

HOFFMANN'S MUSICAL MODERNITY AND THE PURSUIT OF SENTIMENTAL UNITY

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ABSTRACT

Around 1800 a group of critics worried that new music was in danger of losing its social relevance. In their eyes music had become severed from the religious practices which had formerly provided its purpose and now exhibited a mercurial style that threatened its intelligibility, leading to a host of anxieties about its role in the contemporary world. This article argues that these concerns form the basis of an elegiac discourse of musical modernity, one resonating with broader philosophical concerns of the period. Taking Hoffmann's 'Alte und neue Kirchenmusik' as the central text, my narrative explores how he and others sought to rehabilitate modern music in the wake of a perceived social upheaval. This rehabilitation chiefly occurred at the hands of critics, who approached the complexities of new musical works by attempting to elucidate them through analysis. Hoffmann's review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony belongs in this narrative as a characteristic attempt to secure new music's meaning.

E. T. A. Hoffmann, in one of his more provocative moods, set out to give a frank account of the music of the day in an 1814 issue of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*. His contribution was entitled simply 'Alte und neue Kirchenmusik' (Old and New Church Music), and it begins with a scathing condemnation of a recent trend. Composers seem to have repudiated religious music, devoting their efforts instead to works for the theatre, works that have become disposable, vulgar, 'lifeless puppets with a semblance of vitality' ('dessen Flimmer der toten Puppe den Schein des Lebens verleihen sollte').¹ For a point of contrast, Hoffmann looks to the age of Palestrina. In those wonderfully Catholic times, he argues, composers created religious works of such crystalline purity that they produced 'the most glorious period in church music (and hence in music in general)' ('mit Palestrina hub unstreitig die herrlichste Periode der Kirchenmusik (und also der Musik überhaupt) an').²

Hoffmann's parenthetical remark should raise an eyebrow. We typically place him at the helm of musical romanticism, a position immortalized in his famous review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony from 1810, where

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- 1 E. T. A. Hoffmann, *E. T. A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings*, ed. David Charlton, trans. Martyn Clarke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 353; E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Schriften zur Musik, Nachlese*, ed. Friedrich Schnapp (Munich: Winkler, 1963), 210. The article was originally published in *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 16 (1814), 577–584, 593–603. For other comparisons of music to puppetry see Noël-Antoine Pluche, 'From "The Spectacle of Nature" (1746)', in *Music and Culture in Eighteenth-Century Europe: A Source Book*, ed. Enrico Fubini and Bonnie Blackburn, trans. Wolfgang Freis, Lisa Gasbarrone and Michael Louis Leone (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 79–83, and Heinrich von Kleist, 'Über das Marionettentheater', *Berliner Abendblätter* 1 (1810), 247–249, 251–253, 255–256, 259–261.
- 2 Hoffmann, *E. T. A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings*, 357; Hoffmann, *Schriften zur Musik, Nachlese*, 214.



he effusively guides us through the intricacies of the new music of his time, celebrates its enormity and embraces its otherworldliness.³ Hoffmann appears to pursue conflicting agendas: on one hand he grieves for a lost musical past, and on the other he champions the new. As Karol Berger has argued, Hoffmann's championing exemplified a broader social phenomenon characteristic of the years around 1800, nothing short of the establishment of a 'musical modernity'. Critics effectively separated recent musical practice from everything before it, embracing 'the exceptional, epoch-making character of late eighteenth-century musical innovations'.⁴ Yet all was not rosy. Exemplified by Hoffmann's mourning for an irrecoverable past, an elegiac strand of musical modernity was being articulated by a select group of critics. Their efforts led them to find 'sentimental unity' in a modern music that appeared alarmingly opaque, and their quest shaped the ascendant discourse of music criticism and analysis.

My narrative highlights the social and historical claims of the elegiac moderns. Earlier texts offered optimistic accounts of musical progress, such as Johann Nikolaus Forkel's introduction to his *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik*, which presents modern music as the fruition of humanity's historical pursuit of a fully rational language of emotion.⁵ To Hoffmann and some his contemporaries a few decades later, the account was less straightforward: while they recognized and extolled the advancements of music's modernization, they also connected these advancements with unstable developments in society. Looking to the past as a way to get a grip on the present, they were enthralled by a pre-modern music that appeared wholly transparent in its worldly purpose, particularly Palestrina's church music. In stark contrast, modern music's function was utterly elusive. Prefiguring G. W. F. Hegel's aesthetic theory, critics grappled with the situation by theorizing about how modern music connected to the social totality.

These critics considered musical style to be central to their elegiac narrative, fortifying the division between pre-modern and modern music by establishing a stylistic dichotomy: the former was gloriously simple and the latter was impressively innovative, echoing Friedrich Schiller's 'naive' and 'sentimental' art. Yet innovation risked volatility. With new music threatened by instability and incoherence at every turn, critics found criticism and analysis to be necessary for securing its place in the world. If in their eyes the musical work was fractured, new conceptualizations of form and models of structural features were needed to stitch it back together. Above all, critics approached music with unprecedented fervour, in the hopes of rehabilitating it. Hoffmann's proclamation that modern music was 'Sanskrit of nature, translated into sound' ('in Tönen ausgesprochene Sanskrita der Natur!') sums up the situation well: while undoubtedly esoteric, modern music was not outright illogical – it still held meaning.⁶

CONFRONTING THE FRACTURED PRESENT

The musical discourse of modernity that developed at the turn of the nineteenth century has received much scholarly attention.⁷ By no means far-reaching geographically, it was primarily a Germanic phenomenon whose contributors were concerned with instrumental music. Yet it resonated with a contemporaneous philosophical discourse that fashioned itself as a response to a variety of 'modernizing' social developments,

3 The review was originally published in *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 12 (1810), 630–642, 652–659.

4 Karol Berger, *Bach's Cycle, Mozart's Arrow: An Essay on the Origins of Musical Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 4–5.

5 Johann Nikolaus Forkel, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik* (Leipzig: Schwickert, 1788), 1–68. For more on Forkel's conception of music history see chapter 4 of Matthew Riley, *Musical Listening in the German Enlightenment* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

6 Hoffmann, E. T. A. *Hoffmann's Musical Writings*, 105; E. T. A. Hoffmann, E. T. A. *Hoffmanns Musikalische Schriften*, ed. Edgar Istel (Stuttgart: Greiner und Pfeiffer, 1906), 96.

7 For significant accounts see Karol Berger, *A Theory of Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) and Daniel Chua, *Absolute Music and the Construction of Meaning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).



particularly the intellectual tradition of the *Aufklärung* – the discourse of the late eighteenth-century German Enlightenment – and the traumatic political events of the French Revolution.⁸

At the most abstract level, scholars have argued that modernity constitutes the historical moment when society appeared to have abandoned its traditional structures, when the present seemed ruptured from the past and poised for the future. Jürgen Habermas argues that its first phase originated with the Reformation and the Scientific Revolution. By the end of the eighteenth century, however, there had been a noticeable shift. To philosophers, society's quest for grounding itself had reached a moment of crisis that they saw requiring an intervention. The world appeared sharply divided into three domains: 'science, morality, and art were . . . institutionally differentiated as realms of activity in which questions of truth, justice, and of taste were autonomously elaborated'. The hallowed unity of truth, goodness and beauty that characterized antiquity had splintered, and furthermore these 'spheres of knowing' became separated from religion by an ever-increasing rift between secular and religious life.⁹ The establishment of rational foundations led paradoxically to a radical fracturing, fuelling what Habermas terms 'the philosophical discourse of modernity'.

To the German idealists and the early German romantics, Hoffmann among them, contemporary life was fraught. Modernity produced subjects who were alienated from the world and from each other, exemplifying the broken conditions of the present by living fractured lives.¹⁰ According to Frederick Beiser, the romantics were responding to the internal conflicts of the *Aufklärung*, embracing the Enlightenment concept of *Bildung* as a way to advance society while contending with the potentially alienating tendencies of reason and radical criticism, particularly in the wake of Immanuel Kant's philosophical Copernican turn.¹¹ They ultimately put their faith in art, which, they posited, 'could restore belief and unity with nature and society'.¹²

The possibility of restoration implied an earlier unification between subject and society as well as self and nature, an ideal many attributed to Ancient Greece. Above all, philosophers and critics posited a harmonious antiquity as a foil against which to interpret modern conditions, and it proved to be a potent hermeneutic. Initiated by the art historian Johann Joachim Winckelmann, the procedure was appropriated by Friedrich Schiller in his influential 'Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man'. He asserts that the Ancient Greek citizen was at once both an individual and an embodiment of the state, while the modern citizen was alienated from the world as a consequence of society's efficient division of labour.¹³ Enlightenment values had led humanity astray and atomized the world into 'innumerable but lifeless parts'. To Schiller society was no longer a living organism but a mechanical clock. He claims, '*Utility* is the great idol of our age, to which all powers are in thrall and to which all talent must pay homage.'¹⁴

Art's place in the modern world was less than obvious. According to J. M. Bernstein, art suffered the most from modernity's repudiation of tradition, a condition he terms 'aesthetic alienation'. In the aftermath of society's fragmentation, art had lost its former authority in the world and was expelled from

8 For more on the *Aufklärung* see James Schmidt, 'Introduction: What Is Enlightenment? A Question, Its Context, and Some Consequences', in *What Is Enlightenment?: Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions*, ed. James Schmidt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 1–44. A classic political account of the period can be found in Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution 1789–1848* (New York: Vintage, 1996).

9 Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: Polity, 1987), 16–19.

10 Frederick Beiser, *The Romantic Imperative: The Concept of Early German Romanticism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 30–35.

11 For an account of Kant's immediate philosophical influence see Eckart Förster, *The Twenty-Five Years of Philosophy*, trans. Brady Bowman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

12 Beiser, *The Romantic Imperative*, 53.

13 Friedrich Schiller, 'Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man', trans. Elizabeth Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby, in *Friedrich Schiller: Essays*, ed. Walter Hinderer and Daniel Dahlstrom (New York: Continuum, 1993), 100.

14 Schiller, 'Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man', 89. Original italics.



the spheres of everyday life, religion, knowledge and morality.¹⁵ Decades after Schiller, Hegel would embed the impoverishment of modern art into the very centre of his aesthetic theory, particularly in his shift from what he terms 'Classical' to 'Romantic' art.¹⁶ Breaking away from neoclassical aesthetics, Hegel claims that art embodies and reinforces socially meaningful forms of life. Art does not depend on timeless standards – it is a historically and socially contingent vehicle for articulating how society relates human agency to the natural world. According to Gillian Rose, Hegel's conception of art is a 'historically specific phenomenon which reproduces social contradiction in the medium of sensuous illusion. Art in this sense is not ideal, not integral, not beautiful'.¹⁷ In other words, art is not an abstraction for its own ends, but rather an expression of the character of the spheres of social life. Artistic form is harmonious when created in a climate of political harmony, or unstable in one of political instability.

For Hegel there was no better art than that of Ancient Greece. It had served as a perfect material realization of freedom: 'Therefore the world-view of the Greeks is precisely the milieu in which beauty begins its true life and builds its serene kingdom; the milieu of free vitality which is not only there naturally and immediately but is generated by spiritual vision and transfigured by art'.¹⁸ In contrast, romantic art, that is, modern art in the post-Reformation Christian world, cannot serve the function as well. Hegel sees this as a direct consequence of the modern invention of individual subjectivity. To him, humanity outgrows the need for art or beauty as it functioned in antiquity, as the quest for its self-understanding no longer requires a material means for the job. Hegel states, 'The peculiar nature of artistic production and of works of art no longer fills our highest need. We have got beyond venerating works of art as divine and worshipping them', eventually leading to his famous claim: 'art, considered in its highest vocation, is and remains for us a thing of the past'.¹⁹ Art's obsolescence occurs alongside religion's loss of power, both being superseded in the most recent age by philosophy.²⁰ Modern art could no longer function as perfectly as it did in Ancient Greece – it was a relic.

MODERN ART'S ANALYTICAL IMPERATIVE

While modern art had lost its 'highest vocation', it did not go away quietly. Hegel's account offers intriguing, if enigmatic, new directions for modern art. He contends, 'In this way romantic art is the self-transcendence of art within its own sphere and in the form of art itself'.²¹ Central to art's new status was a new mode of engagement. Modern art simply could not offer a compelling sensory experience as it could in the Classical age; instead it required some sort of discursive mediation:

15 J. M. Bernstein, *The Fate of Art: Aesthetic Alienation from Kant to Derrida and Adorno* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 1–10.

16 Claiming modern art's obsolescence is a tradition almost as old as Continental philosophy itself. See Eva Geulen, *The End of Art: Readings in a Rumor after Hegel*, trans. James McFarland (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006). For the remainder of the article I use the terms 'Classical' and 'Romantic' in their Hegelian formulation.

17 Gillian Rose, *Hegel Contra Sociology* (London: Verso, 2009), 135. For an account of Hegel's historical theory of aesthetics see Terry Pinkard, 'Symbolic, Classical, and Romantic Art', in *Hegel and the Arts*, ed. Stephen Houlgate (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 3–28. My discussion is also indebted to chapter 1 of Robert B. Pippin, *After the Beautiful: Hegel and the Philosophy of Pictorial Modernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

18 G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T. M. Knox, two volumes, volume 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 437. Pinkard observes, 'The elegiac nostalgia for Greek life – beautiful, lost and irrecoverable – was a weighty feature of the intellectual atmosphere of Hegel's time.' Terry Pinkard, *Hegel's Phenomenology: The Sociality of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 134.

19 Hegel, *Aesthetics*, volume 1, 10–11.

20 As Pinkard states, 'The inadequacy of art to capture this self-understanding for us is, paradoxically, not the metaphysical inadequacy of art itself to get at a deeper truth, but a change in the status of "we moderns" who find it inadequate to ourselves as we have come to be'. Pinkard, 'Symbolic, Classical, and Romantic Art', 21.

21 Hegel, *Aesthetics*, volume 1, 80.



What is now aroused in us by works of art is not just immediate enjoyment but our judgment also . . . The *philosophy* of art is therefore a greater need in our day than it was in days when art by itself as art yielded full satisfaction. Art invites us to intellectual consideration, and that not for the purpose of creating art again, but for knowing philosophically what art is.²²

In short, art now needed criticism.

Earlier figures had found modern art complex and unstable, fundamentally different from the gloriously simple art of antiquity. As Winckelmann had asserted, 'Had the ancients been poorer, they would have written better about art: compared to them, we are like badly portioned heirs; but we turn over every stone, and by drawing inferences from many tiny details, we at least arrive at a probable assertion that can be more instructive than the accounts left by the ancients.'²³ Schiller's account from his essay 'On Naive and Sentimental Poetry' provides a helpful model for illustrating the shift. In Schiller's Ancient Greece, the subject and society were harmoniously united, with no division sensed between the two. The naive artist *was* nature, associating intuitively with the world, aesthetically depicting an object from a limited perspective. Regardless of genre or the intensity of affect, the relation of the depiction to its imitated object remained constant. Naive art required no intermediary to secure its meaning – it simply mattered.

In a sentimental world, on the other hand, art was hardly as fortunate. The sentimental artist could only *seek* nature in his fractured modern life. This sentimental longing for the naive world drove the artist to compare his actual situation to the ideal one, and the resulting dissonance led to a variety of sentimental art forms.²⁴ Thus when the sentimental artist appropriated the classical forms of old, he could no longer use the traditional norms they relied upon. Hegel deepens the claim that the modern artist was separated from tradition, revealing that the relation between outer material and inner freedom was no longer straightforward: 'The artist thus stands above specific consecrated forms and configurations and moves freely on his own account, independent of the subject-matter and mode of conception in which the holy and eternal was previously made visible to human apprehension.'²⁵

While classical art forms had reflected and supported the harmonious relations of the world and seamlessly blended into life, modern ones retreated into themselves as unique totalities. Schiller expands on this claim in a set of letters to Gottfried Körner, a notable attempt to work through his conception of aesthetics, influenced by Karl Philipp Moritz's *Ueber die bildende Nachahmung des Schönen* (On the Artistic Imitation of the Beautiful)²⁶ and Kant's third *Critique*. According to Beiser, the basis of Schiller's project was to stress human freedom in the aesthetic realm, and it is in the *Kallias-briefe* where his conception of their relationship most closely matches Kant's.²⁷ Modern art could no longer depend on societal custom, and so its materials appeared free: 'A form appears as free as soon as we are *neither able nor inclined* to search for its ground outside it . . . A form is beautiful, one might say, if it *demands no explanation*, or it if *explains itself without a concept*.'²⁸ All of a work's components seemed self-determining, 'as if technique flowed freely out of the thing itself'.²⁹ The components also had to stand apart from each other. Schiller writes, 'Freedom comes

22 Hegel, *Aesthetics*, volume 1, 11. Original italics.

23 Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *History of the Art of Antiquity*, ed. Alex Potts, trans. Harry Mallgrave (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2006), 351.

24 Friedrich Schiller, 'On Naive and Sentimental Poetry', trans. Daniel O. Dahlstrom, in *Essays*, ed. Hinderer and Dahlstrom, 204.

25 Hegel, *Aesthetics*, volume 1, 605. For a trenchant analysis of Hegel's claim see Pippin, *After the Beautiful*, 42–43.

26 Karl Philipp Moritz, *Ueber die bildende Nachahmung des Schönen* (Braunschweig: Schul-Buchhandlung, 1788).

27 Frederick Beiser, *Schiller as Philosopher* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2005), 219–224. See also Dieter Henrich, 'Beauty and Freedom: Schiller's Struggle with Kant's Aesthetics', in *Essays in Kant's Aesthetics*, ed. Ted Cohen and Paul Guyer, trans. David R. Lachterman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 237–257.

28 Friedrich Schiller, 'Kallias or Concerning Beauty: Letters to Gottfried Körner', trans. Stefan Bird-Pollan, in *Classic and Romantic German Aesthetics*, ed. J. M. Bernstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 155. Original italics.

29 Schiller, 'Kallias or Concerning Beauty', 169.



about because each restricts its inner freedom such as to allow every other to express *its* freedom.³⁰ No longer a harmonious assemblage of features readily submitting themselves to a unified whole, the art work was now an atomized totality.

Friedrich Schlegel's call for 'Romantic poetry' gives a radical perspective on just how much freedom the arrangement of artistic materials should display. The criteria for binding materials together within an art work lost their traditional basis, requiring the work to combine disparate elements in a convincingly original way. Schlegel claims that Romantic poetry 'tries to and should mix and fuse poetry and prose, inspiration and criticism, the poetry of art and the poetry of nature; and make poetry lively and sociable, and life and society poetical; poeticize wit and fill and saturate the forms of art with every kind of good, solid matter for instruction, and animate them with the pulsations of humour'.³¹ As Hegel later claims, the modern artist had no more rules to follow, faced no forbidden juxtapositions of styles or genres and was free to assemble any features imaginable. The work became a unique system of intermingling parts bound only by his imagination.

Unity no longer referred to a pleasingly formed whole with all parts harmoniously supporting a straightforward artistic depiction. To borrow Schiller's term, it was now *sentimental unity*, a singular totality containing a succession of fragments. Each work demanded its own principles for understanding – instead of traditional norms binding the work together, the work itself authorized its unification. Critics were drawn to the work to affirm its wholeness, attempting to reconcile two opposing claims: the components of the work appeared self-determining, but they were nonetheless arranged in a way that they cohered into a singular whole. Schlegel referred to this coherence as 'a higher unity . . . through the bond of ideas, through a spiritual central point'.³² The critical pursuit of this 'bond of ideas' was a procedure that evinced modern art's loss of naive unity.

Schlegel attempted, in Winckelmann's words, to 'turn over every stone' in his lengthy analytical essay on Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* of 1795. 'This book', he contends, 'is absolutely new and unique. We can learn to understand it only on its own terms. To judge it according to an idea of genre drawn from custom and belief, accidental experiences and arbitrary demands, is as if a child tried to clutch the stars and the moon in his hand and pack them in his satchel'.³³ There were no pre-existing models to determine the inner logic of Goethe's novel. Instead, Schlegel carefully pores over the novel section by section, considering how each one relates to its surroundings and how the transitions between sections help to connect them. Central to his analysis is how each part maintains independence from the whole: each fragment was part of the totality, yet each could also stand alone, exhibiting 'unintentional homogeneity and original unity'.³⁴ Following Schiller's model, the sections of Goethe's novel demanded independence from each other. A fragment's independence threatened to dissolve the glue that made it cohere with its surroundings, yet somehow all of the fragments coalesced together into a sentimental unity. Resonating with Hegel's conception of modern art, Schlegel's conception of the novel contained an assertion about art's new status. A work held a claim to its coherence originating from within it and hovering over it, a claim attained through criticism.

30 Schiller, 'Kallias or Concerning Beauty', 171–172. Original italics.

31 Friedrich Schlegel, 'Athenaeum Fragments', trans. Peter Firchow, in *Classic and Romantic German Aesthetics*, ed. Bernstein, 249.

32 Friedrich Schlegel, 'Letter About the Novel', trans. Ernst Behler and Roman Struc, in *Classic and Romantic German Aesthetics*, ed. Bernstein, 293. See also Ernst Behler, *German Romantic Literary Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 177.

33 Friedrich Schlegel, 'On Goethe's *Meister*', trans. Peter Firchow, in *Classic and Romantic German Aesthetics*, ed. Bernstein, 275.

34 Schlegel, 'On Goethe's *Meister*', 276–277.



NAIVE MUSIC

At the turn of the nineteenth century some critics recognized music's unstable position in the wake of aesthetic modernity, a recognition that reached its apotheosis in Hoffmann's 'Alte und neue Kirchenmusik'.³⁵ The essay starts off with a contentious observation: operatic music in the last decades of the eighteenth century was lacking any sort of deeper connection to society beyond its commercial worth. Instead of dutifully studying counterpoint for the purpose of creating religious music, composers now ditched the church for the theatre: 'their only concern is to dazzle and impress the multitude, or indeed for ignoble monetary gain to pander to passing taste and become merely popular composers instead of serious ones' ('daß es ihnen nur darum zu tun sei, zu glänzen, der Menge zu imponieren, oder wohl gar, des schnöden Geldgewinnes wegen, dem augenblicklichen Zeitgeschmack zu fröhnen, und, statt ein gründlicher, tiefer, nur ein beliebter Komponist zu werden').³⁶ Composers were increasingly preoccupied with entertaining the masses, and were beholden to the commodified marketplace, rendering modern music fundamentally hollow.³⁷

While he was far from being the first to claim that composers had succumbed to popular taste, Hoffmann provides an intriguing explanation for his thought.³⁸ Instead of faulting composers for misjudgment, he argues that the situation was part of a larger social crisis:

Die tiefere Ursache dieses Leichtsinns in der Kunst lag in der Tendenz der Zeit überhaupt. Als regierten dämonische Prinzipien, strebte alles dahin, den Menschen festzubannen in das befangene, ärmliche Leben, dessen Tun und Treiben er für den höchsten Zweck des Daseins hielt: so wurde er abtrünnig allem Höheren, Wahrhaften, Heiligen.

The deeper cause of this frivolity in art lay in the general tendency of the times. As though governed by demonic forces, everything conspired to hold men spellbound within their miserable, blinkered world, whose constant activity seemed to them the highest purpose of existence. And so they turned against all that was noble, true and sacred.³⁹

In the modern world the subject was alienated, distracted from pursuing a higher way of life, inhibited from composing a noble style of music. Even music for the church was not immune, as the Enlightenment 'killed every deeper religious impulse' ('allen tieferen religiösen Sinn tötenden Aufklärerei gleichen Schritt haltend').⁴⁰ Composers could no longer create an authentic church music because society no longer

35 Others have observed themes of modern aesthetic alienation in Hoffmann's literary works. See Ulrich Schönherr, 'Social Differentiation and Romantic Art: E. T. A. Hoffmann's "The Sanctus" and the Problem of Aesthetic Positioning in Modernity', *New German Critique* 66 (1995), 3–17.

36 Hoffmann, *E. T. A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings*, 353; Hoffmann, *Schriften zur Musik, Nachlese*, 209–210.

37 Hoffmann's conception of modern opera merits further study. His own compositional focus on operatic works and his laudatory review of Spontini's *Olimpia* suggest a deeper claim to the legitimacy of opera as a romantic art form. See Hoffmann, *E. T. A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings*, 431–446. For context on Hoffmann's operas see chapter 5 of Abigail Chantler, *E. T. A. Hoffmann's Musical Aesthetics* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

38 Hoffmann was treading a well-worn path when he claimed that modern church music was inadequate. For instance, in 1801 Triest stated, 'In a word, sacred music is no longer a thing that exists in its own right'. Johann Karl Friedrich Triest, 'Remarks on the Development of the Art of Music in Germany in the Eighteenth Century', in *Haydn and His World*, ed. Elaine Sisman, trans. Susan Gillespie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 359. Decades earlier Johann Friedrich Reichardt and Johann Adam Hiller had also offered critiques of modern church music. See Hans-Günter Ottenberg, *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach*, trans. Philip J. Whitmore (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 110–111.

39 Hoffmann, *Schriften zur Musik, Nachlese*, 210; Hoffmann, *E. T. A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings*, 353–354.

40 Hoffmann, *E. T. A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings*, 370; Hoffmann, *Schriften zur Musik, Nachlese*, 227. For more on Hoffmann's religious views see Keith Chapin, 'Lost in Quotation: The Nuances behind E. T. A. Hoffmann's Programmatic Statements', *19th-Century Music* 30/1 (2006), 49–52.



supported authentic religious worship. Modern church music, with all its faults, was just a manifestation of modernity itself.⁴¹

Hoffmann articulated an elegiac modernity when he constructed a musical analogy for Hegel and Schiller's Ancient Greece, a moment when musical practices likewise appeared to be in harmony with society. Resonating with the German early-romantic nostalgia for Catholic Europe, Hoffmann chose Renaissance Rome as an instructive foil to modern life.⁴² Here music was grounded by pre-Enlightened religion, which, in Hoffmann's eyes, made church music truly and clearly meaningful:

dem ausübenden, praktischen Komponisten geht aber die heiligste Tiefe seiner herrlichen, echt-christlichen Kunst erst da auf, als in Italien das Christentum in seiner höchsten Glorie strahlte, und die hohen Meister in der Weihe göttlicher Begeisterung das heiligste Geheimnis der Religion in herrlichen, nie gehörten Tönen verkündeten.

For the practising composer . . . the most sacred depths of his noble and truly Christian art are first revealed in Italy, when Christianity shone forth in its greatest splendour, and the great composers, with the solemnity of divine rapture, proclaimed the holiest mysteries of religion in magnificent sounds not heard before.⁴³

Music worked jointly with other arts, such as painting and sculpture, to advance the spiritual mission of Christianity at its hub, the Vatican. Resonating with Hegel's conception of classical art, music served as a vehicle through which to embody and reinforce the harmony between the human and divine. Hoffmann claims:

Die Liebe, der Einklang alles Geistigen in der Natur, wie er dem Christen verheißen, spricht sich aus im Akkord, der daher auch erst im Christentum zum Leben erwachte; und so wird der Akkord, die Harmonie, Bild und Ausdruck der Geistergemeinschaft, der Vereinigung mit dem Ewigen, dem Idealen, das über uns thront und doch uns einschließt.⁴⁴

The love, the consonance of all things spiritual in nature promised to the Christian, finds expression in the chord first brought to life in Christendom; and thus the chord, the harmony, becomes the image and expression of that community of spirits, of that unification with the eternal, the ideal, which reigns over us and yet embraces us.

Music's efficacy in the world was beyond question; it was something, in Ludwig Tieck's words, 'to compose to the movement of the stars' ('welche sinnige Alte dem Umschwung der Gestirne ebenfalls zuschreiben wollten').⁴⁵

For Hoffmann, Palestrina served as the paradigmatic composer of the age: his music had a wonderfully uncomplicated character, with 'bold, powerful chords, blazing forth like blinding shafts of light' ('wunderbare Strahlen hereinbrechenden Akkorde, auf das Gemüt zu wirken vermöge'). The music was 'simple, true, childlike, good, strong, and sturdy' ('einfach, wahrhaft, kindlich, fromm, stark und mächtig'). It was also free from recent technical developments: 'no contrived frivolity or orchestral mimicry defiles the purity of this heaven-sent music; nothing is heard of the so-called striking modulations, the gaudy figures, the

41 Hoffmann invokes France as exemplifying this decay, which, as Stephen Rumph points out, resonates with political events of the time. Stephen Rumph, 'A Kingdom Not of This World: The Political Context of E. T. A. Hoffmann's Beethoven Criticism', *19th-Century Music* 19/1 (1995), 55–58.

42 A paradigmatic idealization of medieval Europe may be found in Novalis, 'Christendom or Europe', in *Novalis: Philosophical Writings*, trans. Margaret Mahony Stoljar (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 137–152.

43 Hoffmann, *Schriften zur Musik, Nachlese*, 213; Hoffmann, E. T. A. *Hoffmann's Musical Writings*, 356. Tieck rhapsodized about Palestrina's age in Ludwig Tieck, *Phantasia: eine Sammlung von Märchen, Erzählungen, Schauspielen und Novellen*, three volumes, volume 1 (Berlin: Realschulbuchhandlung, 1812), 466–468.

44 Hoffmann, *Schriften zur Musik, Nachlese*, 215.

45 Tieck, *Phantasia*, volume 1, 471.



feeble melodies, the impotent, confusing clamour of instruments' ('keine gesuchte Spielerei und Nachäffung entweicht das rein vom Himmel Empfangene; daher kommt nichts vor von den sogenannten frappierenden Modulationen, von den bunten Figuren, von den weichlichen Melodien, von dem kraftlosen, verwirrenden Geräusch der Instrumente').⁴⁶ In short, Palestrina's music was naive.

Other critics also imagined an idyllic musical past, and whether it was in Palestrina's Rome or elsewhere, it always evinced an unadulterated style that privileged simplicity of expression. Amadeus Wendt tellingly refers to his version of a lost age as the 'Kingdom of Consonance' ('im Reiche der Consonanzen'), a world of old folk and church music whose name refers both to music's clear societal role and to its uncontrived stylistic components.⁴⁷ Christian Friedrich Michaelis explicitly labels such music 'naive' in his 1805 article 'Etwas über sentimentale und naive Musik' (On Sentimental and Naive Music). As with Hoffmann's characterization of Palestrina's style, Michaelis's naive music opposed the features of modern music:

Die naive Musik drückt in der größten Einfalt und Ruhe die sanften Gefühle des mit sich selbst harmonirenden Gemüths, des von der Unruhe der heftigen Affekten und Leidenschaften freien, in sich selbst zufriedenen Herzens aus. Leicht fließend ist ihre Melodie, kunstlos, einfach und natürlich in den Akkorden und Wendungen ihre Harmonie; ihre Bewegung gleichmäßig und mild; ihre Modulation ohne kühne Sprünge und auffallende Abwechslungen. Die Nüancen ihres Ausdrucks sind sanft, und er ist frei von starken Contrasten. Alles was die Musik pikant und humoristisch macht, z. B. durch fremde harmonische Ausweichungen, erschütternde Dissonanzen, durch frappante Verstärkungen, rhythmische Illusionen u. dergl. ist fern von dieser Gattung.⁴⁸

Naive music expresses, with the greatest simplicity and calmness, the gentle sentiments of a mind in harmony with itself, of a heart content with itself, free from the restlessness of intense affects and passions. Gently flowing is its melody, its harmony artless, simple and natural in its chords and inflections; its motion is even and mild; its modulations are without bold leaps or striking digressions. The nuances of its expression are gentle, and the expression is free of strong contrasts. All that makes music piquant and humorous – such as through strange harmonic deviations, shocking dissonances, through striking intensifications, rhythmic deceptions and the like – is distant from this genre.

In the naive style, according to thinkers like Michaelis, the imagination stood beneath understanding.⁴⁹ A work held a naive unity: each feature completely subsumed itself under the whole without any jagged edges. As a reflection of the harmonious world, the music of antiquity served to complement and reinforce traditional societal structures.

46 Hoffmann, E. T. A. *Hoffmann's Musical Writings*, 358–360; Hoffmann, *Schriften zur Musik, Nachlese*, 216–218. Hoffmann's conception of Palestrina's style elaborates themes presented by earlier critics, such as Johann Friedrich Reichardt, and his insights were mediated by the limited availability of Palestrina's works at the time. See James Garratt, *Palestrina and the German Romantic Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 43.

47 Wayne M. Senner and William Meredith, eds, *The Critical Reception of Beethoven's Compositions by His German Contemporaries*, trans. Robin Wallace, three volumes, volume 2 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 197; Amadeus Wendt, 'Gedanken über die neuere Tonkunst, und van Beethovens Musik, namentlich dessen Fidelio', *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 17 (1815), 682–683. Wendt discusses old music earlier on in Amadeus Wendt, 'Von dem Einfluss der Musik auf den Charakter', *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 11 (1808), 81–90, 97–103. For more on the period conceptions of folk music see Matthew Gelbart, *The Invention of 'Folk Music' and 'Art Music': Emerging Categories from Ossian to Wagner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

48 Christian Friedrich Michaelis, *Ueber den Geist der Tonkunst und andere Schriften* (Chemnitz: Gudrun Schröder, 1997), 240. The article was originally published in *Berlinische musikalische Zeitung* 1/38 (1805), 149–150.

49 Wendt also describes old music as having 'the appearance of following a predetermined plan'. To him Haydn was a transitional figure, displaying both pre-modern and modern compositional tendencies. Senner and Meredith, *The Critical Reception of Beethoven's Compositions*, volume 2, 197.



SENTIMENTAL MUSIC

Critics invented naive music in order to grasp modern sentimental music. The two were linked: if naive music had reflected its idyllic surroundings with simplicity and stability, then modern music epitomized the fractured present with complexity and volatility. Initially, eighteenth-century critics such as Johann Adolph Scheibe saw early versions of the modern style as a jumbled mixture of incompatible techniques. Composers risked mixing styles defined by social stratum, national idiom or generic convention that potentially resulted in incoherence:

Man hat in einer Zeile hoch, in der andern mittelmäßig, und in der dritten endlich gar niedrig geschrieben. Hier stehen französische, dort aber italienische Stellen. Bald zeigt sich ein theatralischer Satz, bald auch ein anderer, der sich in die Kirche schickte. Ja, alles ist so bunt und so kraus durch einander gemischt, daß man keinesweges eine herrschende Schreibart, oder einen gehörigen Ausdruck der Sachen finden wird.

There is one line written in a high style, another in a middle, and finally a third in a low. Here there are French passages, but there we find Italian ones. First goes a theatrical phrase, then one suitable for the church. Everything is so chaotically mixed together that a dominant style or a proper expression of things cannot be found.⁵⁰

In contrast, the critical upholders of the elegiac strand of musical modernity found such a style ineluctably tied to the present, foreshadowing Hegel's claim that the modern artist was no longer bound to any tradition. The modern style was the grotesque negation of pre-modern clarity and balance, overflowing with bizarre modulations, clashing dissonances, wobbly syncopations and exaggerated dynamic juxtapositions. As noted earlier, the style even prompted a new conceptualization of musical form, as the materials of the work appeared fractured, no longer readily fusing into a whole.⁵¹

Instrumental music exemplified the modern style's volatile tendencies. While scholars have often characterized the rise of instrumental music as an achievement, such as when Carl Dahlhaus calls the symphony the culmination of absolute music in the early nineteenth century, the musical moderns were less emphatic.⁵² Their writings betray an ambivalence, acknowledging instrumental music's impressive artifice but tempering that with an awareness of its destabilizing capacities.⁵³ In an evocative passage, Tieck compares modern music to Orpheus's horrific failure to resurrect his deceased wife:

Ich sehe hierinn die Geschichte des Orpheus und der Eurydice. Sie ist gestorben; bei den Schatten, in der dunkeln Unterwelt weilt die Geliebte; er fühlt Kraft und Muth genug, das Licht der Sonne zu verlassen, sich der schwarzen Flut und Dämmerung anzuvertrauen; sein Zauberspiel rührt den ernsten, sonst unerbittlichen Gott; die Larven und Verdammten genießen in seinen Tönen eine schnell vorüber fliehenden Seeligkeit; Eurydice folgt seinem Saitenspiel, aber nicht rückwärts soll

⁵⁰ Johann Adolph Scheibe, *Critischer Musikus*, expanded edition (Leipzig: Breitkopf, 1745), 134; translation adapted from Danuta Mirka, 'Introduction', in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, ed. Danuta Mirka (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 5. For more on Scheibe's criticism see Dora Wilson, 'Johann Adolph Scheibe's Views on Opera and Aesthetics', *The Opera Quarterly* 2/2 (1984), 49–56. For a discussion of national styles in mid-century music criticism see chapter 3 of Mary Sue Morrow, *German Music Criticism in the Late Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁵¹ The elegiac moderns' perception that the musical era of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven was intrinsically experimental is a position espoused by James Webster in 'Between Enlightenment and Romanticism in Music History: "First Viennese Modernism" and the Delayed Nineteenth Century', *19th-Century Music* 25/2–3 (2001–2002), 108–126.

⁵² Carl Dahlhaus, *The Idea of Absolute Music*, trans. Roger Lustig (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 10–11.

⁵³ Here I follow the argument in Richard Littlejohns, 'Iniquitous Innocence: The Ambiguity of Music in the *Phantasien über die Kunst* (1799)', in *Music and Literature in German Romanticism*, ed. Siobhán Donovan and Robin Elliott (New York: Camden House, 2004), 1–12.



er blicken, ihr nicht ins Angesicht schauen, sie nur im Glauben besitzen; sie lockt, sie ruft, sie weint, da wendet sich sein Auge, und blasser und blasser zittert die geliebte Gestalt in den gähnenden Orkus zurück. Der Sänger tritt mit der Kraft seiner Töne wieder in die Oberwelt, sein Lied singt und klagt die Verlorene, alle Melodien suchen sie, aber er hat aus dem tiefen Abgrund, den kein Sänger vor ihm besucht, das schwermüthige Rollen der unterirdischen Wässer, das Aechzen der Gemarterten, das Stöhnen der Geängstigten und das Hohnlachen der Furien, samt allen Gräueln der dunkeln Reiche mit herauf gebracht, und alles klingt in vielfach verschlungener Kunst in der Lieblichkeit seiner Lieder. Himmel und Hölle, die durch unermessliche Klüfte getrennt waren, sind zauberhaft und zum Erschrecken in der Kunst vereinigt, die ursprünglich reines Licht, stille Liebe und lobpreisende Andacht war. So erscheint mir Mozarts Musik.⁵⁴

I see [in Mozart's music] the story of Orpheus and Eurydice. She is dead; the beloved abides among the shades in the dark underworld. He feels enough strength and courage to abandon sunlight, to confide himself to the black flood and twilight. His enchanting playing stirs the serious, otherwise merciless god; the ghosts and damned enjoy a quickly fleeting bliss in his music. Eurydice follows his string playing, but he is forbidden from glancing backward and looking into her face – she can only be held on faith. She entices, she shouts, she cries, then his eyes turn toward her, and the beloved's form trembles fainter and fainter back into the cavernous underworld. The singer, with the force of his music, returns to the world of the living. His song sings and laments the lost one. All melodies seek her, but from the deep abyss that no singer had visited before him he brought the desolate rolling of the underground waters, the groaning of the martyred, the wailing of the fearful and the mocking laughter of the furies, along with all the horrors of the dark realm, and everything sounds within the frequently convoluted art in the charm of his songs. Heaven and hell, which were separated by vast chasms, are magically and frightfully combined in the art that originally was pure light, tranquil love and glorifying prayer. This is how Mozart's music appears to me.

Like sorcery gone awry, modern music was a perversion of traditional order, a volatile juxtaposition of opposing images, a sounding art form rooted in catastrophic loss.

Tieck's dismal portrayal of musical modernity was hardly exceptional, as critics and early German romantics often noted the perverseness of music's dizzying new style.⁵⁵ Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder describes the experience of listening to a modern symphony as initially delightful, suddenly transforming into something utterly horrifying:

Mit leichter, spielender Freude steigt die tönende Seele aus ihrer Orakelhöhle hervor . . . Aber bald gewinnen die Bilder um sie her festern Bestand, sie versucht ihre Kraft an stärkeres Gefühl, sie wagt sich plötzlich mitten in die schäumenden Fluthen zu stürzen, schmiegt sich durch alle Höhen und Tiefen, und rollt alle Gefühle mit muthigem Entzücken hinauf und hinab. – Doch wehe! sie dringt verwegen in wildere Labyrinth, sie sucht mit kühn-erzwungener Frechheit die Schrecken des Trübsinns, die bittern Quaaalen des Schmerzes auf, um den Durst ihrer Lebenskraft zu sättigen, und mit einem Trompetenstoße brechen alle furchtbaren Schrecken der Welt, alle die Kriegsschaaren des Unglücks von allen Seiten mächtig wie ein Wolkenbruch herein, und wälzen

54 Tieck, *Phantasus*, volume 1, 468–469. Over a century later, Theodor Adorno concedes the force of Tieck's bleak conclusion about the music of the period with the same mythical reference: 'Beethoven – his language, his substance and tonality in general, that is, the whole system of bourgeois music – is irrecoverably lost to us, and is perceived only as something vanishing from sight. As Eurydice was seen. *Everything* must be understood from that viewpoint'. Theodor Adorno, *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 6. Original italics.

55 For example, see Chua, *Absolute Music*, 71–72.



sich in verzerrten Gestalten fürchterlich, schauerlich wie ein lebendig gewordenes Gebirge über einander.

With easy, playful joy the resounding soul rises forth from its oracular cave . . . But soon the images around it acquire firmer contours; it tests its power with stronger emotion; it suddenly dares to plunge itself into the foaming floodwaters, moves lithely through all heights and depths, and rolls up and down all emotions with spirited delight. – But alas! It recklessly invades wilder labyrinths; with boldly forced impudence it seeks out the horrors of dejection, the torments of pain, in order to quench the thirst of its vitality; and with one burst of the trumpet, all frightful horrors of the world, all the armies of disaster violently break in from all sides like a cloudburst and roll over each other in distorted forms, frightfully, gruesomely, like a mountain come alive.⁵⁶

Jean Paul even claims that Haydn's 'annihilating humour' ('des vernichtenden Humors') – brought upon by the abrupt juxtaposition of key centres, dynamics and tempos in his symphonies – results in a disturbing 'psychic vertigo which suddenly transforms our own rapid motion into an external one affecting the whole steady world' ('gleichsam ein Seelen-Schwindel welcher unsere schnelle Bewegung plötzlich in die fremde der ganzen stehenden Welt umwandelt').⁵⁷ Though John Neubauer celebrates the turn of the nineteenth century as the moment of instrumental music's 'emancipation' from traditional mimetic aesthetics, the contributors to the elegiac strand of musical modernity recognized that this freedom came at a high cost.⁵⁸ Music's artifice evinced its modern estrangement from traditional social structures, and the virtuosic advancement of its own materials supplanted a simple style that was no longer sustainable.

Returning to Hoffmann, while 'Alte und neue Kirchenmusik' initially seems to condemn modern church music – squaring with Hoffmann's reputation for privileging instrumental music – the essay exposes a space for both genres in light of their modern complexities. Hoffmann uncovers a purpose for new church music when he discusses its deficiencies. In stark contrast to Palestrina's music, which had lucidly reinforced the harmonious social totality, modern church music exacerbates the discontinuities of modern life. Its chromatic figures were 'glued-on pieces of rustling tinsel' that 'mar the calm composure of the whole, smother the singing and, particularly in the high vault of a cathedral, only produce a confusing noise' ('die wie aufgeklebte, knisternde Goldflitter die Ruhe und Haltung des Ganzen stören, die den Gesang übertäuben, und vorzüglich in dem hohen, gewölbten Dom nur ein verwirrendes Geräusch machen').⁵⁹ Hoffmann takes Haydn's church music to be an exemplar of the genre's corrupted manner, as it incorporates mercurial shifts of affect that contaminate the church with images of the profane: 'This wonderful music is charged with the same constant alternation of gravity, awe, horror, jollity, and exuberance as that which mundane activity gives rise to, and it relates to the church only to the extent that pious reflections play a part in the affairs of everyday life.' ('Derselbe ewige Wechsel des Ernsten, Grauenhaften, Schrecklichen, Lustigen, Ausgelassenen, wie das irdische Sein ihn treibt, herrscht in jener wundervollen Musik, die auf die Kirche sich höchstens nur insofern bezieht, als auch fromme Betrachtungen in den Kreis des täglichen Lebens gezogen werden.') Church works are infected with 'the contagion of mundane, ostentatious levity' ('ansteckenden Seuche des weltlichen, prunkenden Leichtsinns') and, at worst, 'sound like dogs snapping beneath their master's table' ('wie jene sich unter dem Tisch des Herrn beißenden Hunde erscheinen').⁶⁰ In essence, new church music

56 Ludwig Tieck and Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, *Phantasien über die Kunst, für Freunde der Kunst* (Hamburg: F. Perthes, 1799), 200–201; translation adapted from Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, *Confessions and Fantasies*, trans. Mary Hurst Schubert (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971), 193.

57 Jean Paul Richter, *Horn of Oberon: Jean Paul Richter's School for Aesthetics*, trans. Margaret Hale (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973), 93–94; Jean Paul Richter, *Vorschule der Aesthetik*, two volumes, volume 1 (Vienna: Gräffer und Härter, 1815), 152.

58 John Neubauer, *The Emancipation of Music from Language: Departure from Mimesis in Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

59 Hoffmann, *E. T. A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings*, 373; Hoffmann, *Schriften zur Musik, Nachlese*, 232.

60 Hoffmann, *E. T. A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings*, 370–371; Hoffmann, *Schriften zur Musik, Nachlese*, 227–228.



was noisy: it undermined the church's metaphysical stature by reducing it to the realm of everyday life, laying bare the weakened state of enlightened religion.

Hoffmann's turn to instrumental music toward the end of the essay demonstrates modern music's dialectical nature. Just as modern religious music contaminated the sacred with the profane, modern instrumental music had achieved the reverse by disrupting the quotidian realm with spirit. To be sure, Hoffmann rehearses a romantic truism when he claims that music harboured spiritual content: 'By virtue of its essential character, therefore, music is a form of religious worship' ('Ihrem innern, eigentümlichen Wesen nach, ist daher die Musik . . . religiöser Kultus').⁶¹ Yet within an elegiac musical modernity, this claim highlights the perversion of music's split from the religion of antiquity. It was a testament to the unstable fracturing of modernity that music now offered a religious experience by itself, apart from the church. Hoffmann's underlying contention is that Beethoven's music corrupts the bourgeois venue, whether it be a concert hall or salon, by engulfing the listener in spiritual ecstasy. New instrumental music was actually subversive because a spiritual experience in the secular realm exposed the inadequacy of civic life divorced from religion.

Hoffmann sums up the situation with the claim that 'Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven have evolved a new art' ('Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven entfalteten eine neue Kunst').⁶² Here he prefigures Hegel's realization that the romantic art of modernity was functionally different from the classical art of Ancient Greece, particularly in light of his discussion of Palestrina. Following Dahlhaus, Berger flattens the historical distinction: 'But [for Hoffmann] Beethoven's symphony appears already to be the Palestrina mass for the times when Christianity no longer shines forth in all its glory, the new revelation of "the other world", the realm of the spirit.'⁶³ While Berger interprets Hoffmann's programme as celebrating music's spirit-revealing capacity in both Palestrina and Beethoven, Hoffmann himself argues something else. Mirroring Hegel's narrative of classical giving way to romantic art forms, he claims that Palestrina's music was a vehicle through which to embody and reinforce the pre-modern bond between spirit and nature. New music – either in the church or the concert hall – revealed that the bond was broken. It was an infestation of otherworldly content in the, to use Hegel's word, 'prosaic' modern world.

'Alte und neue Kirchenmusik' constitutes an elegiac reflection of musical modernity, claiming that modern music in all its genres called attention to the fault lines of modern society. Five years later in his *Die Serapions-Brüder*, and paralleling the style of Tieck's *Phantastus* of 1812, Hoffmann recast the essay as a dialogue, primarily between the two characters Theodore and Cyprian.⁶⁴ The former attempts to salvage contemporary music while the latter mourns the bygone age of Palestrina, highlighting the countervailing forces of the original essay and the grounding ambivalence of the elegiac musical discourse of modernity. Music stood at a crossroads, looking back to a harmonious past and forward to an uncertain future. Hoffmann's essay presents one possibility for music's new-found role: it was to reveal the rift between the secular and religious realms by exposing the religiosity of the former and the secularity of the latter. The spectacular quality of a Beethoven symphony came with the sabotaging quality of a Haydn mass. Music could no longer be glorious, only destabilizing.

61 Hoffmann, *E. T. A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings*, 355; Hoffmann, *Schriften zur Musik, Nachlese*, 212.

62 Hoffmann, *Schriften zur Musik, Nachlese*, 230.

63 Berger, *A Theory of Art*, 137. Dahlhaus similarly argues that the metaphysical essence of music had fled from religious works and then opera, only to empower the symphony in Beethoven's time. See Carl Dahlhaus, *Klassische und romantische Musikästhetik* (Laaber: Laaber, 1988), 111–121. The interpretation resurfaces in Garratt, *Palestrina and the German Romantic Imagination*, 54–55.

64 E. T. A. Hoffmann, *Die Serapions-Brüder: Gesammelte Erzählungen und Märchen*, four volumes, volume 2 (Berlin: Reimer, 1819), 359–385. For a discussion on the function of the 'Alte und neue Kirchenmusik' section within the book see chapter 4 of Hilda M. Brown, *E. T. A. Hoffmann and the Serapionic Principle* (Rochester: Camden House, 2006).



MODERN MUSICAL FORM

The 'new art' of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven adopted an unstable, mercurial, 'sentimental' style. In Hegel's words, it 'invites us to intellectual consideration'. Modern music required a modern appreciation, a thought that Hoffmann reflects on in a late article entitled 'Zufällige Gedanken beim Erscheinen dieser Blätter' (Casual Reflections on the Appearance of This Journal). Appealing directly to the composer, he defends the critic's job of dissecting and elucidating a work. The critic, Hoffmann claims, is an intermediary, a 'kindred spirit' between the composer and the listener, 'who is able, by means of a mysterious magic, to let the people see into the depths of the earth, as through crystal, so that they discover the seed, and realise that from this very seed the entire beautiful tree sprang'. ('Da kommt aber jener verwandte Geist gegangen und vermag mittelst eines geheimnisvollen Zaubers es zu bewirken, daß die Leute in die Tiefe der Erde wie durch Kristall schauen, den Kern entdecken und sich überzeugen können, daß eben aus diesem Kern der ganze schöne Baum entsproß.')65 Implicit in 'Alte und neue Kirchenmusik' is the assumption that the pre-modern music of Palestrina's day required no criticism or analysis to operate as effectively and simply as it did. Sentimental music, on the other hand, was quite different.

To a subscriber to the period's music journals, Hoffmann's proprietary 'mysterious magic' was not as esoteric as he suggests. Some of his contemporaries outlined theories about the structure of modern music that confronted fundamental difficulties broached by the discourse of musical modernity. They extended Schiller and Schlegel's conception of form to musical works, taking up the question of what exactly about a musical totality animated all of its fragments. The answer came on two levels: globally, critics idealized musical form as a variegated collection of fragments; locally, they catalogued structural components that seemed to bind the work from section to section.

While contending with the early German romantic model of sentimental unity, critics responded to prevailing conceptions of musical form. An important predecessor was the notion of the *Hauptsatz*, a deeply hierarchical model requiring that a work's introductory passage regulate the structural and expressive content of its remainder.⁶⁶ Critics most taken by sentimental unity challenged such a hierarchy, focusing instead on how sections began to exert their own independence and how they caused the splintering of the work. Michaelis writes, 'Form, however, relies on that array and position of parts small and large, how they correspond to each other, hoist and carry each other, as it were, place each other in light, shade and contrast, and work towards the principal impression that gives the totality its aesthetic character.' ('Die Form aber beruht auf derjenigen Anordnung und Stellung der Theile im Kleinen und Grossen, wodurch sie einander entsprechen, einander gleichsam heben und tragen, in Licht, Schatten und Contrast setzen, und auf den Haupteindruck hinwirken, der dem Ganzen seinen ästhetischen Charakter gibt.') While this embodies the Schlegelian ideal of a non-hierarchical group of fragments connected by some ethereal force, Michaelis soon betrays that the earlier models could not be shaken completely:

Wie sind die grössern und kleinern Theile der Musik geordnet und zum Ganzen verbunden, oder wie entwickelt sich Alles aus einander? Stehen die Theile im richtigen, natürlichen Verhältniss und im innigen Zusammenhange, so dass das Wesentliche klar und schön hervortritt? In welchem Verhältniss steht der Hauptgegenstand zum Nebenwerk, das Thema und der Hauptsatz zu den Neben- und Zwischensätzen? Ist jener durch gehäufte Zierrathen oder weite Abschweifungen verdunkelt? Sind die Episoden zu lang, die Contraste zu häufig und zu grell? Ist der Hauptgedanke

65 Hoffmann, E. T. A. *Hoffmann's Musical Writings*, 425–426; Hoffmann, *Schriften zur Musik, Nachlese*, 344. The article was originally published in *Allgemeine Zeitung für Musik und Musikliteratur* 1/2–3 (1820).

66 A seminal account of the *Hauptsatz* may be found in Johann Georg Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste*, four volumes, volume 2 (Leipzig: Weidmann, 1792), 488. On its broader influence see Mark Evan Bonds, *Wordless Rhetoric: Musical Form and the Metaphor of the Oration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 90–102. On period conceptualizations of musical form in compositional treatises see Scott Burnham, 'Form', in *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, ed. Thomas Christensen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 881–883.



ohne Weitschweifigkeit gehörig entwickelt, oder klar und bündig ausgeführt? Oder trifft man gar keinen Hauptgedanken an, indem Alles ohne Haltung bunt durch einander läuft?⁶⁷

How are the larger and smaller parts of music organized and related to the totality, or how does everything diverge? Do the parts stand in an appropriate, natural relationship and in intimate coherence so that the essentials emerge clearly and beautifully? In what relationship is the main subject matter with the supporting material, the theme and main section to the subsidiary and transitional sections? Is it clouded by heaps of embellishments or broad digressions? Are the episodes too long, the contrasts too frequent and garish? Is the main idea properly developed without being long-winded, or accomplished clearly and succinctly? Or does one not even find any main idea, with everything being scattered colourfully without control?

For Michaelis, each fragment – by virtue of being a fragment – has a unique profile: it might contribute to the main subject matter, serve as a transition or even explore other matters altogether different from the main subject matter. His concern about overly conspicuous episodes echoes Schiller, as such a section could infringe on the freedom of surrounding sections. Rather than embrace Jean Paul's 'annihilating humour', Michaelis retains the hierarchical 'Hauptsatz', 'Nebensatz' and 'Zwischensatz' concepts, even as he calls for each individual part to explore its own pursuits. The Schlegelian ideal was elusive.

Critics readily adopted the term 'character' to address sentimental unity in abstraction. As theorized by Christian Gottfried Körner, the recipient of Schiller's *Kallias-briefe*, it was a term that encompassed a work's multifaceted disposition.⁶⁸ In his essay 'Über Charakterdarstellung in der Musik' (On the Representation of Character in Music), Körner sought to defend music as a fine art in the wake of Kant's and Schiller's doubts.⁶⁹ He articulates how a modern musical work transcends a mere titillation of the senses by incorporating human freedom to form a coherent, self-sufficient whole. The work required a careful balance, though, threatening its aesthetic claim from two opposite extremes: if it was too simple, it became dull, and if it was too chaotic, it risked incoherence. A compelling work actually contained a flux of changing states, and Körner coins the concept of 'character' to suggest their overarching relation.⁷⁰ To say that a musical work had a character was to claim that the work cohered in spite its fragmented appearance.

Character was extraordinarily tricky to locate. Körner claims, 'Character cannot be perceived directly, either in the real world or in any work of art. Rather, we can only deduce it from that which is contained in the features of individual conditions. It must be asked then, whether, in the series of conditions that music represents, sufficient material is present to form a definite presentation of a character.' ('Was wir Charakter nennen, können wir überhaupt weder in der wirklichen Welt, noch in irgend einem Kunstwerke unmittelbar wahrnehmen, sondern nur aus demjenigen folgern, was in den Merkmalen einzelner Zustände enthalten ist. Es fragt sich also nur, ob auch in einer solchen Reihe von Zuständen, wie sie durch Musik dargestellt

67 Michaelis, *Ueber den Geist der Tonkunst und andere Schriften*, 278.

68 As Matthew Pritchard observes, the term 'character' travelled around quite a bit outside of musical discourse prior to Körner, such as in neoclassical writings on comedy and satire. See Matthew Pritchard, "'The Moral Background of the Work of Art': "Character" in German Musical Aesthetics, 1780–1850', *Eighteenth-Century Music* 9/1 (2012), 65–67.

69 See Robert Riggs's introduction to Christian Gottfried Körner, "'On the Representation of Character in Music": Christian Gottfried Körner's Aesthetics of Instrumental Music', trans. Robert Riggs, *The Musical Quarterly* 81/4 (1997), 601–602. In his third *Critique* Kant infamously deemed music 'more enjoyment than culture'. See §53 of Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 205–206. Schiller initially dismisses modern music as something that 'flatters the reigning taste that wants only to be pleasantly titillated, and not to be taken hold of, not to be powerfully moved, not to be ennobled' in Friedrich Schiller, 'On the Pathetic', trans. Daniel O. Dahlstrom, in *Essays*, ed. Hinderer and Dahlstrom, 48–49. He more or less restores its aesthetic power to that of poetry and sculpture a few years later in Friedrich Schiller, 'Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man', in *Essays*, 150.

70 For a restatement of this claim see G. von Weiler, 'Ueber den Begriff der Schönheit, als Grundlage einer Aesthetik der Tonkunst', *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 13/7 (1811), 121.



wird, Stoff genug vorhanden sei, um daraus die bestimmte Vorstellung eines Charakters zu bilden.’⁷¹ As Matthew Pritchard has argued, ‘character’ is thoroughly idealist, an abstract feature unable to be located in the specifics of musical material.⁷² Its conceptualization nonetheless affected how critics viewed the musical material. Character rested upon a compelling series of sections – each its own ‘individual condition’ – to create a totality and, through analysis, critics attempted to relate the local assemblage of disparate elements to a central idea. In 1799, in the inaugural volume of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, Friedrich Fleischmann extends character’s binding power to the most minor of musical features: ‘One should easily understand that not only must the key comply with the character of the movement, as well as the metre, the tempo, the rhythms, but also the form of the melody, and the embellishments of the principal voices.’ (‘Es ist sofort ohne Schwierigkeit einzusehen, dass sich nach dem Charakter des Satzes nicht nur die Tonart desselben, die Taktart, das Tempo, der Rhythmus, sondern auch die Formen der Melodien, so wie Coloraturen der Prinzipalstimmen richten müssen.’)⁷³ A work’s singular character regulated its form and content, and was incrementally disclosed through them.

To investigate a work’s sentimental unity on the local level, critics traced the main melodic idea and its subsequent variants, or what is now termed ‘motivic development’. The motive rescued the work from utter chaos, saturating it with character. Wendt proposes that a musical composition ‘should suggest a dominant idea and character during the temporal sequences of its development. This occurs, first, when these sequences develop one from another out of necessity rather than wilfulness, and second, when all the various sequences developed by the art work are governed by a *fundamental idea*.’ (‘in den Zeitreihen seiner Entwicklung auf einen herrschenden Gedanken und Charakter immer hindeute. Dieses geschieht erstens, wenn diese Reihen mit Nothwendigkeit, ohne Willkühr sich eine aus der andern entwickelt, zweytens, wenn alle verschiedene Reihen, in denen sich das Kunstwerk entwickelt, von einem *Grundgedanken* beherrscht werden.’)⁷⁴ This technique fortified the work with ‘comprehensible connectedness and coherence’ (‘überschauliche Verbindung und Zusammenhang’), while also supporting a variegated modern form.⁷⁵

The symphony once again exemplified the modern style by showcasing the binding power of motivic development. With the technique at hand, a composer could incorporate the genre’s dizzying array of musical features while maintaining a semblance of cohesion. According to Ernst Ludwig Gerber, the modern symphony owed its very success to the motive:

Meister in ihren Symphonien oft aus einer einzigen Phrase von zwey bis vier Takten, durch Zergliederung und Vertheilung unter die verschiedenen Instrumente, nach den Regeln der Harmonie und des Rhythmus, bey der höchsten Mannigfaltigkeit im Moduliren, zwey und mehr Seiten voll schreiben können; wie sie dadurch jene vortreffliche Einheit in ihren Kunstwerken erreichen, welch dem Ganzen, ungeachtet seiner vielfältigen Theile . . . das Ansehen eines Ey’s giebt, dessen unendliche, aber durchaus gleichartige Theile, ebenfalls ein unzertrennliches Ganzes bilden.

71 Körner, “On the Representation of Character in Music”, 621; Christian Gottfried Körner, *Ästhetische Ansichten: Ausgewählte Aufsätze*, ed. Joseph P. Bauke (Marbach: Schiller-Nationalmuseum, 1964), 41–42.

72 Matthew Pritchard, “The Moral Background of the Work of Art”, 67–70.

73 Friedrich Fleischmann, ‘Wie muss ein Tonstück beschaffen seyn, um gut genannt werden zu können? – Was ist erforderlich zu einem vollkommenen Komponisten?’, *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 1 (1799), 213. Friedrich Kanne states as much a few decades later in his extensive serialized essay on musical unity. See Kanne, ‘Der Zauber der Tonkunst: Einheit’, *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung, mit besonderer Rücksicht auf den österreichischen Kaiserstaat* 5 (1821), 569.

74 Adapted from Senner and Meredith, *The Critical Reception of Beethoven’s Compositions*, volume 2, 199; Wendt, ‘Gedanken über die neuere Tonkunst’, 385. Original italics.

75 Senner and Meredith, *The Critical Reception of Beethoven’s Compositions*, volume 2, 197. Wendt, ‘Gedanken über die neuere Tonkunst’, 382.



Masters in their symphonies are wholly able to fill page after page often from a single phrase of two to four measures, through dissection and distribution in various instruments, following the rules of harmony and rhythm and with the highest diversity of modulation. As a result, how they achieve that admirable unity in their masterworks, which the totality regardless of its diverse parts . . . gives the appearance of an egg whose infinite, but thoroughly similar parts, likewise form an inseparable totality.⁷⁶

The egg metaphor conveys the idealized fulfilment of sentimental unity: motives grouped fragments into a singular totality, as if each section grew or 'hatched' from an original entity. Gerber attributes the rise of the technique to Haydn, whose symphonic style marked a significant departure from prior times. As he notes, motivic development made possible the lengthening of the musical work, serving to break it away from outside influence and convincing the listener of its status as a self-contained system.

Motives nonetheless required careful use of repetition and alteration in order to maintain the balance between monotony and chaos. Michaelis states as much in an article on repetition and variation: 'Variation forestalls the monotony, the triviality, in short, that void through which a melody simply becomes worn out or a mere street tune.' ('Die Variation kommt der Einförmigkeit, der Trivialität, kurz derjenigen Leere zuvor, durch welche eine Melodie leicht, wie man sagt, abgedroschen, abgenutzt oder zum Gassenhauer wird.')⁷⁷ This idea was not entirely new, as earlier critics had already recognized the need for such musical invention.⁷⁸ What was new is the repudiation of strict hierarchy: a motive's development highlighted the independence of one section from another, with the motive itself disguised. Michaelis states, 'But if the basic theme, the main melody, appears clothed in a new manner, under a delicate transparent cloak, so to speak, thus the soul of the listener obtains pleasure, in that it can independently look through the veil, finding the known in the unknown, and can see it develop without effort' ('Erscheint aber das Grundthema, die Hauptmelodie, auf eine neue Art eingekleidet, gleichsam unter einer zarten durchsichtigen Hülle, so gewinnt die Seele des Zuhörers an Vergnügen, indem sie selbstthätig durch den Schleier hindurchblickt, das Bekannte in dem Unbekannten auffindet, und aus demselben ohne Anstrengung entwickelt'). He claims that the process 'attractively fus[es] the new with the old without creating a bizarre mixture of heterogeneous figures' ('das Neue mit dem Alten reizend verschmolzen zu treffen, ohnen dass jedoch hier eine abentheuerliche Vermischung heterogener Manieren Statt findet').⁷⁹ Here Michaelis echoes Körner's abstract conception of character by lifting the main theme up from the surface of the work – it animated the musical material and contributed to the work's sentimental unity, while also hovering over the work as a governing idea.

In their pursuit of sentimental unity, critics also scrutinized key relations. The period conception of 'modulation' was something more like our 'tonicization', as critics generally understood keys and modulations as local entities without any significant underlying prolongation.⁸⁰ While the pre-modern style supported the understated use of modulations and a limited range of keys, the modern style abandoned any regulation of key areas or modulations in a musical work. Friedrich Kanne finds key to be a principal constituent of unity, and while he cautions composers against modulating to close or distant keys with

76 Ernst Ludwig Gerber, 'Eine freundliche Vorstellung über gearbeitete Instrumentalmusik, besonders über Symphonien', *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 15 (1813), 457–458; translation adapted from James Webster, *Haydn's 'Farewell' Symphony and the Idea of Classical Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 180.

77 Adapted from Elaine Sisman, *Haydn and the Classical Variation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 236; Christian Friedrich Michaelis, 'Ueber die musikalische Wiederholung und Veränderung', *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 6 (1803), 200.

78 In his introduction Michaelis recalls Neefe's earlier criticism of musical repetition. See Christian Gottlob Neefe, 'Über die musikalische Wiederholung', *Deutsches Museum* 2 (1776), 745–751.

79 Adapted from Sisman, *Haydn and the Classical Variation*, 236; Michaelis, 'Ueber die musikalische Wiederholung und Veränderung', 200.

80 See Janna K. Saslaw, 'The Concept of *Ausweichung* in Music Theory, ca. 1770–1832', *Current Musicology* 75 (2003), 145–163.



‘destructive caprice’ (‘mit zerstörender Willkühr’), he does not exclude any relations in his discussion of unity. He claims, ‘yet unity does not preclude variety; in fact it precisely requires that for its triumph’ (‘aber Einheit schliesst nicht Mannigfaltigkeit aus, sondern fordert sie gerade zu ihrem Triumphe’).⁸¹ A composer arranged a work’s succession of keys so that each belonged freely, without recourse to rule, while simultaneously supporting the character of the whole.

As critics repudiated a priori key restrictions, they investigated how key relations could be compellingly presented. Kanne contends that the burden fell on modulatory passages to tie a work together: ‘The transition or the connection between two remote keys is now of equally great importance for the unity of music . . . because the relation of beauty and the interesting relationship in which the two keys stand – which is immediately obvious to the eye – is not to be biased beforehand by means of false views or improper principles.’ (‘Der Übergang oder die Verbindung der zwey entfernten Tonarten ist nun von eben so grosser Wichtigkeit für die Einheit der Musik . . . weil das Verhältniss der Schönheit und der interessanten Beziehung, in welcher zwey Tonarten stehen, dem sehr schnell in die Augen springt, der durch falsche Ansichten oder unrichtige Grundsätze nicht vorher befangen ist.’)⁸² Kanne also asserts that the composer should connect two sections with care to effect a compelling arrangement.⁸³ Even the commonplace modulation from tonic to dominant required a masterly transition. Modern music no longer supported the convention of the dominant as a normative key area, and so only the work itself could authorize the dominant as well as its preparatory modulation. Hoffmann implies this when he states, ‘It is as though a hidden, sympathetic bond often connected the most remotely separated keys, and as though under certain circumstances an insuperable idiosyncrasy separated even the most closely related keys. The most common and most frequent modulation of all, that from the tonic to the dominant, or vice versa, can seem at times unexpected and unusual, even unpleasant and unbearable.’ (‘Es ist, als ob ein geheimes, sympathisches Band oft manche entfernt liegende Tonarten verbände und ob unter gewissen Umständen eine unbezwingbare Idiosynkrasie selbst die nächstverwandten Tonarten trenne. Die gewöhnlichste, häufigste Modulation, nämlich aus der Tonika in die Dominante und umgekehrt, erscheint zuweilen unerwartet und fremdartig, oft dagegen widrig und unausstehlich.’)⁸⁴ Key areas essentially became fragments, whose juxtapositions were regulated not by rule but rather by the work itself.

HOFFMANN’S SENTIMENTAL BEETHOVEN

Hoffmann’s review of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony is undeniably the most famous text of early German musical romanticism.⁸⁵ Alongside ‘Alte und neue Kirchenmusik’, Hoffmann’s introductory praise for the

81 Kanne, ‘Der Zauber der Tonkunst: Einheit’, 570.

82 Kanne, ‘Der Zauber der Tonkunst: Einheit’, 577. Gottfried Wilhelm Fink seems to have followed Kanne’s criteria in his critiques of Schubert’s modulations a few years later. See Suzannah Clark, *Analyzing Schubert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 67.

83 Kanne, ‘Der Zauber der Tonkunst: Einheit’, 570.

84 Hoffmann, *E. T. A. Hoffmann’s Musical Writings*, 158; Hoffmann, *E. T. A. Hoffmanns musikalische Schriften*, ed. Istel, 145.

85 Commentaries on the review are legion. For a discussion of its relation to nineteenth-century analytical traditions see Ian Bent, ed., *Music Analysis in the Nineteenth Century*, two volumes, volume 2: *Hermeneutic Approaches* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 141–144, and Ian Bent, ‘Plato – Beethoven: A Hermeneutics for Nineteenth-Century Music?’, *Indiana Theory Review* 16 (1995), 1–33. For a consideration of it alongside A. B. Marx’s and Berlioz’s reviews of the symphony see chapter 5 of Robin Wallace, *Beethoven’s Critics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). For its relation to German idealist philosophy see chapter 3 of Mark Evan Bonds, *Music as Thought: Listening to the Symphony in the Age of Beethoven* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006). For a general discussion of Hoffmann as a reviewer of Beethoven’s works in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* see Peter Schnaus, *E. T. A. Hoffmann als Beethoven-Rezensent der Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (Munich: Katzbichler, 1977). Hoffmann also reuses parts of the review with parts from his later review of Beethoven’s Op. 70 piano trios in the *Kreisleriana* section entitled



instrumental music of Haydn, Mozart and especially Beethoven constitutes a significant part of the project to secure the meaning of modern music. Yet the majority of the review presents a detailed analysis of the symphony, where Hoffmann grounds the work's ethereal 'purple shimmer of romanticism' in concrete terms.⁸⁶ According to Holly Watkins, Hoffmann developed a metaphor of 'musical depth' to aid his analytical endeavour, which 'preserves the impenetrable mystery of the genius's creations while simultaneously attesting to their rational construction, however disjunct they may appear on the surface'.⁸⁷ Beethoven's work was seemingly opaque yet held an underlying logic, that Schlegelian spiritual central point which required elucidation. To plumb the work's 'depths', Hoffmann utilized an analytical toolkit supplied by his critic-colleagues.

Hoffmann's agenda was to demonstrate sentimental unity, as illustrated by the first few paragraphs of his discussion of the opening movement. He first notes the obvious: the work begins with the 'Hauptgedanke', a motive 'which subsequently appears again and again in a variety of forms' ('in der Folge, mannigfach gestaltet, immer wieder durchblickt'). Much like Michaelis, Hoffmann cannot shake the hierarchical model of the *Hauptsatz* or the motivic development that it precipitates. He includes a musical example of the first group through to the grand pause at bar 21, boldly claiming that this passage 'determines the character of the whole piece' ('entscheidet den Charakter des ganzen Stücks'), essentially calling it the *Hauptsatz*.⁸⁸ Following a fermata there is a new fragment – the beginning of the transition – which incorporates the main motive. The second theme enters which, while uniquely lyrical, maintains the work's character. Hoffmann dutifully traces the main motive as he divides the exposition into discrete parts, determining each of their functions within the totality.

Hoffmann considers the remainder of the movement bit by bit as well, referring to each section's key areas and motivic content. In line with Fleischmann and Gerber, he concludes that the motive exhibits a formidable binding power:

Es gibt keinen einfacheren Gedanken, als den, welchen der Meister dem ganzen Allegro zum Grunde legte und mit Bewunderung wird man gewahr, wie er alle Nebengedanken, alle Zwischensätze, durch rhythmischen Verhalt jenem einfachen Thema so anzureihen wusste, dass sie nur dazu dienten, den Charakter des Ganzen, den jenes Thema nur andeuten konnte, immer mehr und mehr zu entfalten.

There is no simpler idea than that on which Beethoven has based his entire Allegro, and with admiration one becomes aware of how he was able to relate all the secondary ideas and episodes through the rhythmic content of this simple theme, so that they only serve to reveal facets of the character of the totality ever gradually, which the theme itself could only suggest.⁸⁹

Yet here Hoffmann tempers his grand claim about the regulative capacity of the opening bars. While the first group of the exposition determined the character of the whole, it could not dictate how the character was to be revealed – it could not undercut the freedom of the other sections. Each fragment made an individual contribution to the character, collectively forming the whole.

'Beethovens Instrumental-musik' from his first book, *Fantasiestücke in Callot's Manier* (Bamberg: C. F. Kunz, 1819). See Hoffmann, *E. T. A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings*, 23–25.

86 Dahlhaus describes the review both as the founding document of musical romanticism and as a watershed moment in the history of music analysis. See Carl Dahlhaus, *Die Musiktheorie im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Ruth E. Müller, two volumes, volume 2 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1989), 227–231.

87 Holly Watkins, *Metaphors of Depth in German Musical Thought: From E. T. A. Hoffmann to Arnold Schoenberg* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 44.

88 Hoffmann, *E. T. A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings*, 239; Hoffmann, *Schriften zur Musik, Nachlese*, 37.

89 Hoffmann, *Schriften zur Musik, Nachlese*, 43; translation adapted from Hoffmann, *E. T. A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings*, 244.



While Hoffmann takes significant pains to show that the work has a singular character, he nevertheless attempts to give each section some leeway. The finale offers an illuminating example: the joyful second theme at bar 44 initially strikes him as foreign. Robin Wallace notes that Hoffmann brought attention to this moment to appreciate the movement's impetuosity.⁹⁰ But Hoffmann also sees this as a knot to be untied, subsequently recognizing that this curious theme gets significantly worked out in the development, complete with new harmonic and contrapuntal features. Its relation to the whole is incrementally revealed, offering some retroactive context for its earlier foreignness: 'the character already apparent in its original guise fully emerges' ('der Charakter, der sich schon in seiner ursprünglichen Gestalt aussprach, ganz entwickelt').⁹¹ Skirting this difficulty, he asserts that the work as a whole maintained a unity of one feeling, evinced by its motivic content and orchestration.⁹²

Perhaps Hoffmann realized that he was papering over the cracks of the finale, and so at the close he claims that the work has a 'deeper relationship' ('tiefere Verwandtschaft') that analysis cannot account for, one that 'often speaks only from heart to heart' ('spricht oft nur aus dem Geiste zum Geiste').⁹³ His pursuit of sentimental unity finishes with the realization that the work's unity cannot be fully explicated. No matter how much analysis can be done – how many keys, modulations, motives and orchestral effects elucidate the totality of the tortuous symphonic world – some aspect of the work's logic remains beyond the listener's comprehension.

Here Hoffmann inserts a sentimental gap between analysis and the critic, revealing analysis itself to be a fragmentary pursuit and throwing into question the efficacy of the critic's 'mysterious magic'. While the contributors to the elegiac discourse of musical modernity sought to ground music in the unstable present through criticism, they could not wholly endorse a critical method. A bleak conclusion emerges from Hoffmann's review, particularly once taken with the arguments established in 'Alte und neue Kirchenmusik'. Despite even the best criticism, the 'new art' of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven would remain elusive and ambiguous. While Beethoven's music demanded criticism to elucidate its inner structure, it also served to disrupt modern life in a fit of ineffable, otherworldly force. Such ambitions were gloriously foreign to Palestrina.

⁹⁰ Wallace, *Beethoven's Critics*, 140.

⁹¹ Hoffmann, E. T. A. *Hoffmann's Musical Writings*, 249; Hoffmann, *Schriften zur Musik, Nachlese*, 48.

⁹² On the political context of Hoffmann's interpretation see Rumph, 'A Kingdom Not of This World', 61–65.

⁹³ Hoffmann, *Schriften zur Musik, Nachlese*, 51.