular mediating influence, seem more promising in this regard. Many of these relationships will already be familiar to readers; the diplomat of chapter 3's 'Music for a Diplomat', for example, is Andrey Razumovsky. But in referring to these figures by their societal position rather than by name, Ferraguto invokes a larger network of contexts that potentially 'mediate' Beethoven's music. In chapter 2, 'Music for a Virtuoso', for example, Ferraguto outlines the importance of interiority in the contemporaneous conception of a virtuoso through a reading of Johann Karl Friedrich Triest's 1802 essay on the subject. With this in mind, he identifies two 'expressive topics' in the Fourth Piano Concerto that demonstrate the expressive interiority of an ideal virtuoso (61–66), who is ultimately Beethoven himself. But does the discourse on virtuosity act as a mediator here, or does Ferraguto's account of virtuosity more simply provide a historical context for interpreting expressive moments in these concertos?

This distinction, however subtle, is crucial if we are to take Ferraguto's methodological positioning seriously. After all, part of his stated microhistorical approach is a rejection of fixed, totalizing contexts that potentially overwhelm the particulars of any specific work. Yet the difference between mediation and the interpretative use of context, the latter associated with the now-old 'new musicology', must be more than a question of scale. For one, mediation often privileges networks of actors that make meaning possible over hermeneutics: simply put, it focuses on means over meaning. I found a distinct mediation approach sometimes tricky to identify in the early chapters of this book. Perhaps this is because in both chapters 3 and 4, Ferraguto performs a familiar interpretative move in which a contextual reading provides a way of understanding a textual observation or analysis. For example, chapter 3 revisits the stylistic tension between the learned style and Russian folk tunes in the Op. 59 quartets. Around the middle of the chapter, Ferraguto turns to the quartets' dedicatee, Andrey Razumovsky, noting his political identity as a 'European Russian' and his involvement in Viennese culture and its music scene. The interaction of the *thèmes russes* with the learned style is thus interpreted as an expression of Razumovsky's cosmopolitan 'Russianness', rather than as what Richard Taruskin sees as parodic exoticism (105).

Perhaps the most convincing example of mediation in this book is found in the fifth chapter, 'Music for a French Piano'. This chapter explores how the unique qualities of Beethoven's Sébastien Érard piano (acquired in 1803) mediated the composition of the WoO 80 piano variations. Since mediators 'transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry', Ferraguto therefore understands this piano as more than a compositional tool; rather, its physical limitations act to transform, modify and shape Beethoven's musical ideas. He focuses particularly on the piano's five-and-a-half-octave range, noting how Beethoven saves the highest note (c⁴) for the last *fortissimo* climax, which also signals also the beginning of the coda. The mediation-based approach here enables Ferraguto to highlight the affordances and even agential potential of objects (here the Érard piano) as a basis for interpretation. My one reservation here is the unacknowledged possibility that Beethoven may have written this piece during his stay at Prince Lichnowsky's summer residence in Silesia between July and October 1806, and not in Vienna with his own Érard piano; there may be other pianos that mediated these variations!

The final chapter, 'Music for a Playwright', shifts the mediating contexts away from musical texts and toward the titular figure of the 1807 Coriolan Overture, Op. 62. As in earlier chapters, Ferraguto intervenes on a long-standing issue in Beethoven scholarship, this time the literary origins of this overture. After bringing us up to date with the arguments about whether Beethoven's Coriolanus is based on the narrative of



Heinrich von Collin's 1802 play or the subject-position of Shakespeare's play (proposed in 1995 by Lawrence Kramer in 'The Strange Case of Beethoven's *Coriolan*: Romantic Aesthetics, Modern Subjectivity, and the Cult of Shakespeare', *The Musical Quarterly* 79/2 (1995), 256–280), Ferraguto proposes a more nuanced middle ground. He looks at the network of visual and literary works and political ideas associated with the Coriolanus story, demonstrating the complex historical mediation of this figure at the beginning of the century in Vienna. Along with the preceding chapter, this discussion provides a solid example of how Ferraguto is able to refocus the study of Beethoven onto his relationship with mediators, while acknowledging that these mediators are in turn mediated. Unfortunately, this account does not lead Ferraguto to his own analysis of Beethoven's music, as we saw in the previous chapters, although he points to the many analytical possibilities offered by the investigation of such historically contingent networks.

This review has focused on the issue of mediation in *Beethoven 1806* because this methodological outlook offers an innovative and potentially illuminating way forward for the study of Beethoven. Chapter 5, in particular, shows how mediation enables scholars to animate their objects of study in a way that is difficult to achieve through a more traditional contextual approach. Although I remain sceptical about the extent to which Ferraguto enacts his stated Latourian approach in some of the earlier chapters of this book, the commitment to a microhistorical and relational account of Beethoven's 1806 works nevertheless leads to many fresh readings of familiar pieces. Indeed, there is generally a great deal to commend in this book, especially the unpretentious and engaging prose. Ferraguto is able to introduce complex ideas and issues with remarkable clarity and concision, making this book particularly friendly for undergraduates and strangers to Beethovenian scholarship. Even when Ferraguto returns to old debates in Beethoven scholarship, as in chapter 6, he is always able to add a new insight. As we continue to reckon with the Beethoven myth(s) in 2020 and beyond, *Beethoven 1806* will aid musicologists both in confronting the practice and problems of contextual historical musicology, and in searching for ever new ways to animate the relationships between texts and contexts.

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NATHAN WADDELL

MOONLIGHTING: BEETHOVEN AND LITERARY MODERNISM

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Busts of Beethoven, performances of the Fifth Symphony, allusions to the 'Moonlight Sonata' – these are a few of the many references to Beethoven that Nathan Waddell discovers in early modernist literature. These details, Waddell argues, do more than just refer to Beethoven or his music: they make up a stable set of ideas that came to be associated with the composer in the nineteenth century. *Moonlighting* traces this discourse and its recurring appearances in literature of the early twentieth century. As authors employed familiar modes of describing and alluding to Beethoven, they simultaneously, and self-consciously, used the conventionality of this discourse to confront assumptions about bourgeois culture, genius, musical meaning and nationalism. *Moonlighting* is a revealing lesson in understanding how and why modernist authors engaged with these Beethovenian tropes.

Waddell begins by outlining this discourse as authors encountered it at the turn of the twentieth century. He treads familiar territory as he traces its essential elements, constructing a portrait of the composer from 'stock' objects and stories like that of the 'Heiligenstadt Testament', the dedication of the Third Symphony and the portrait by Joseph Karl Stieler. Indeed, in the nineteenth century, 'Beethoven' had become a vast yet consistent