

THE CHAMBER EROICA



Symphony No. 3 in E flat major, Op. 55

version for piano quartet (1807)

Aaron Shorr (piano), Peter Sheppard Skærved (violin),
Dov Scheindlin (viola), Neil Heyde (cello)

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827):**Symphony No. 3 ("Eroica") in E flat major, Op 55 (1803)****Version for piano quartet, published Vienna, 1807**

1	I	<i>Allegro con brio</i>	18:18
2	II	Marcia Funebre: <i>Adagio assai</i>	13:22
3	III	Scherzo: <i>Allegro vivace</i>	6:13
4	IV	<i>Allegro molto</i>	11:08

total CD duration **49:01**

Peter Sheppard Skærved

violin

Dov Scheindlin

viola

Neil Heyde

cello

Aaron Shorr

piano



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On the piano Quartet version of the Eroica Symphony – a player's perspective

Playing music written in the 'pre-recording age', I try to remember that, the predominant experience of orchestral and operatic music was in arrangement. Even with regular concert-going, people only had limited opportunities to hear any work. At the beginning of the 1800s, there was an enormous market of arrangements for home use, ranging from solo-violin transcriptions of melodies from operas, through works for chamber ensemble, 'enlargements' of piano works, re-instrumentations of other works, and reductions of orchestral pieces. An important 'point of sale' for much of this type of chamber music, was that it should function in a number of configurations. Duo transcriptions of opera arias were written so that they could be played by flutes or violins, and transcriptions involving piano usually functioned acceptably with all the 'accompanying' melody instruments missed out. It was in these versions that most people learnt the popular repertoire, playing or listening in the home or salon.

It would be three decades into the 1800s before 'full scores' of orchestral pieces became available for study; Robert Schumann, writing in his 1841 'Marriage Diary' with his new wife, Clara, spoke of his wish for a library of these for the two of them to work at together, playing the orchestra scores at the piano. This, of course, was not a skill possessed by many amateurs!

Then there was the question of ownership, of profit. Joseph Haydn allowed promoters such as Johann Peter Salomon to release versions of his orchestral works, but composers from Beethoven onwards, were increasingly concerned to control, and profit from, the market for amateur musicians. With the collapse of patronage (for all but a small number of artists) at the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1814-15, this need for composers to control and profit from their market at all levels became more marked. By 1816, when Beethoven's 7th *Symphony* first appeared in print, his orchestral works would be published simultaneously in seven formats: full-score, orchestral parts, nine-part wind ensemble ('Harmonie'), String Quintet, Piano Trio, Piano Duo and Solo Piano.

Back in 1804, the year that the 3rd *Symphony* was premiered, this market was undeveloped. Beethoven himself did not yet command such respect as a composer to justify such an endeavour. One might argue that by the time the 1816 Steiner & Co imprint appeared, the strategy which Beethoven (and his brother Carl) had put in place over a decade earlier, to gain control of all aspects of the publication of the music, finally paid off. Larger circumstances also contributed to the success of this strategy. The Congress of

Vienna (1814-15) which brought the war to a close, also had the unintended side-effect of establishing Beethoven as 'composer in residence' to a new idea of Europe, a position which remains unchallenged.

The first published version of *Eroica*, a set of orchestral parts, did not appear until autumn 1806, two years after the premiere (Beethoven was frustrated at the delay in the publication of his work). An announcement of this first publication appeared in the *Wiener Zeitung* on the 19th October that year. The publisher, 'Wien, Kunst- und Industriekontor', was not the first choice for the composer and his circle, who had orchestrated a series of letters to major publishers in Vienna and Bonn (whilst Beethoven was still completing the work) talking up the work, negotiating good prices for their new product.

In October 1803, Beethoven's student, composer/pianist Ferdinand Ries, later such an important ambassador for his work in London, wrote to Nikolaus Simrock in Bonn:

"He wants to sell you the Symphony for 100 Gulden. In his own opinion it is the greatest work that he has yet written. Beethoven played it for me recently, and I believe that heaven and earth will tremble when it is performed." (Vienna; October 22, 1803)ⁱ

Ries referred to a private performance which Beethoven gave for him, at Döblinger Hauptstraße 92, 'on the *left hand side* of the street going down the hill towards Heiligenstadt.'ⁱⁱ This was given on the Stein fortepiano which Beethoven had asked Ries to arrange to be sent to his lodgings. This is the first account that we have of any performance of 'Eroica', and it was given in a chamber setting. .

Beethoven's brother, Carl, engaged his habitually fractious negotiating style with Breitkopf & Härtel (Vienna). On the 23rd November 1803, he wrote:

"At this time I cannot accept your recent offer of 500 florins. I am sorry about this, but you may also regret it in the future, because these symphonies are either the worst my brother has written or the best."ⁱⁱⁱ

ⁱ Letters to Beethoven, Volume 1, pp.119-120

ⁱⁱ Letter to Ries, Oberdoebling Summer (1803)

ⁱⁱⁱ Letters to Beethoven Volume 1. P123 :. Carl von Beethoven to Breitkopf und Haertel, Leipzig. (Vienna; November 23, 1803)

Carl had the knack of communicating precisely why Beethoven's difficult and new music was something that a publisher should take a risk on; "either the worst my brother has written or the best" engages head-on with the criticism of Beethoven which had swirled around his work since the negative response to the publication of the *Sonatas Op 12* for piano with violin in 1799. In the year that the symphony was finally published (1806), the *Wiener Journal für Theater, Musik und Mode* summed up these concerns:

"Because of an obvious desire to be completely novel, B. is not infrequently incomprehensible, disconnected and obscure, and much of his work is extremely difficult without compensating with distinguished beauty."^{iv}

But Beethoven and his circle were strategically working to familiarise audiences, music lovers and amateurs, with Beethoven's innovations, to make them quotidian, so that hearing the music in the concert hall would not be a shock. It was clear that arrangements played a vital role in this. Up till this point, arrangement had tended in three directions; pure keyboard arrangement (two or four hands), flute duo (the most popular form for appreciating, and learning, opera arias at the turn of the 1700-1800s) and string quintet. These models were clearly in Ludwig and Carl Beethoven's' minds, as they pressed ahead with their fruitless negotiations with Breitkopf & Härtel, from October 1803 to June 1805. An 1804 letter from the composer himself made this clear (alongside a blatant attempt to manipulate the publishers). He refers to the 3rd Symphony along with a number of other works. Beethoven noted:

"Should you like to have one of these with an accompaniment, I would also agree to arrange this too – well if you would like to have these works, then you must be so kind as to let me know exactly how much time it will take you to publish them." (Vienna, August 26 1804)^v

The 'accompaniment' to which he is referring, is that of string instruments accompanying the piano, the model offered by all of his sonatas 'for piano with violin accompaniment'. Later in the same letter, Beethoven observed that public interest in his symphony would be such ("I think that it will interest the musical public") that, "I should like you to publish the symphony *in score* instead of engraving the parts."

^{iv} Senner/Wallace Volume 1 p.138- *Wiener Journal für Theater, Musik und Mode* I (Vienna 1806): 53-4

^v Emily Anderson-Letters of Beethoven Volume One. P116

In February 1805, he had insisted that versions of the Symphony arranged for both piano and for string quintet should be published along with the orchestral version. It would be a decade before Beethoven could command such a 'splash' with a first edition.^{vi}

For all his bluster, Beethoven saw the future, not long off, when miniature scores would be published, not for performance, but for appreciation. This was actually pioneered not in Vienna, but London. There, in 1809, 'Cianchettini & Sperati' published 'A compleat collection of HAYDN, MOZART-and BEETHOVEN's Symphonies, IN SCORE', including Beethoven's first three symphonies. There would be no equivalent in German-speaking Europe, until the publication of the score of *Eroica* in Bonn, by Simrock in 1822. This publisher had rejected Ries's overtures concerning the new piece nineteen years earlier.^{vii} Although the orchestral set of parts for the Symphony was published by the 'Kunst- und Industriekontor' in October 1806, it was not reviewed in the press until February the following year. This set of parts was, disastrous, full of mistakes; both errors and omissions. These, unsurprisingly found their way into the London Cianchettini & Sperati 'full score' in 1809, then back into the 1822 Bonn Simrock score.

However in April 1807, the *Wiener Zeitung* also announced the first arrangement of *Eroica* for chamber ensemble, but not for string quintet, but piano quartet, a 'Grand Quartetto... arrangé d'après la Sinfonie héroïque'. This pioneering transcription should not be confused with the late transcription by Beethoven's pupil Ferdinand Ries (published by Simrock in 1857). It is, however, clear from Ries's score, that he was familiar with this version, and may have had access to the set of parts.

This was not the first of Beethoven's orchestral works to appear in a version for piano with strings. In 1805, the same house had published the composer's own arrangement of the *2nd Symphony*, for piano trio. Prior to that, a number of chamber and piano works, had appeared in other chamber configurations, most notably, the reworking of the *Serenade*, *Op. 8* (String Trio) as a *Notturmo* for viola and piano. In 1803 Carl von Beethoven had written to Breitkopf & Härtel, noting that one: "...Herr [Franz Xavier] Kleinheinz, under my brother's direction, has arranged several of his piano works for quartet, and some instrumental works for piano, with accompanying instruments."^{viii} Beethoven himself had also reconfigured the *Piano Sonata*, *Op. 14* for string quartet in 1801-2.

^{vi} Karl Beethoven-Letter fo B & H 18 April 1805

^{vii} Kinsky-Halm Pp129-131

^{viii} Letters to Beethoven Volume 1. P102 Carl von Beethoven to Breitkopf und Haertel, Leipzig. (Vienna; May 21 1803

The first notable transcriptions of orchestral works for chamber ensemble using piano were those pioneered by the composer/violinist/impresario Johan Peter Salomon, born, like Beethoven, in Bonn. In 1795, Salomon published transcriptions of the Haydn 'London' symphonies (which he had commissioned), initially for piano with accompanying violin and cello, that is for 'piano trio', although the use of that descriptor was some way in the future. The function of the strings in these versions approximated to the technique Haydn and Beethoven later used, making folksong transcriptions for the Scottish publisher, George Thomson. These parts could be removed: all the indispensable material is in the piano. By 1798, Salomon was using a different ensemble of string quartet, flute and accompanying piano. In the 1820's the virtuoso pianist/composer Johann Nepomuk Hummel arranged eight Beethoven symphonies (as well as numerous other works) for four instruments: violin, cello, flute and piano. These versions, whilst very accomplished, are primarily written to showcase the impressive keyboard writing, although the melody instrument parts are not dispensable.

This transcription of *Eroica* is completely different from all the models cited above. It is a piece of piano chamber music like nothing written before, anticipating, to my ears, the new worlds of the Schumann and Franck Quintets, still decades away. In none of the earlier cases mentioned, had such gigantic work, both in sound and scale, been attempted so dramatically reduced. In 1829 in the *Allgemeiner Musikalischer Anzeiger* (Vienna) acknowledged the risk that had been taken, as being like:

"The copy of a giant tableau; a colossal statue on a reduced scale; Caesar's portrait shrunk by the pantograph; an antique bust of Carraran marble made over as a plaster cast."^{ix}

I will return to this article later, discussing whether or not the re-working was successful.

There is no evidence as to who carried out the transcription. It certainly bears none of the fingerprints of Franz Xaver Kleinheinz. His work is invariably respectful, and careful, but takes no risks. It does not resemble any of Beethoven's work to date either. His own 1805 reworking of the 2nd *Symphony* reveals chamber qualities at the heart of the original work, particularly his debt to Haydn's piano trios.

This version of *Eroica*, made less than two years after the transcription of the 2nd *Symphony* does nothing of the sort. No attempt is made to 'fit' the piece into a smaller

^{ix} 12.[?] AllgemeinerMusikalischer Anzeiger (Vienna) 1 (1829): 199

frame, even to a smaller room! From the very first moments playing, it challenges musicians to take on the massive, monumental heft of the original, and reproduce them, with just four players. The effect is impressive, but not only achieved through power, (whilst it is an important element). It is necessary to look back some of the recent heritage of this combination, the piano quartet, to see where its success might be 'grounded'.

I am convinced, that the musician responsible for this arrangement, was well-acquainted with both Mozart (K.478 & K.493) and Beethoven's (Op 16) published piano quartets. In addition, the dimorphic manifestation of Beethoven's *Quartet/Quintet* Op16 can be seen as part of this knot of influences. Beethoven wrote this work as both a quintet with wind and as a conventional piano quartet with three strings (He had already written three remarkable works for this combination, as a 14-year old). The piano part in each case is the same, but the melody instruments find different ways around similar material. Mozart's 1784 *Quintet K452* (Piano and wind) also appeared as a piano quartet with strings, revealing a similar process; it is now generally accepted that Mozart himself had a hand in this version. Mozart's two original 'piano quartets', in G minor and E flat Major, were written in 1785. Looking these four works together, it is clear that they share a number of elements, notably 'quasi-orchestral' weight and virtuosic demands. Mozart's commissioning publisher, Hoffmeister, released him from the contract for these works, realising that this music was beyond his target amateur market. Notably, all but one of these widely-played pieces are in E flat Major. This was surely a factor when the decision was made to transcribe 'Eroica' for this combination. The result is remarkable.

The first review of this piano quartet transcription version (1808) talked about the challenge of reproducing the striking wind-strings contrast of the original symphony (see below). The mystery arranger was emboldened to take some risks to ensure this was the case. This points to a musician closely involved in the early performances.

The first edition of this arrangement was brought out by the same publishing house as the original material, within weeks. This raises the possibility that, if it was not made by Beethoven himself, then it had to be made by a musician close to him, and to the material. There is one question which is beyond doubt. The transcriber was in the presence of the score. This, as I noted earlier, had not been published, and the mistakes in the first set of parts suggests that the publishers did not have it either. There are no such mistakes in the parts of this arrangement, which also included no score (the piano part, as was normal until well into the century, is just that, a part). This is the only set of the parts published at the

time which does not require 'fixing' in order to make it work. I infer from that that whoever

made it, either had the original score (or a very good copy), knew the piece intimately, or actually was the composer, who for some reason, chose to remain anonymous. This can only be speculation.

The boldness of this version is nowhere better revealed than in the 'trio' section of the *Scherzo*. Beethoven was proud with his use of three horns as an attention-grabbing stunt; this 'trio' is, famously, their concertante moment. The arranger took the opportunity to give this to the three string players, in a wonderful bit of close-harmony, every bit as 'ear-grabbing' an effect as the horns. Striking originality pervades the arrangement. By way of example, the blistering orchestral unison which begins the last movement might have been expected to be given to the whole group. Instead, the viola steps to the fore, and blazes away with the piano. This sets up the possibility for the attention to remain at the middle of the ensemble. The viola is centre stage for the first two variations.

The success of this arrangement was immediately noticed in the press. In February 1808 the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* reported:

"This well-known work, extensively evaluated earlier in these pages, is arranged here with diligence. Even in this form it has as much and as good an effect as is possible for pieces that depend so much on the unique effect of all the instruments, particularly that of the wind instruments in opposition to the strings. All four players must be rather accomplished in order to perform this quartet properly."^x

We should pay careful attention to this last line. An early complaint about Beethoven's published piano chamber music was, as I noted earlier, that it was too complex for the amateurs who were its primary market. All four parts this arrangement demand concerto-like virtuosity (the viola part goes higher than any of the chamber music which Beethoven had written up to this point). This is the inevitable result of the freewheeling redistribution of wind parts; for instance the violin often plays what was originally virtuosic flute writing, at pitch. Much of the effectiveness of the work is the result of juggling the instrumental hierarchy; instruments leap over each other as they chase to keep up with the missing orchestra. This results in a sonic profile that pulses with energy. This not, by any stretch of the imagination, music for a gentle evening's reading by amateurs. The *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* review suggested that Beethoven's music was becoming regarded as

^x Senner/Wallace Volume 2 p.37 Brief Notice. *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* 10 (10 Feb 1808): 320

something to be reached for. The very difficulty which just a few years earlier might have occasioned complaint, occasioned the critic's observation that 'accomplishment' was necessary to perform the work 'properly'. The awe-inspiring challenge of Beethoven's music, for listener and player, had, in a few short years, come to be seen as its very virtue. In 1809, the composer Carl Maria Von Weber, later a great admirer of Beethoven's music, (he conducted a production of *Fidelio* in 1814) wrote *Fragment of a Musical Journey which will perhaps take place*. This satirical and highly critical view of *Eroica* summed up the initial resistance to the physical brand of virtuosity which Beethoven was demanding of his initially reluctant musicians and instruments:

"All of a sudden the property man entered the hall, and all the instruments separated in fear, for they knew the rough hand that packed them up and took them to the rehearsals. 'Wait!' he shouted, 'Are you rebelling again? Just wait, Pretty soon there are going to set out the *Eroica* Symphony by Beethoven, and after that I'd like to see which one of you can move a limb or key!" "Oh, no! Not that!" begged the instruments.^{xi}

In 1829, the 1807 arrangement was reprinted in Vienna by Tobias Haslinger, occasioning the review partially quoted earlier. Here is the rest:

"One is readily satisfied, however, with a half-accurate silhouette when one cannot have the original. Then fantasy begins its sweet play. And all the world certainly knows the beneficial effects of the powers of imagination and recollection."^{xii}

It had taken two decades, but Beethoven had changed the musical landscape. This arrangement, whoever made it, marks an important stage in that success.

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^{xi} Beethoven as I knew Him, Anton Felix Schindler, 1860 Dover New York 1996 p.482,

^{xii} Senner/Wallace Volume 3 p. 41 12.[?] AllgemeinerMusikalischer Anzeiger (Vienna) I (1829): 199

The musicians

Peter Sheppard Skærved is the only violinist to have performed on the violins of Viotti, Paganini, Joachim, Kreisler and Ole Bull. He is the dedicatee of over 400 works for violin, by composers including Hans Werner Henze, Poul Ruders, David Matthews, Judith Weir and Jörg Widmann.

He has made over 60 critically acclaimed recordings for Metier, Naxos, Toccata, Chandos, NMC and others. This includes cycles of sonatas by Tartini and Beethoven, Quartets by Reicha and Tippett, and many of the works written for him. This has resulted in a Grammy nomination and awards from the BBC Music Magazine. Upcoming releases include a two-disc set of all 24 Telemann Fantasies, on a 1570 Amati in original condition for Athene, his second volume of Henze Concerti for Naxos and the fourth disc of his David Matthews cycle for Toccata Classics.

Peter is the only musician to have been invited to curate an exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery, London, and has made and performance projects for the Library of Congress, Washington DC, the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, London and galleries worldwide. He has just returned from a week long residency at Connect Festival, in Malmo, Sweden, and In the near future, he will be playing all 30 Tartini solo sonatas in residencies in Brussels, Tallinn and Bergen, and complete a residency as performer and painter, and the Dover Museum.

As a writer, he has written on subjects ranging from Victoria painters and violin-making to contemporary quartet writing and Paganini. He is married to the Danish writer and poet, Malene Skaerved, and is the Viotti Lecturer at the Royal Academy of Music, London, where he was elected Fellow last year. For recordings, films, writing and more info, go to www.peter-sheppard-skaerved.com

Acclaimed by the New York Times as an "extraordinary violist" of "immense flair," **Dov Scheindlin** has been violist of the Arditti, Penderecki and Chester String Quartets. His chamber music career has brought him to 28 countries around the globe, and won him the Siemens Prize in 1999.

He has appeared as soloist with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam, the Radio Symphony Orchestra of Berlin, the Paris Radio Philharmonic Orchestra and the Munich Philharmonic. Mr. Scheindlin has recorded extensively for EMI, Teldec, Auvidis, Col Legno, and Mode, and won the Gramophone Award in 2002 for the Arditti Quartet's

recording of Sir Harrison Birtwistle's *Pulse Shadows*. As a member of the Arditti Quartet, he gave nearly 100 world premières, among them new works by Benjamin Britten, Elliott Carter, György Kurtág, Thomas Adès, and Wolfgang Rihm. He has also been broadcast on NPR, BBC, CBC, and on German, French, Swiss, Austrian, Dutch and Belgian national radio networks.

Dov was raised in New York City, where he studied with Samuel Rhodes and William Lincer at the Juilliard School. He has taught viola and chamber music at Harvard, Wilfrid Laurier University and Tanglewood. He has regularly participated in summer festivals such as Salzburg, Luzern, and Tanglewood, and has performed with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and the Met Chamber Ensembles. His chamber music partners have included members of the Juilliard, Alban Berg, Tokyo, and Borodin String Quartets, as well as concertmasters of many major symphony orchestras.

Dov Scheindlin currently lives in New York. He is a member of the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and an associate member of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. He plays a viola by Francesco Bissolotti of Cremona, made in 1975.

As a soloist and chamber musician **Neil Heyde** has appeared throughout Europe, and in the USA and Australia, broadcasting for the BBC, WDR, ORF, Radio France, RAI, NRK, DR, Netherlands Radio and many other networks. Since the mid 90s he has been the cellist of the Kreutzer Quartet and he currently heads the postgraduate programmes at the Royal Academy of Music, where his work focuses on the relationships between performers and composers past and present. He has commissioned and premiered many solo and chamber pieces and has edited Faber's series of 19th century music for stringed instruments and piano, and prepared an analytical study of Debussy's sonatas. A DVD film and documentary of his work on Brian Ferneyhough's extraordinary *Time and Motion Study II* for solo cello and electronics is now available on YouTube.

New music is central to his work, and while he has commissioned and premiered many solo and chamber pieces, he is also dedicated to performing and recording neglected areas of the repertoire. Recording projects for Metier with the Kreutzer Quartet include the quartets of Michael Finnissy and Roberto Gerhard – both premiere recordings – as well as the acclaimed DVD 'Quartet Choreography'. He has enjoyed a leading role in recordings of new music by many composers including David Gorton (MSVCD92104 and MSV28550).

Aaron Shorr settled in the United Kingdom in 1984, and has since established an international career as soloist, chamber musician and teacher. As well as appearing as soloist at London's South Bank in over thirty concertos, he has toured extensively as a recitalist and chamber musician worldwide.

Aaron has recorded for Guild, Naxos, Metier, Olympia, NMC and Meridian. His recordings of Beethoven with duo partner, Peter Sheppard Skærved, have won universal acclaim. He has also enjoyed close associations with composers and has given countless premieres and performances of works, including those by Hans Werner Henze, John McCabe, George Rochberg, Sadie Harrison, David Matthews, Paul Moravec, Elliott Schwartz, Jorg Widmann, Michael Alec Rose, Jeremy Dale Roberts, Judith Bingham, Rory Boyle, Marek Pasieczny, and Sidika Ozdil. Aaron is currently Head of Keyboard at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

This recording was made at St. John's, Smith Square, London in 2003

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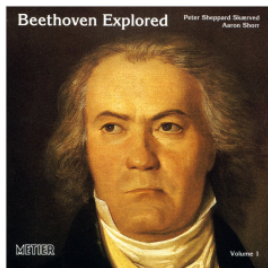
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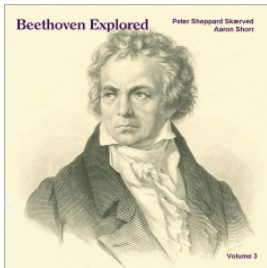


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