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'NICHT DIESE TÖNE': LESSONS IN SONG AND SINGING FROM BEETHOVEN'S NINTH SYMPHONY

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ABSTRACT

Discussions of the recitative intervention from the solo baritone in the finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony usually focus on how his words might offer a commentary on the discourse of the symphony as understood in instrumental terms. This article seeks to interpret the baritone's words as a call to song – song in its literal as well as idealized sense, as identified through strophic treatment and folk-like character. Beethoven's borrowing of material from his own setting of Bürger's Gegenliebe *for his 'Ode to Joy' tune is taken as a sign of the composer engaging with Bürger's advocacy of simple diegetic song, an advocacy that sits provocatively alongside the abstract idealism of Schiller's* An die Freude. *Concentrating on the song-like aspects within the finale of the Ninth Symphony in this way might seem to magnify the effect of the silences and disjunctures within the movement. However, Johann Gottfried Herder (the poet and theorist of the lyric) embraced silence as one of the conditions of folk-like song, as Beethoven seems to have understood from his own settings of Herder's poetry. A comparison between the Ninth Symphony finale and some of Beethoven's actual settings suggests a new understanding of how the composer uses silence within the symphony. It also points up the radical nature of his balance between abstract and literal renditions of song in this work, a balance that even outstrips the Helen-Gretchen contrast in Goethe's* Faust *for its subtlety and pervasiveness.*

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If we were to follow Richard Taruskin's call to 'resist the resistance' to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and so join in with the composer's 'gigantic affirmation', we might question what it is we would be affirming.[1] One of the severest critical difficulties posed by the Ninth is how to accept that our place as responsive listeners is to be usurped, or acted out before our eyes and ears, by the assembled host of the chorus.[2] This band of surrogate receivers of the work join in at the order of the solo baritone when he announces, as though on the composer's behalf, the arrival of a new strain of 'more pleasing sounds'. As we watch the chorus rise to its feet we seem relegated to the role of spectators, relieved of our inner responsibility of deciding whether to acknowledge Beethoven's claim to please. The composer appears to be taking us beyond the usual negotiations of the symphonic genre, the balance between private and public modes of confession and response, and introducing the more literal values of communal song.[3] In his finale Beethoven supplements instrumental evocations of singing with an actual song; such a song does not need to be framed as 'heard' within the listener's head because the message of its audibility and acceptance is declared so explicitly through the movement's elaborately prepared verse and refrain structures. What do we as listeners need to offer, beyond our willingness to embrace a 'simple tune' and let it convince us through repetition?

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[1] Richard Taruskin, 'Resisting the Ninth', *19th Century Music* 12/3 (1989), 256. This article also appears in Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 235–261.

[2] See Andreas Eichmann, *Beethovens Neunte Symphonie: Die Geschichte ihrer Aufführung und Rezeption* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1993), 69. Eichmann's ideas on the identification between the chorus and the audience are discussed by Scott Burnham in his review article 'Our Sublime Ninth', in *Beethoven Forum* 5 (1996), 157–158.

[3] See Nicholas Cook, *Beethoven: Symphony No. 9* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 90, where he discusses how the 'musical time of the first three movements is transformed into real time, the time of performance'.

Yet if the immediate message of the Ninth's finale is embarrassingly clear,[4] one still faces the question why such a message is offered within the context of the symphony as a whole. Why do instruments have to be joined by voices in song in such an explicit fashion, when they have been singing with increasing eloquence through the first three movements of the symphony? Even Wagner – who, in his early essay 'A Pilgrimage to Beethoven', put forward as a reason that the primitive feeling aroused by the instruments as 'rudimentary organs of Creation and Nature' had to be calmed by 'contact with the clear and definite emotion of the human heart' – admitted that the key to a successful performance of the work, as shown by the conductor Habeneck, was that the instruments be made to 'sing' throughout.[5] The emergence of a melodic line from the undifferentiated textures of the symphony's opening bars is itself perhaps the most dramatic event of the work. One can even pinpoint the moment when such a line emerges as the violins sustain the B♭ of bar 24, the first pitch of the upper part not to be taken up with outlining the basic elements of tonal and rhythmic identity – triad (dominant or tonic), pulse and metre. Such melodic independence is shown to precipitate the tonal crisis of the movement, and of the symphony as a whole, since the melodic B♭ of bar 24 is accompanied by the tonally dissonant step to E♭, so pitting the tonal realm of B♭ against the tonic D. Thus to 'sing' a line, or to hold a pitch, is represented as an expressively charged act from the first bars of the work.

Why is such melodic eloquence not allowed to be self-sufficient? The question becomes all the more urgent when one considers the extraordinary melodic flights of the symphony's third movement, Adagio molto e cantabile, now centred in the tonal realm of B flat. Wagner would remind us of the distinction between instrumentally conceived melodic lines, or 'melos', and more traditional periodic melodies that invoke the breath-shapes of actual singing and can be remembered once the lines have ceased.[6] One would be hard pushed to identify any of the latter within the first or second movements of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, even though the composer continues to mark steps towards greater melodic definition. The Andante moderato section of the third movement, however, charts just such a deliberate assembling of periodic breath-shapes, with an implied pause for breath after the third quaver of each bar, as well as after each repeated four-bar unit. The articulation of such settled rhythmic and intervallic sequential patterns, from bar to bar and across the four-bar phrases, represents a point of song-like focus after the more seamless melodic flow of the opening sections of the third movement.

If one accepts this broad interpretation of the third movement's character as the arrival of song-like melody, the question re-emerges why Beethoven gives us such a deliberate lesson in how to sing in his finale. In many senses the lesson articulated by the solo baritone's intervention has to be recognized as superfluous; it acts out or celebrates a lesson already learned elsewhere. Leo Treitler, in his essay 'History, Criticism, and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony', points out how much Beethoven employs 'signs' within his finale, believing that the fugue which begins in bar 432 'functions as a sign of a sonata form', though in this instance 'the sign functions in the absence of the thing itself'.[7] Treitler believes Beethoven creates a 'concatenation of instrumental genres' in the finale of the Ninth Symphony – a mixture of sonata form, fugue, variation form, concerto and four-movement work in miniature[8] – with the implication that none can be the 'thing' that provides listeners with their immediate frame of reference. Each is pointing elsewhere and operating symbolically, or even ironically.[9]

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[4] See Rose Rosengard Subotnik, 'Adorno's Diagnosis of Beethoven's Late Style: Early Symptom of a Fatal Condition', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 29/2 (1976), 258, which relays Adorno's view that Beethoven made his Ninth Symphony all too intelligible. See also Cook, *Beethoven: Symphony No. 9*, 99.

[5] Richard Wagner, *Pilgrimage to Beethoven and Other Essays*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1994; reprint of *Richard Wagner's Prose Works* (London: Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1898), volume 7, 41–42. See also Richard Wagner, *Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen* (Leipzig: Bong & Co., 1887–1888), volume 1, 110. For the reference to Habeneck's performance see Wagner's essay 'On Conducting', in *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, volume 4, 301 (also Wagner, *Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen*, volume 8, 271).

[6] Wagner, 'Music of the Future', *Prose Works*, volume 3, 337-341 (also *Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen*, volume 7, 128–132).

[7] Leo Treitler, *Music and the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 27.

However, the baritone's extra lesson in how to sing has to be recognized as pointing to an actual song, the setting of Schiller's poem, even while it also seems to be addressing symbolic notions of singing. The baritone's intervention reminds one of the lesson Faust gives Helen in Part 2 of Goethe's drama. In one sense Faust's lesson in how to sing can only be understood at the symbolic level; taken literally it would seem uncomfortably presumptuous:

Faust: Gefällt dir schon die Sprechart unsrer Völker,
O so gewiss entzückt auch der Gesang,
Befriedigt Ohr und Sinn im tiefsten Grunde.
Doch ist am sichersten, wir üben's gleich;
Die Wechselrede lockt es, ruft's hervor.
Helen: So sage denn, wie sprech ich auch so schön?
Faust: Das ist gar leicht, es muss von Herzen gehn.
Und wenn die Brust von Sehnsucht überfliesst,
Man sieht sich um und fragt –
Helen: wer mitgeniesst.[10]
[Faust: If you already like our people's way of speaking,
Surely their singing will also delight you,
And satisfy the deepest parts of ear and mind.
But to be certain let's practise it immediately;
For responses draw us on enticingly.
Helen: So tell me, how should I speak so beautifully?
Faust: That is quite simple, it must come from the heart.
And when the breast overflows with yearning,
One looks around and asks –
Helen: who feels the same.][11]

Song is described here as a coming together of souls and the call of heart to heart. Yet Helen's very presence promises even more – a return to Arcadia where men and gods intermingle as one:

Faust: So war Apollo den Hirten zugestaltet,
Dass ihm der schönsten einer glich;
Denn wo Natur im reinsten Kreise waltet,
Ergreifen alle Welten sich.[12]
[Faust: So was Apollo formed like the shepherds,
And the most beautiful of them resembled him;
For where the pure circle of Nature rules,
All worlds lay hold of each other.][13]

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[8] Treitler, *Music and the Historical Imagination*, 25. See also Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style* (London: Faber, 1971), 440.

[9] See Cook, *Beethoven: Symphony No. 9*, 104–105.

[10] Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Faust: Der Tragödie zweiter Teil*, ed. Lothar J. Scheithauer (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1961), 140–141, lines 9372–9380.

[11] Author's translation.

[12] Goethe, *Faust*, 146, lines 9558–9561.

[13] Author's translation.

Helen herself represents an ideal unity between art and nature, according to Schiller the 'gift of all who live under a Greek sky'.[14] Yet her submission to Faust's lesson in singing suggests the ideal might not be enough. And if one asks, where is the actual song that is sung 'when the breast overflows with yearning', then one does not hear it from Helen herself but from Gretchen, who sings constantly and from nature.[15] The figure of Gretchen is constantly interwoven with that of Helen[16] and Goethe can be seen to be inviting memories of Gretchen's songs, 'Der König von Thule', 'Meine Ruhe ist hin' and 'Meine Mutter, die Hur', to come in and fill the spaces left by Faust and Helen's dialogue. As diegetic acts of singing within *Faust* Part 1 these songs acquire an object-nature that allows them to travel across time and space, to be heard where the will to listen is invoked – as here by Faust and Helen. Gretchen herself listens in to echoes of previous songs; as she sings 'Ach neige, / Du Schmerzenreiche' in her scene before the Mater Dolorosa in Part 1, she weaves in references to the well known Latin hymn 'Stabat Mater'.[17] 'Ach neige' then becomes the basis for 'Neige, neige, / Du Ohnegleiche', Gretchen's final song in Part 2 as she accompanies Faust's soul to heaven. Even the final 'Chorus mysticus' is set to the rhythms of 'Christ ist erstanden! / Freude dem Sterblichen' from Part 1, a parody of a traditional German Easter hymn and of the Latin hymnody from which it sprang.[18]

Thus recapitulations of actual song, beginning with 'Ach neige', Gretchen's most intense outpouring of feeling, provide the cue for *Faust*'s conclusion and the mode of its completion. From the simplest viewpoint, Helen's lesson is a sign that Goethe's work, in all its grandeur and complexity, is to be resolved through invoking the resonance of songs that have been sung, as against songs that are only imagined. Without the lesson that points away from Helen towards Gretchen one might miss the significance of Goethe's acts of 'betonen' – the sympathetic sounding of songs heard from elsewhere – and approach *Faust* more within Schiller's aesthetics of the achieved or composed work.[19] Much in Goethe's handling of Helen reminds one of Schiller's description of Juno Ludovisi, the vision of beauty whose countenance unites 'grace and dignity':

> The whole figure reposes and dwells in itself, a creation completely self-contained, and, as if existing beyond space, neither yielding nor resisting. . . there results that wondrous stirring of the heart for which mind has no concept nor speech any name.[20]

Yet it is Gretchen who leads Faust to heaven – a sign of an aesthetic battle won by daring to reconfigure the ideal from the basis of heard songs.

Beethoven would not have heard Goethe's explicit lesson on singing from Part 2 of *Faust*, yet Part 1 was extremely dear to him and would have already implanted the figure of Gretchen in his mind. The impulse to make his own lesson on singing explicit in the Ninth Symphony also seems to share two sources with Goethe.

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[14] Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, ed. and trans. Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and Leonard A. Willoughby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 57. This edition includes the German text of *Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* with the English translation.

[15] I am indebted to Briony Williams and her work on Bettine von Arnim's settings of songs from *Faust* for this observation.

[16] See, for example, how the streak of mist from Helen's vanishing image assumes the likeness of Gretchen at the beginning of *Faust* Part 2 Act 4.

[17] For information on this relationship and Goethe's parody techniques see Frederick Sternfeld, *Goethe and Music* (New York: New York Public Library, 1954), 81–82.

[18] Sternfeld, *Goethe and Music*, 84–85.

[19] Hans Joachim Moser has pointed out that Goethe preferred to use the words 'betonen' or 'vertonen' for describing the act of song-writing to 'componieren' (*Goethe und die Musik* (Leipzig: Peters, 1949), 92). This point is discussed at length in Heinrich W. Schwab, *Sangbarkeit, Popularität und Kunstlied: Studien zu Lied und Liedästhetik der mittleren Goethezeit 1770–1814* (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse, 1965), 44.

[20] Schiller, *Aesthetic Education*, 109. Goethe acknowledged that Schiller was an important influence on Part 2 of *Faust*; see Goethe's letter to Boisserée of 22 October 1826, *Letters from Goethe,* trans. M. von Herzfeld and C. Melvil Sym (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1957), 474 (also *Goethe Gedenkausgabe*, ed. Ernst Beuttler (Zurich: Artemis, 1951), volume 21, 710–711).

In the first instance his long association with Schiller's poem 'An die Freude' – which stems from his Bonn years[21] – suggests the composer's own struggle to find ways of responding to the call of such idealism and to the poet's challenge to find aesthetic completion.[22] Goethe's wish to counteract or balance Schiller's emphasis on the 'general' in art fuelled a journey of self-discovery that he said ended in *Faust*,[23] just as Beethoven's wish to find a way of encompassing 'An die Freude' found fulfilment in his Ninth Symphony. Goethe's wish to raise the importance of the 'particular' can be seen to be influenced by his teacher Johann Gottfried Herder, a poet whom (as we shall see) Beethoven also turned to in his later years. Herder represented listening as the primary creative activity, listening intently to echoes of past songs, rather than composing new 'aesthetic worlds'. He believed that Homer's epics, Shakespeare's dramas and even the Bible should all be heard as folksongs, as acts of singing that resonate across divisions of time and place:

> O that out of the golden gifts and memories of antiquity I might succeed in translating these most noble folksongs into our language, so that some of what they are might linger on! Homer, Hesiod, Orpheus, I see your shadows there in front of me among the crowd on the island of the blessed and I hear the echo of your songs; but here on my land and in my language I lack the ship to take me to you. On the return journey the waves of the sea silence the harps and the wind blows your songs back to where, in endless dances and feasts under Amaranthian arbours, they will never die away.[24]

When Herder advised Goethe to collect 'folksongs', he was underlining his belief in song as objects of sound which exist even when confronted by silence. 'Collecting folksongs' became the conscious sign of 'listening', just as 'transcribing folksongs' became the sign of 'hearing', though neither activity could be sustained without facing threats of silence. According to Herder, there is an inevitable and necessary silence while the listener finds a way of giving voice to what his ear has heard.[25] In the preface to his second volume of *Volkslieder* from 1779 Herder made a point of distinguishing the 'Volk' (folk) from the 'Pöbel' (mass) as the source of song:

> To be a folksinger does not mean that one must come from the masses or sing for the masses. The 'folk' is not defined as the mass on the street, who never sing or make poetry but shout and distort.[26]

A 'poet of the masses' seeks to bypass painful acts of reflection and fill all silences with song, whereas, according to Herder, a true poet works with and across silence.

Beethoven seems to have picked up something of this crucial aesthetic distinction between 'Volk' and 'Pöbel' when he noted these words from Herder in his *Tagebuch* on 13 May 1813: 'Learn to keep silent, O friend. Speech is like silver, but to be silent at the right moment is pure gold.'[27] The baritone's words, 'nicht diese Töne', in the Ninth Symphony could indeed be taken as an injunction to silence as well as a lesson in song. And what we are called to listen to, the 'Ode to Joy' melody, came for Beethoven out of the past, so that for him layers of reflection would be built into it almost as a matter of course. As has often been recognized, the 'Ode to Joy' tune borrows its lineaments from Beethoven's early setting of the poem *Gegenliebe* by Gottfried August Bürger, a tune which he recapitulated as the basis of his *Choral Fantasy*, Op. 80, of 1808.

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[21] See William Kinderman, *Beethoven* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 264–265.

[22] For a discussion of Schiller's influence on Beethoven see Kinderman, *Beethoven*, 276–277.

[23] For Goethe's view that his difference from Schiller is aiming at the 'particular' see Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Maxims and Reflections*, ed. Peter Hutchinson, trans. Elisabeth Stopp (London: Penguin, 1998), 33–34. For his view of *Faust* as a distillation of his nature as an artist see Goethe's letter to Zelter of 24 May 1827 (*Letters from Goethe*, 479, and *Goethe Gedenkausgabe*, volume 21, 743), his letter to Humboldt of 17 March 1832 (*Letters from Goethe*, 537, and *Goethe Gedenkausgabe*, volume 21, 1042–1043), and his letter to Schiller of 22 June 1797 (*Letters from Goethe*, 259, and *Goethe Gedenkausgabe*, volume 20, 362).

[24] Johann Gottfried Herder, preface to his 1779 collection 'Volkslieder', *Herders Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. Bernhard Suphan (Berlin: Weidmann, 1885), volume 25, 316, author's translation.

[25] See Walter Wiora, 'Herders und Heinses Beiträge zum Thema: "Was ist Musik?" ', *Die Musikforschung* 13 (1960), 390. Herder contrasts the eye, which can take in and give back with one look, with the ear that needs to call upon the separate organ of the voice for its response.

[26] Herder, preface to 'Volkslieder', 323, author's translation.

[27] See Maynard Solomon, 'Beethoven's Tagebuch', in his *Beethoven Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 247.

In poetic terms Beethoven could hardly have found a more provocative echo than Bürger's *Gegenliebe* to accompany his setting of Schiller's *An die Freude*, for Schiller rejected Bürger as a poet who failed to keep any sense of the 'general' in his poetic utterances: 'a poet puts himself in danger if he sings of sorrow from the midst of sorrow'.[28] Goethe also dismissed Bürger; he described him as 'an outstandingly talented man battling frantically with himself, his circumstances, his time, without ever managing to get anywhere'.[29] Neither Goethe nor Schiller were prepared to take seriously Bürger's call to poets to leave their Olympian heights and 'put on human nature'. It as though they were embarrassed by his enthusiastic identification with the 'little ditties' of the people, an enthusiasm which knew no bounds: 'One should get to know the people in its entirety. . .Then pull out the magic wand of the natural epos! Set it all in swarming tumult!'.[30] Such a call to join the 'swarming tumult' was perhaps nearer to Beethoven's aesthetic sensibility, as one can see with the exaggerated momentum of the *Tanzlied* rhythms in his *Gegenliebe* setting. The very awkwardness of the vocal prosody in Beethoven's song suggests the infectiousness of the 'natural epos', an infectiousness which seems to leave no time for refinement or artistic adjustment (see Example 1).

Beethoven inserts a much-needed layer of reflection for his listeners, a chance to take a breath, by pairing this song with a setting of Bürger's poem 'Seufzer eines Ungeliebten'. Here the composer sketches a quasi-operatic context to allow his listeners to reflect on the occasion of the subsequent ecstatic outpourings in *Gegenliebe*. Although both poems are made up of regular quatrains of rhyming couplets, one based on iambic and one on trochaic metres, Beethoven masks their common folk-like characteristics and common poetic theme – a yearning for love – by creating a transformation of scene between the two utterances. In the first song the poet is clearly alone in nature, and the effect of the silences within his opening recitative continue to be felt through the spaciousness of the subsequent melody. The carefully articulated melodic phrases offer maximum contrast to the flow of rhythmic energy that greets the transition to the second poem, *Gegenliebe*, and brings home the implied change of scene from solitary mountain-top to the conviviality of a village green (see Example 2).

In Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy*, the moment of transition from an individual to a communal expression of feeling is played out through the contrast between the fantasy-like textures of the solo piano and the massed forces of orchestra and chorus which join for the final varied repetitions of the *Gegenliebe* melody. Beethoven originally sketched the words 'Hört ihr wohl' across the horn-calls that introduce the voices,[31] in a Bürger-like call to attention. The words that accompany the apotheosis of the tune, as offered by Beethoven's friend Christopher Kuffner,[32] hardly bear much scrutiny; it is the tune itself that continues to carry the weight of expectation as furnishing something worth listening to. Given the slightness of the text and the way the words fail to fit the music, one might ask whether Beethoven's tune still offers us an actual song, or only the 'sign' of a song. The *Choral Fantasy* was conceived as a finale to a concert performance, thus the absence of a clear generic negotiation within the work itself might seem appropriate. But in the

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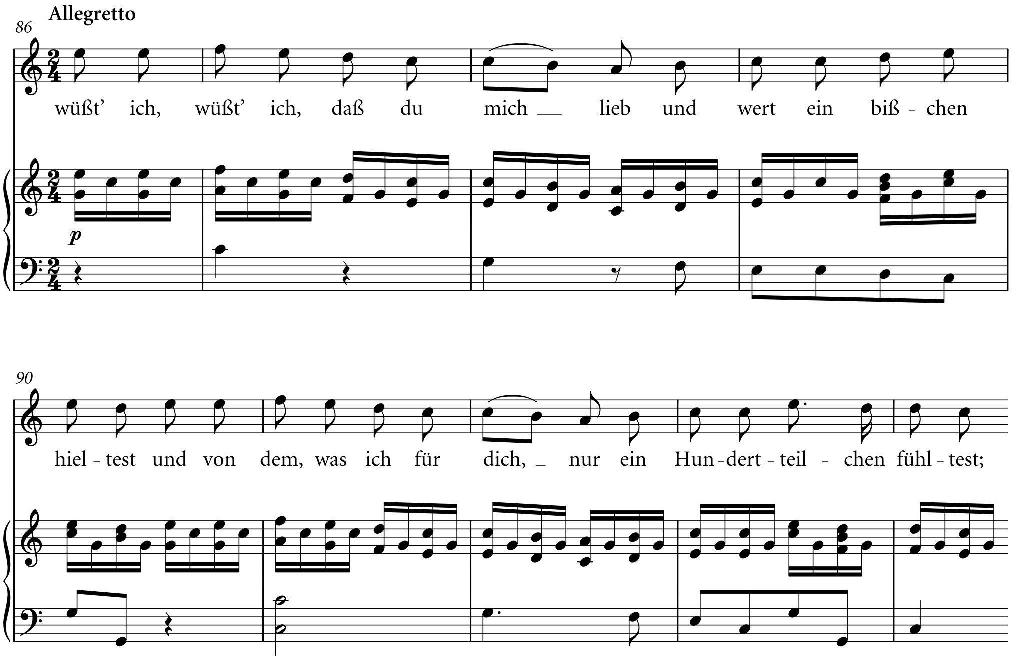
[28] Friedrich Schiller, 'Über Bürgers Gedichte', *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Jost Perfahl (Munich: Winkler, 1968), volume 5, 685–686, author's translation.

[29] Goethe, *Maxims and Reflections*, 11.

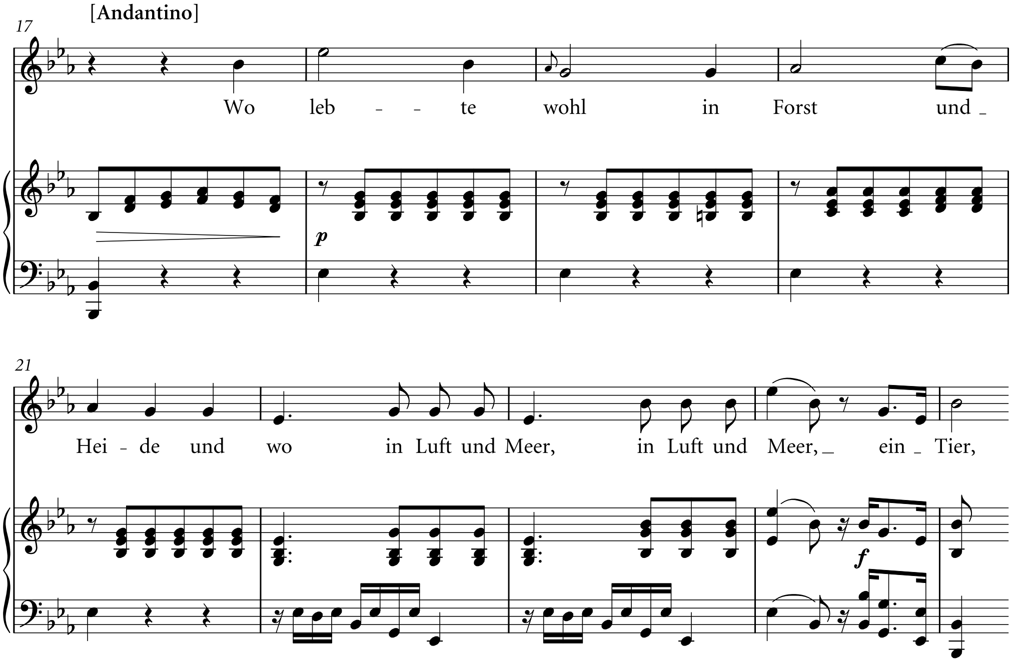
[30] Gottfried August Bürger, 'Outpourings from the Heart on Folk Poetry', in *Eighteenth-Century German Criticism*, ed. and trans. Timothy J. Chamberlain (New York: Continuum, 1992), 252–255. For the German text see 'Herzensausguss über Volkspoesie', in *Sturm und Drang: Dichtungen und theoretische Texte*, ed. Heinz Nicolai (Munich: Winkler, 1971), volume 2, 1651–1654.

[31] See Denis McCaldin, 'The Choral Music', in *The Beethoven Companion*, ed. Denis Arnold and Nigel Fortune (London: Faber, 1971), 389.

[32] See Preface to Beethoven, *Choral Fantasy*, ed. Willy Hess (London: Eulenberg, 1965).


Allegretto
86
wüßt' ich, wüßt' ich, daß du mich lieb und wert ein biß - chen
p
90
hiel - test und von dem, was ich für dich, nur ein Hun-dert - teil - chen fühl - test;

Example 1 *Gegenliebe*, bars 86–94 (*Beethoven Werke*, series 12, volume 1, *Sämtliche Lieder*, ed. Helga Lühning (Munich: Henle, 1990)). Used by permission


[Andantino]
17
Wo leb - - te wohl in Forst und
p
21
Hei - de und wo in Luft und Meer, in Luft und Meer, ein Tier,
f

Example 2 ‘*Seufzer eines Ungeliebten*’, bars 17–25 (*Beethoven Werke*, series 12, volume 1, *Sämtliche Lieder*, ed. Helga Lühning (Munich: Henle, 1990)). Used by permission

Ninth Symphony finale, a movement which Beethoven acknowledged was modelled on the *Choral Fantasy*, though on a larger scale,[33] the extraction of a 'tune' as possibly relating to song – song as presence as well as absence – raises important questions over the nature of the symphony's generic framework.

Beethoven's instrumental approach to his song material in the *Choral Fantasy*, as a series of stepwise movements, even-measured rhythms and strophic variations, might seem to remove it from Bürger's insistence on diegetic song – song as it might be heard in the laundry or the spinning-rooms.[34] Yet even in Beethoven's setting of *Gegenliebe,* the natural-seeming flow of rhythmic ebullience is controlled by aspects of larger-scale rhythmic abstraction that suggested a distanced stance from the immediate material. In this song the composer treads a fascinating boundary between Schiller's generalizing instinct and Bürger's immersion in the 'natural epos'; he hints that the simple communal life is to be embraced within a larger picture, just as Schiller embraces earthly drinking-song imagery within divine celebrations in his poem 'An die Freude' – 'Lasst den Schaum zum Himmel sprützen' (Let the bubbles foam up to heaven). As part of his impulse to abstraction in *Gegenliebe*, Beethoven rounds out his song-material into four musical strophes of roughly twenty-four bars each. The first musical strophe corresponds to the first three stanzas of Bürger's poem, arranged musically as a symmetrical a-b-a^1 formation of three times eight bars. Beethoven repeats the text and music of this self-contained twenty-four-bar unit as his third 'strophe', while his second and fourth strophes are more developmental in nature. Yet even while the internal phrasing of these contrasting sections is more broken and varied, they continue to conform to the song's large-scale rhythmic pacing. The 'second strophe' (beginning from the second half of bar 110) outlines a twenty-two-bar paragraph in the dominant, while the fourth (beginning from the second half of bar 156) expands codetta-like into a twenty-six-bar period ending on the tonic. The four verses in Beethoven's *Gegenliebe* are created across the four verses of Bürger's poem:

Beethoven:	A (bars 87–110)	B (bars 111–132)	A (bars 133–148)	B^1 (bars 149–182)
Bürger:	Verses 1–3	Verse 4	Verses 1–3 (rep)	Verse 4 (rep)

Yet in some senses Beethoven's arrangement makes the four-square regularity of his periodic structure the more striking, as though he constructed the formal pillars of his song in advance of his response to the propulsive rhythms of the poetic text itself.

In the finale of the Ninth Symphony, Beethoven takes up the basic twenty-four-bar period of *Gegenliebe* and uses it once more as a quasi-neutral measurement for his material, though with some crucial differences in the internal disposition of the melodic phrases. The self-contained a-b-a^1 structure of the musical strophe in *Gegenliebe* (see Figure 1) is replaced by a more generative a-b-b shape in the 'Ode to Joy' tune (see Figure 2).

In Figure 2 the strophe could finish with the return and completion of x2 at the end of sixteen bars; thus the eight bars of the second b section come as an extra twist to the cycle of repetitions, requiring a repeat of the second half of Schiller's stanza. As Beethoven first presents the material in the instrumental sections from the Allegro assai (bar 92) of the Ninth's finale, the twenty-four-bar measurement is marked and upheld by the steady passing of the tune up through the orchestra from violoncellos and double basses to violas, to violins, and then to the wind section. The four times twenty-four-bar structure seen in *Gegenliebe* is thus outlined within this first orchestral statement, up to the moment of the developmental link beginning in bar 188, though on this occasion the units are exact in their repetitions and thus more literally strophe-like. When compared with *Gegenliebe*, Beethoven has in fact created a more obvious tension between the large-scale exactness of his twenty-four-bar unit and the generative energy of the music's internal repetitions. He could even be said to be imposing a formally objective view on his material in a way that goes against its intrinsic nature.

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[33] See Beethoven's letter to Schott of 10 March 1824 in Michael Hamburger, ed., *Beethoven: Letters, Journals and Conversations* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1951), 213.

[34] Bürger, 'Outpourings from the Heart on Folk Poetry', 255 (see also 'Herzensausguss über Volkspoesie', 1654).

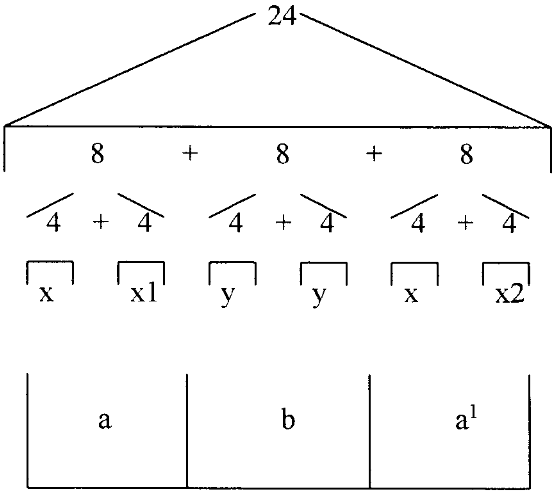

Figure 1 *Gegenliebe* phrasing

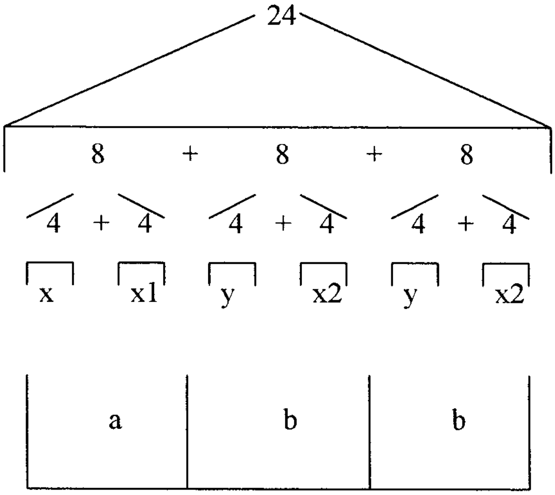

Figure 2 'Ode to Joy' phrasing

As will be seen, the twenty-four-bar shape or strophe remains an important framing device for the rest of the Ninth's finale. In the symphony the notion of a song tune being heard and held up as an external 'object' is presented quite literally within the dramatic slide-show of different kinds of material in the opening section of the movement. As in *Seufzer eines Ungeliebten*, recitative-like passages, here for the cellos and basses, suggest a painful individuality, an awareness of silence which the later *Gegenliebe*-derived tune might promise to fill. Except that here the silence is magnified by the context, to proportions which far exceed anything that might be conveyed within song alone. The impenetrable wall of sound offered by the dissonant tutti at the opening of the Ninth's finale decisively silences the natural continuation of echoes from the symphony's previous movements; it creates a change of aesthetic awareness for the listener, not just an implied change of scene. What was felt as a flow of the present, gathering momentum through the symphony's first three movements, is now firmly relegated to the past. The recitative imposes upon the listener a Herderian pause for reflection after the 'Stoss' or 'shock' of the finale's first dissonant tutti. The cellos' and basses' returning passages of recitative seem to ponder alternatives; yet, in truth, as the earlier movements are reviewed, the emphasis is upon silence and the impossibility of filling it. Now that what was felt in the present as 'subject' has been consigned to the past as 'object', the subject seems effectively silenced.

Yet for Herder these conditions of silence are precisely those in which lyricism thrives. In 'Der Gesang der Nachtigall' and 'Die laute Klage', two poems which Beethoven set in 1813 and 1815 respectively,[35] Herder shows the poet borrowing a voice from the nightingale or turtle-dove and so able to pass on to his listeners what should be beyond communication. Although the nightingale and dove sing automatically, the poet invites us to join him in hearing them as intentional laments. The poet offers us the object of birdsong as a voice for our own subjectivity, yet we can still choose to hear it as an object; its literal presence is assured. In 'Der Gesang der Nachtigall' the nightingale continues to sing,[36] but by comparing the first and last verses we can see how our view of it changes between object and subject; by becoming an 'I' the nightingale faces out the silence that threatens the poet:

Höre, die Nachtigall singt: der Frühling ist wieder gekommen!
Wieder gekommen der Frühling und deckt in jeglichen Garten
Wohlustsitze, bestreut mit den silbernen Blüten der Mandel.
Jetzt sei fröhlich und froh; er entflieht, der blühende Frühling.

[Listen, the nightingale sings: Spring has come back!
Spring is back and prepares in every garden
Seats of pleasure, strewn with silver almond blossom.
Now be glad and joyful; for the flowers of Spring pass.]

Hier im reizenden Tal, hier unter blühenden Schönen
Sang, eine Nachtigall, ich der Rose. Rose der Freude,
Bist du verblühet einst, so verstummt die Stimme des Dichters.
Drum sei fröhlich und froh; er entflieht, der blühende Frühling.

[Here in a delightful valley, here under blossoming beauties
I, a nightingale, sang to the rose. Rose of joy,
If you ever die, the voice of the poet will be silenced.
So be glad and joyful; for the flowers of Spring pass.]

In 'Die laute Klage' the poet addresses the bird throughout the poem, so they cannot simply exchange their identities as in 'Der Gesang der Nachtigall'. The poet also insists on his own silence, even to the third and final verse (see below), and so projects the voice of the song entirely onto the turtle-dove and its monotonous call:

Ach, die hartverteilende Liebe!
Sie gab dir die laute
Jammerklage zum Trost,
Mir den verstummenden Sinn.

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[35] Details of these poems and others by Herder that were entered in Beethoven's *Tagebuch* are given by Maynard Solomon, in *Beethoven Essays*, 247–248. The translations given here are by the author.

[36] See what Beethoven wrote over the autograph of *Der Gesang der Nachtigall*: 'Alle übrigen Verse müssen nur die Exposition des Frühlings enthalten, ohne die Nachtigall zu berühren; jedoch muss das Ende dasselbe sein, näml.: Jetzt sei fröhlich und froh, er entblüht, der blühende Frühling' [All the remaining verses must contain only a hint of spring, without disturbing the nightingale; yet the ending must remain the same, namely: Now be glad and joyful, for the flowers of spring pass]. See Georg Kinsky, *Das Werk Beethovens: Thematisches-bibliographisches Verzeichnis seiner sämtlichen vollendeten Kompositionen*, ed. Hans Halm (Munich: Henle, 1955), 611.

[Ah, the love which cannot be shared!
To you it gives a loud
Lament for comfort,
To me a silenced mind.]

Beethoven's way of responding to both these poems was to juxtapose mechanical and monotonous rhythmic elements, which fix the songs as external objects, with contrasting levels of rhythmic or harmonic activity that disclose the poet's subjective identification with what he hears. In his setting of 'Der Gesang der Nachtigall' he builds the song's vocal melody out of short intervallic units, each the length of two quavers. This melody can be followed either as a series of small-scale reorderings within the measure, like the written-out trill that forms the piano prelude, or as a single six-bar sweep. The song operates at both levels; or rather one level gives us the mimesis of the bird-call, and the other a song of controlled rhythmic and melodic direction (see Example 3).

In Beethoven's setting of 'Die laute Klage', the contrast between an objective and subjective view is played out over textural and harmonic space. In the song's first two bars the rhythmic patterns of alternating trochees and dactyls are set out within the harmonically compact sphere of C minor/E flat major. But at the opening of the third verse the effect of the same metrical patterns is transformed by a dramatic deepening of the harmonic texture (see Examples 4a and 4b).

These extreme contrasts in harmonic texture make 'Die laute Klage' a much more emotionally charged song than 'Der Gesang der Nachtigall'. Yet in both cases an emphasis on the immediate rhythmic unit provides a vital foil to the composer's lyrical voice. And in both cases listeners have to wait before they can distinguish an expressive voice from a more mechanical filling of silence.

In the Ninth Symphony this process of distinguishing an expressive voice from a mechanical voice is extended to huge proportions in both formal and conceptual terms. After the movement's first fourfold instrumental repetition of the twenty-four bars of the 'Ode to Joy' melody, the textural, rhythmic and harmonic expansion introduced from bar 187 suggests the emerging of a subjective response. Yet just as the 'object' of the song seems about to be left behind in favour of a symphonic-style developmental sweep, the return of the finale's first dissonant tutti in bar 208 reimposes a ban of silence. Even in the previous passage the abrupt reduction from tutti to quartet texture at bar 205, and from broad sweep to one-bar sequences, suggests a withdrawal from the vertical and horizontal dimensions that were being revealed. The 'object' of song has to remain as such; it is necessary to the Ninth Symphony's reclaiming of voice from silence – just as the mechanical traits of small-scale articulation were necessary to 'Der Gesang der Nachtigall' and 'Die laute Klage'. In the symphony the solo baritone makes clear that this 'object' is to be fully embraced. His words – 'nicht diese Töne' – are usually taken to refer to the immediately preceding dissonant tutti, but in an important sense they could also apply to the previous symphonic 'sweep' and even to the whole course of the symphony up to that point.[37] The claim to sound out 'more pleasingly' (*angenehmere*) and 'more joyfully' (*freudenvollere*) through singing the 'Ode to Joy' melody establishes both the 'object' to be sounded and how it should be received. The subsequent vocal response involves three more exact repetitions of the twenty-four-bar strophe, with sixteen bars of solo voice or voices being reinforced by an eight-bar repetition from the choir on each occasion (see Figure 2). There is no divergence in outline during these three strophic vocal repetitions; Beethoven sets three verses of the ode one after the other, without introducing Schiller's intervening choruses with their differing rhyme scheme.[38] In Beethoven's setting the immediate function of a chorus is first absorbed into the verse itself, through the eight-bar repetitions of the choral body. A larger

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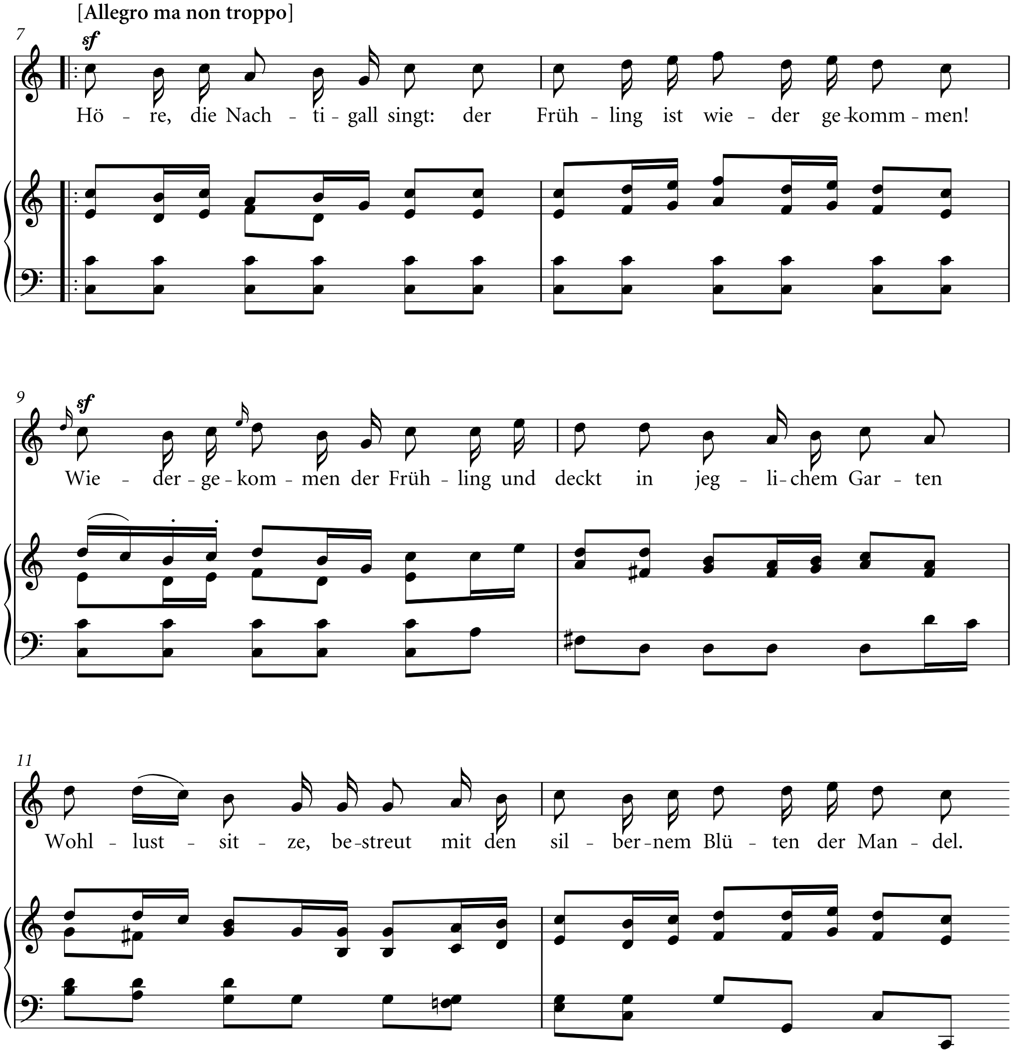
[37] See Cook, *Beethoven: Symphony No. 9*, 88–89, for an account of Schenker's disagreement with Wagner on the reference point for 'nicht diese Töne'.

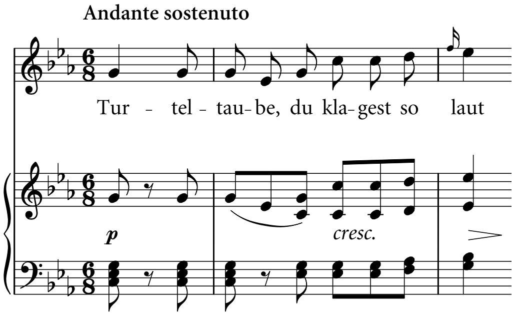
[38] See Friedrich Schiller, *Werke*, volume 2 ('Gedichte'), ed. Norbert Oellers (Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1983), 185–187. The formal relationship between Schiller and Beethoven's version of the poetic text is set out by James Webster in his article 'The Finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony', *Beethoven Forum* 1 (1992), 34, and by Cook, *Beethoven: Symphony No. 9*, 108–109.


[Allegro ma non troppo]
7
sf
Hö - re, die Nach - ti - gall singt: der Früh - ling ist wie - der ge-komm - men!
9
sf
Wie - der - ge - kom - men der Früh - ling und deckt in jeg - li - chem Gar - ten
11
Wohl - lust - sit - ze, be - streut mit den sil - ber - nem Blü - ten der Man - del.

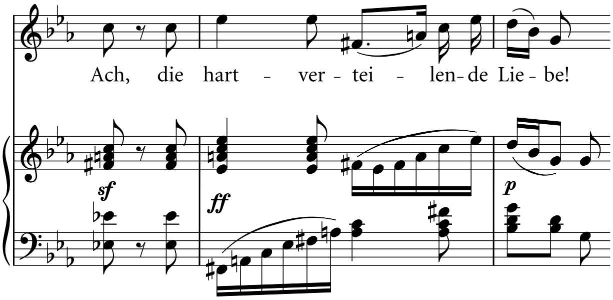
Example 3 ‘*Der Gesang der Nachtigall*’, bars 7–12 (*Beethoven Werke*, series 12, volume 1, *Sämtliche Lieder*, ed. Helga Lühning (Munich: Henle, 1990)). Used by permission

sense of a response being passed backwards and forwards across time and space has to be transferred to the contrast between instruments and voices, at the scale of blocks of a hundred bars or so. Thus the ‘song-object’ begins to expand in our view from the original sixteen or twenty-four bars, towards being simultaneously understood as a unit of distinctly symphonic dimensions.

Yet the vocal ‘block’ that would secure a large-scale symmetry with the previous instrumental section is not completed. The expanding line that follows the third vocal verse for ten bars after bar 321 is followed by the reintervention of silence before a balancing fourth verse can be enunciated. From contemplating the emergence of a large-scale symmetry, this silence at bar 331 draws our attention back to small-scale details – to whether we can recognize the rhythms that follow as belonging to the previous ‘song-object’ or not. The change in key and metre at this point indicates a definite shift from the original ‘Ode to Joy’ melody. It could be that something different is being heard, but the likeness of melodic shape and rhythmic phrase that emerges soon makes it clear that this is the same song-object, but heard from somewhere else or sung by



Example 4a ‘*Die laute Klage*’, bars 1–3 (*Beethoven Werke*, series 12, volume 1, *Sämtliche Lieder*, ed. Helga Lühning (Munich: Henle, 1990)). Used by permission



Example 4b ‘*Die laute Klage*’, bars 12–14

different people. This ‘otherness’ parades itself, again as if in a dramatic slide-show, through the Turkish sonorities in which the tune appears. But most crucially Beethoven also begins to reconfigure Schiller’s chorus function on an even larger scale than previously. The instruments and voices of the previous sections can now be grouped together as a hymnic version of the ‘Ode to Joy’, to be answered by this second march-like or dance-like realization of the tune. Such a conceptual parallelism is encouraged by the way an instrumental prelude is again brought in from bar 331, to establish a sense of strophic measurement before the entry of the voices. The tenor’s verse from bar 375 unfolds as a forty-eight-bar shape, the equivalent of twenty-four bars within the previous metrical framework, to be followed by 112 bars of instrumental fugato-style development. If this too were computed as a measurement of time within the earlier hymnic sections it would come to fifty-six bars, roughly the equivalent of two strophic measures, with the point between the ‘verses’ being marked in bar 491 by the shift from the tonality of B flat to B.

A sense of large-scale measurement is thus maintained throughout the Turkish *alla marcia* episode, with the strophe for solo tenor and choir and two strophes of instrumental development being completed by a more literal choral return to the ‘Ode to Joy’ tune from bar 543. The literalness of this final choral strophe is a necessary counter to the looseness of the fugato episode. For the sense of periodic measure during the fugato episode is inevitably lessened by the splitting of the four- and eight-bar groupings into two-bar units; a fugue-style subject or motive ends up substituting for statements of a ‘tune’. One could still argue that an ‘object’ is being heard and passed around the orchestra, yet the relativism of such a chain of connection contrasts markedly with the literalness of the movement’s first song statements. Vertical and horizontal (harmonic and rhythmic) expansions of the song material have now almost subsumed its original identity. At earlier points in the finale such a move away from the song as object was greeted by the imposition of silence, and indeed a return to silence threatens in the reduction of texture in bar 525. In immediate terms, the silence is deflected by the poetic and musical return to the 'Ode to Joy' in bar 543, but at bar 594 the threat returns and is realized in perhaps its strongest form yet.

As for the conceptual and formal layout of Beethoven's movement, this is the moment where our perception of the symphony's adopted song material reaches a point of crisis. When one first hears the vocal line that follows this fourth dramatic silence, one is not sure whether it is designed to continue the silence, like the earlier passages of cello and bass recitative, or to continue the echoes of the 'Ode to Joy' tune. As with the earlier 'Turkish' episode, one is drawn to interrogate each phrase for signs of song identity. In this case one senses the solidity of the eight-bar phrase shapes, as reinforced by the eight-bar antiphony between unison and harmonized choral textures. However, syncopation blurs the articulation of the four-bar shape in bar 598 and bar 606, and continues to blur the identification of the basic trochaic metres within those shapes. It is difficult to hear any identifiable features from the 'Ode to Joy' melody, or any melody, in this setting of 'Seid umschlungen', the first chorus from Schiller's ode. The 'object' of the song seems to have disappeared, even if an object-like space, the eight-bar unit, remains to mark where the song has been. This sense of an open yet defined space intensifies with the following setting of the third chorus from Schiller's ode, 'Ihr stürzt nieder'. Four- and eight-bar blocks of sound are articulated by the chorus's entry-points, even while the melodic and harmonic outlines within those blocks become increasingly fluid and recitative-like.

Indeed, with the blurred textures and A/B♭ dissonance that emerge in the eight bars from bar 647 one begins to hear both the harmonic sounds of the dissonant tutti from the beginning of the movement and the suspended rhythmic shimmer from the beginning of the symphony. These echoes emerge from a silence that opens in bar 647, yet this silence is qualitatively different from those noted earlier in the movement. Rather than projecting the listener forward into potential nothingness, this silence is incorporated within the eight-bar period, as part of a song-like mapping of spaces that are certain of being filled. The 'object-nature' of song now seems to have been fully assimilated as the movement's ground of utterance, even to the point of incorporating echoes from what is clearly not song. The solo baritone's earlier lesson in how to sing and the subsequent modelling of a new beginning through song are here given an ultimate test of credibility. If the 'Seid umschlungen' episode is heard as song, however abstracted, then its joining to the 'Ode to Joy' melody at the subsequent point of resolution in bar 655 carries the weight of natural-seeming completion. The four strophes of the instruments' initial introduction of the 'Ode to Joy' can then be seen to be reflected at the largest level as four blocks of contrasting yet related material, divided and joined by silence, and by alternations between instrumental and vocal forces:

(bars 7–91) *Silences*	*(bars 92ff.)* Prelude to 'Hymn' (insts)
(bar 215) *Return to silence*	*(bars 241ff.)* 'Hymn' (voices)
(bar 331) *Return to silence*	*(bars 331ff.)* 'March' (insts/voices/insts/voices)
(bar 594) *Return to silence*	*(bars 595ff.)* "Seid umschlungen" (voices)
(bars 647–654) *Filled silence*	

It is noticeable how freely the eight-bar phrases are expanded upon once the finale's point of climactic resolution in bar 655 is past. The song-object now dissolves into symphonic extensions without the further threat of silence or the need for strophic markers. Subject and object have found their point of balance, through a process of enactment that surely surpasses Schiller and Bürger in the depth of its exploration even while it draws on their aesthetic oppositions. For these poets the literalness or abstraction of their acts of singing created battle-lines that even Goethe could not fully transcend. In *Faust*, as we have seen, the poet needed the mechanism of Helen and Gretchen's separate identities to forge a balance of possibility for his readers. Beethoven, by contrast, brings the abstract and literal renditions of song into such a close relationship that, if we accept this lesson of the Ninth Symphony, our view of singing and song will never be quite the same again.