Musicians, music lovers, and music critics have typically considered Beethoven's overtly political music as an aberration – at best, it is merely notorious, at worst, it is denigrated and ignored. In *Political Beethoven* Nicholas Mathew returns to the musical and social contexts of the composer's political music throughout his career – from the early marches and anti-French war songs of the 1790s to the grand orchestral and choral works for the Congress of Vienna – to argue that this marginalized functional art has much to teach us about the lofty Beethovenian sounds that came to define serious music in the nineteenth century. Beethoven's much-maligned political compositions, Mathew shows, lead us into the intricate political and aesthetic contexts that shaped all of his oeuvre, thus revealing the stylistic, ideological, and psycho-social mechanisms that gave Beethoven's music such a powerful voice – a voice susceptible to repeated political appropriation, even to the present day.

Nicholas Mathew is a professor in the Department of Music at the University of California, Berkeley. He was educated at his local comprehensive school in Norwich, England, and went on to study music at Oriel College, Oxford and piano at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. After earning his doctorate from Cornell University, where he also studied period pianos with Malcolm Bilson, he was a Junior Research Fellow at Jesus College, Oxford. He is editor, with W. Dean Sutcliffe, of the journal *Eighteenth-Century Music*, and has published on matters relating to Beethoven, Haydn, Mozart, music aesthetics, and musical performance in, among others, the *Musical Quarterly, Eighteenth-Century Music, Nineteenth-Century Music, Current Musicology*, and the *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*. He is a contributor to the volume *Engaging Haydn* (ed. Richard Will and Mary Hunter, 2012).
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For Penny

“Ah, sir, you are under some mistake there,” said Klesmer, firing up. “No man has too much talent to be a musician. Most men have too little. A creative artist is no more a mere musician than a great statesman is a mere politician. We are not ingenious puppets, sir, who live in a box and look out on the world only when it is gaping for amusement. We help to rule the nations and make the age as much as any other public men. We count ourselves on level benches with legislators. And a man who speaks effectively through music is compelled to something more difficult than parliamentary eloquence.”
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Traditionally, Beethoven's triumphs are wholly his own, while his supposed mistakes – not least the patriotic potboilers that I discuss in this book – have been ascribed to the meddling of contemporaries. By contrast, I share any credit for this work with many others, even as its shortcomings are entirely mine.

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Abbreviations


A-Wgm Vienna, Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Archiv

A-Wn Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Musiksammlung


D-Bds Berlin, Staatsbibliothek

GB-Lbl London, British Library

HHstA Vienna, Hof- Haus- und Staats-Archiv, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv


### List of abbreviations

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