

The Cambridge Companion to
BEETHOVEN

EDITED BY
Glenn Stanley



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1 Some thoughts on biography and a chronology of Beethoven's life and music

GLENN STANLEY

The three style periods

The idea that Beethoven's music and his career as a composer fall into three periods was first proposed in rudimentary form by an anonymous French author in 1818 – at the very beginning of what we now consider the third period and almost ten years before his death in 1827. It was advanced again in 1828, and taken up by some of the most influential biographers and authors of life-and-works studies in the nineteenth century, among them A. Schindler (*Biographie von Ludwig van Beethoven*, 1840), and W. Lenz (*Beethoven et ses trois styles*, 1852). Yet almost from the start objections were raised to its usefulness, and it did not figure prominently in the seminal biography by A. W. Thayer (first published in Germany in three volumes, 1866, 1872, 1879), which includes little discussion of the music. And there was little agreement among those authors subscribing to the idea about the criterion for and the chronological limits of the “style periods.” But the necessity of imposing some kind of narrative structure was self-evident, and, while some twentieth-century authors have advanced four-part and even five-part divisions, the original ternary one has proved to be remarkably strong.¹

As ever more details of Beethoven's life became known, it was recognized that “the breaks between the periods correspond with the major turning-points in Beethoven's biography.”² This certainly increased the attractiveness of the basic idea, regardless of the number of periods proposed, because with the new biographical underpinning, such divisions provided a (superficially) persuasive answer to the question of the connections between the artist and his art. The new periods are precipitated by personal crises that help trigger artistic ones; the new style is the result of Beethoven's overcoming or surmounting both personal and creative problems.

The following discussion of the three periods represents an amalgam and critique of various traditional tri-partite divisions that differ in details but are in basic agreement about general contours.

1. A relatively untroubled “formative” or “early” first period runs until 1802, in which Beethoven masters the “Classical” style and establishes himself as a virtuoso composer for piano. In addition to the obvious flaw

that ignores the personal and musical importance of Beethoven's move to Vienna in 1792, this periodization does not acknowledge several small-scale crises that affected his productivity, the significance of Beethoven's turn to string quartet and symphony c. 1798, or the "new path" identified by Beethoven himself in 1801. A separate Bonn period has been suggested, and the first decade in Vienna has been subdivided into spans preceding and following 1799–1800.³

2. The devastating episode of the "Heiligenstadt Testament" (October 1802) – a letter written, but not sent, to his brothers when Beethoven, in despair about the hearing losses that had begun some three years earlier, considers and then rejects taking his life – ushers in the second, or middle period. It runs from the *Eroica* Symphony (1803–04) through 1813–14 and is sometimes poeticized as the "heroic decade." Now, having assimilated the Classical style, Beethoven forges his own more dramatic and monumental one, while concentrating more on the symphony and concerto, and large scale choral and dramatic works. Even the works for piano and chamber ensemble reflect the new expressive and structural emphases. A shortcoming in this division lies in its over-identification with the style of the Third and Fifth Symphonies and other "heroic" works, and its failure to acknowledge first-period precedents for them, e.g. the *Pathétique* Sonata for Piano op. 13 (1798). It also denies the non-heroic character of the Seventh and Eighth Symphonies, the Fourth Piano Concerto, and the Violin Concerto, and ignores the importance of a number of lyrical works for piano and for chamber ensemble composed from 1809 onwards, which has led some recent authors to sub-divide this second decade around that year.

3. The third or "late" period begins with several relatively fallow years in which Beethoven is preoccupied with a whole host of personal calamities: the catastrophe of the "Immortal Beloved" (a love affair with a married woman whose identity cannot be established with complete certainty – Antonie Brentano is the current leading candidate; Josephina Deym-Brunsvik has also been suggested – that was broken off in 1812), and as a result the abandonment of any hopes to marry and establish a family; the deep disappointment about the political restoration after the defeat of France in 1813 and the bitterness about the political conditions in Vienna; the death of Beethoven's brother Caspar Carl in 1815, and the ensuing five-year struggle with his sister-in-law Johanna over the guardianship of her son Karl; the ever-worsening deafness that forces Beethoven to renounce completely public performance as a pianist and contributes to his feelings of social isolation. This period is marked by intense formal and stylistic innovation and an increasing emphasis on personal subjectivity in contrast to the more objective character of the

heroic music. Just where this period really begins has been the subject of extended debate. Works as early as the 1814 final version of *Fidelio* and the Piano Sonata op. 90 have been viewed as important transitional music, yet as late a composition as the “Hammerklavier” Piano Sonata of 1818 has been suggested as the crucible for the third-period style. A. Oulibicheff (*Beethoven, ses critiques et ses glossateurs*, 1857) sets the beginning of the third period even later, with the composition of the last string quartets and the *Grosse Fuge* after the completion of the *Missa solemnis* and Ninth Symphony (1823–24). This suggestion has not been influential, although P. Bekker (*Beethoven*, 1911) and more recently W. Kinderman (*Beethoven*, 1995) have adopted it for a sub-division of the third period. In either form, a new beginning with the quartets de-emphasizes important ties between them and the last three piano sonatas, the most clear of which are the revolutionary experiments with the number, order, and weighting of movements.

These experiments actually began in earnest with the Piano Sonata op. 101 (1816) and the Two Cello Sonatas op. 102 (1817), which I believe should be viewed as full-fledged members of the late group. Moreover, Beethoven’s efforts to seek alternatives to conventional three- and four-movement designs (which, however, were not as monolithic as the style-critical literature on the Classical period often suggests) began already in the first style period. The continuity suggested herein can be extended to include many other stylistic features. The refined lyricism of many late works is often related back to the second phase of the second period, while the third-period pre-occupation with fugue and variations that is often stressed in the literature represents nothing new, but rather the culmination of interests in these forms that had always been strong.

Such continuities counter at least partially the image of a progressive stylistic development that has been viewed positively and negatively. There has been little disagreement about the relation of the second to the first periods; progress and mastery sum it up. (The least refined view has the “real” Beethoven emerging only at this time.) The third period represents either further progress or, as critics during Beethoven’s lifetime and authors such as Fétis and Lenz have suggested, evidence of decline. This latter view has virtually no influence today; it is agreed that Beethoven makes progress, but that progress is neither inevitable, nor constant. The periods are not seen as steps in Beethoven’s personal and artistic *Gradus ad Parnassum*; they represent a cautiously advanced idea of progress that avoids sweeping value judgments. For example, Maynard Solomon has suggested an objective, style-critical approach that grafts Classical, high-Classical, post-Classical, and Romantic phases onto four life-and-works periods (Bonn is the first) that include sub-periods of transition and

consolidation.⁴ On the other hand he stresses the psychological factors in this process; Beethoven's search for new styles stems in large part from his attempt to come to terms with personal crises. Style-critical and aesthetic criteria have also served arguments that stress the playing-out of opposing tendencies over the entire course of Beethoven's career. In these less-established schemes, which have much to offer in conjunction with the periods, such dualities as sonata vs. symphonic style, private vs. public genre and character, Classical vs. Romantic, and experimental vs. traditional define the parameters of Beethoven's continuous search for the technical and expressive solutions to the creative problems of the day.

One measure of the significance of the style periods for Beethoven research can be seen in the fact that periodization itself has been the subject of recent scholarship; as numerous articles and three conferences, one per style period, all held in the United States in the 1990s show.⁵ Despite the limitations of this approach, the periods have become virtually axiomatic for our understanding of Beethoven's personal and artistic history. They are recommended – *cum grano salis*.

The inner Beethoven; Beethoven in context

In the above discussion and the chronology, and in my chapter on Beethoven's professional life, I try to provide some sense of the biographical circumstances that impacted on his work. But space does not allow more than a sketch, and I am particularly aware of the limitations of my hints and suggestions about his psychological make-up, his often tortured relations with family, friends, and associates, his romantic involvements and his sexual nature and attitudes, and his responses to the crises and misfortunes that impacted so heavily on his life and undoubtedly influenced his music. On these topics there is an abundant literature – much of it is popularizing, myth-perpetuating, and lacking in critical reflection and empirical underpinning – which by its very nature is speculative (I do not use the word in a negative sense) and interpretative and, therefore, controversial. Solomon's psychologically oriented biography, *Beethoven* (1977, 2nd edition, 1998) and the pertinent chapters in his *Essays* (1988) enjoy deserved – though not unchallenged – authority that rests in part on the basis of the author's scrupulous consideration of documentary evidence in support of his arguments. Readers interested in these crucial aspects of Beethoven's biography are advised to begin with Solomon's work and then read further. I also tried to provide some idea of the context – social, cultural, and political – in which Beethoven worked, yet here too, I could do little more than broadly sketch the situation in

Vienna, in Austria, and in greater Europe. Again there is a plenitude of literature; again the relevant chapters in Solomon's biography and in his *Essays* have shaped contemporary thinking on these subjects. Other recent contributions include Tia De Nora's controversial study of patronage and the establishment of Beethoven's reputation, *Beethoven and the Construction of Genius: Musical Politics in Vienna, 1792–1803* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1995), and Leon Botstein's essay "The Patrons and Publics of the [String] Quartets: Music, Culture, and Society in Beethoven's Vienna," in *The Beethoven Quartet Companion*, ed. Robert Winter and Robert Martin (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1994) as well as portions of his "Franz Schubert and Vienna," in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, ed. Christopher Gibbs (Cambridge, 1997). This list could, of course, be greatly expanded; a monographic study of Beethoven's life and work from the perspective of social and cultural history would, if of sufficient merit, be an invaluable contribution to Beethoven studies.

Any consideration of biographical literature on Beethoven most include the most comprehensive non-interpretative biography, Thayer's *Life of Beethoven* in the edition that was edited and revised by Elliot Forbes in 1967. Although a new revision of this classic is certainly needed, it remains an indispensable source for scholars and lay readers.

Chronology⁶

Bonn

- 1770 16 December (?): Born in Bonn, second child of Maria Magdalena and Johann van Beethoven, court singer. An older brother, Ludwig Maria, had died six days after his birth on 2 April 1769. Five younger children are born into the family. Caspar Anton Carl (April 1774) and Nikolaus Johann (October 1776) survive and come to Austria in the 1790s, where their lives closely intersect with Beethoven's. Three children born later also died as infants: Anna Maria Franziska in 1779, four days after her birth in February, Franz Georg, two years old, in 1783, and Maria Margaretha Josepha, born in 1786, who died in 1787.
- c. 1775 Beethoven begins music lessons with his father, a severe and cruel teacher, who is said to have often beaten his son.
- 1778 Piano recital in Cologne, but Beethoven does not establish himself as a child prodigy.
- 1779 Composition lessons with Christian Gottlob Neeffe.
- 1782 Unsalaries assistant court organist under Neeffe (c. 1781–82: Beethoven leaves school). First published composition: "Dressler" Variations for Piano WoO 63.

- 1783 Journey to Holland with his mother. Beethoven plays harpsichord in court orchestra. Publication of three “Kurfürst” Piano Sonatas WoO 47. Neefe praises Beethoven in Cramer’s *Magazin der Musik*.
- 1784 Appointed deputy court organist (salaried).
- 1785 Composition of three Piano Quartets WoO 36, nos. 1–3 (published 1828)
- 1787 March–May: Beethoven travels to Vienna and possibly plays for Mozart. July: Beethoven’s mother dies. Father’s long-standing drinking problems deteriorate into incapacitating alcoholism.
- 1788 Count Ferdinand Waldstein in Bonn, one of Beethoven’s important early patrons; he later helps arrange Beethoven’s study with Haydn in Vienna.
- 1789 Matriculation at the University of Bonn; no evidence of serious study. One half of father’s salary paid to Beethoven, who is responsible for family. Beethoven plays viola in court theater orchestra. The repertory includes Mozart’s *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, and in the second season (1790) *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*.
- 1790 Composition of Funeral and Elevation Cantatas (WoO 87 and 88) on the occasion of the death of Emperor Joseph II and the elevation of Leopold II (neither performed).
- 1791 Publication of “Righini” Variations for Piano WoO 65.
- 1792 October: French troops in the Rhineland. November: Beethoven leaves for Vienna to study with Haydn. Before he departs friends give him a “Stammbuch” expressing best wishes and including literary citations. Beethoven formed several life-long (although intermittent) friendships in Bonn, among them with the Wegeler and von Breuning families. Expected to return to Bonn. December: death of father.

In Bonn Beethoven composed numerous songs, three piano sonatas, piano variations, chamber music for various ensembles, several concertos, and the cantatas.

Vienna

- 1793–94 Beethoven is sponsored by leading members of the Viennese nobility – Lobkowitz, Lichnowsky, et al. – and he achieves early success as a piano virtuoso and composer of solo and ensemble piano music. Early in 1794: Haydn leaves for London and returns in 1795. In his absence Beethoven studies with Albrechtsberger and, later, with other teachers. Compositions: 1794, Three Trios for Piano, Violin, and Cello op. 1 (pub. 1795). Trio no. 1 probably originated in Bonn.
- 1795 First Public Concert in Vienna; performance of First or Second Piano Concerto. Brother Johann arrives in Vienna. Compositions: Three Piano Sonatas op. 2 (pub. 1796); Piano Sonata op. 10 no. 1 (?). Work on a symphony in C major begins and is broken off.
- 1796 February–July: Beethoven travels to Prague, Dresden, Leipzig, and Berlin on his only extended concert tour. Compositions: Two Cello Sonatas op. 5, for J. L. Duport in Berlin (pub.

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- 1797); Quintet for Piano and Winds op. 16 (pub. 1801). Concert Aria, *Ah! perfido* op. 65 (pub. 1805). Work on Piano Sonata op. 10 no. 1. Publication of String Trio op. 3 (fin. before 1794?, autograph 1795).
- 1797 Summer: little information about Beethoven; possibility of serious illness.
- Compositions: Piano Sonata op. 7 (pub. 1797). Work begins on Three Violin Sonatas op. 12 (finished in 1798, pub. 1799). Work continues on Three Piano Sonatas op. 10 (fin. and pub. in 1798). Publication of *Adelaide* op. 46 (fin. 1794–95?).
- 1798 Beethoven performs First (op. 15) and Second (op. 19) Piano Concertos (revised version of no. 2) in Prague. First use of bound sketchbooks instead of single leaves. Circa 1798 lessons with Salieri in vocal and dramatic composition.
- Compositions: Piano Sonata op. 13, *Pathétique* (pub. 1799); Piano Sonata op. 14 no. 1 (pub. 1799); Three String Trios op. 9 (pub. 1799); Clarinet Trio op. 11 (pub. 1798). Intermittent work on String Quartets op. 18.
- 1799 Compositions: Piano Sonata op. 14 no. 2 (pub. 1799); Septet op. 20 (premiere 1799, pub. 1802); First Symphony op. 21 (fin. 1800, prem. April 1800, pub. 1801); first version of op. 18 no. 1 given as farewell present to Karl Amenda.
- 1800 April: first concert in his own benefit in the Court Theater, First Symphony, First Piano Concerto, Septet, and other works: Beethoven's public reputation enhanced. Increasing tension between Haydn and Beethoven.
- Compositions: Horn Sonata op. 17 (pub. 1801); String Quartets op. 18 (pub. 1801); Piano Sonata op. 22 (pub. 1802); Violin Sonatas opp. 23 and 24, "Spring" (fin. 1801; both pub. 1801); Piano Sonatas opp. 26 and 27 no. 1 (fin. 1801, pub. 1802); work on Third Piano Concerto op. 37 (? see 1803); Ballet, *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus* op. 43 (prem. 1801, pub. 1801).
- 1801 June: Beethoven writes of hearing loss to Wegeler in Bonn. Ferdinand Ries and Carl Czerny are students; they remain long-term associates of Beethoven. Successful performances of *Prometheus*.
- Compositions: Second Symphony op. 36 (fin. 1802, prem. April 1803, pub. 1804); Piano Sonatas opp. 27 no. 2, "Moonlight," and 28 (both pub. 1802); String Quintet op. 29 (pub. 1802); Three Violin Sonatas op. 30 (fin. 1802, pub. 1803); Bagatelles for Piano op. 33 (fin. 1802, pub. 1803); "Gellert" Songs op. 48 (fin. 1802, pub. 1803). Publication of First and Second Piano Concertos op. 15 (comp. 1795, rev. 1800), and op. 19 (begun 1785?, revised twice in Vienna), Six String Quartets op. 18 (Quartet no. 1 was revised and Beethoven asked Amenda [in Courland] to not show anyone the first version, "for only now have I learned to write quartets . . .")
- 1802 October: "Heiligenstadt" Testament, Beethoven's draft of a letter to his brothers while presumably contemplating suicide.

- Compositions: Piano Sonatas op. 31 nos. 1 and 2 (pub. 1803) and no. 3 (pub. 1804). These sonatas mark the beginning of Beethoven's "new path"; Beethoven supposedly expressed dissatisfaction with his previous compositions; Variations for Piano opp. 34 and 35, "Eroica" Variations, (both pub. 1803); Violin Sonata op. 47, "Kreutzer" (fin. 1803, premiere with George Bridgetower in May 1803, pub. 1805).
- 1803 April: Performance of First and Second Symphonies; premiere of Third Piano Concerto op. 37 (begun in 1800?, pub. 1803) and Oratorio *Christus am Ölberge* op. 85 (rev. 1804 and 1811, pub. 1811). Beethoven plans a trip to Paris and considers leaving Vienna permanently. Compositions: Symphony no. 3 op. 55, *Eroica* (private prem. 1804, public prem. 1805, pub. 1806); Piano Sonata op. 53, "Waldstein" (fin. 1804, pub. 1805); the original second movement is published separately as the *Andante favori* WoO 57 (pub. 1805); Triple Concerto op. 56 (fin. 1804, prem. May 1808, pub. 1807).
- 1804 May: Napoleon crowns himself Emperor in Rome; Beethoven destroys the title page with a dedication to Napoleon of the manuscript score of Third Symphony with the title ("Sinfonia Buonaparte"); title of first edition: "Sinfonia Eroica," with a subtitle, "composed to celebrate the memory of a great man." Late Fall/Jan. 1805: Close relationship with Countess Josephine Deym (née Brunsvik) through 1807. (Beethoven more ardent than Josephine.) Compositions: work begins on *Fidelio* (Beethoven's preferred title was *Leonore*); Piano Sonatas opp. 54 (pub. 1806), and 57, "Appassionata" (fin. 1805, pub. 1807). Intermittent work – sketching – begins on Fourth Piano Concerto op. 58 (fin. 1806/7, prem. March 1807, pub. 1808) and Symphony no. 5 op. 67.
- 1805 November: Unsuccessful premiere of *Fidelio* (French troops in Vienna, Viennese aristocrats flee city). Count Andreas Razumovsky commissions three string quartets (op. 59). Beethoven meets Luigi Cherubini, whose music he admires greatly. Publication of Two Piano Sonatas op. 49 (composed 1795–97?).
- 1806 Birth of nephew Karl in September. March–April: performances of second version of *Fidelio*. Compositions: Three String Quartets op. 59 (pub. 1808); Fourth Symphony op. 60 (prem. March 1807, pub. 1808); Violin Concerto op. 61 (prem. Dec. 1806, pub. 1808); Thirty-two Variations for Piano WoO 80 (pub. 1807).
- 1807 Prince Nikolaus Esterházy commissions a mass (Mass in C op. 86). Beethoven meets Muzio Clementi, who agrees to publish String Quartets op. 59, the Fourth Symphony, and other works and commissions three piano sonatas (opp. 78, 79, and 81a). Unsuccessful petition to Court Theater in Vienna for appointment as composer. Compositions: intensive work through 1808 on Fifth Symphony (prem. Dec. 1808, pub. 1809); *Coriolan* Overture op. 62 (prem. March 1807, pub. 1808); Cello Sonata op. 69 (fin. 1808, pub. 1809, pub. 1809); Mass in C op. 86 (prem. at Esterházy palace in September 1807, pub. 1812).

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- 1808 Beethoven offered a position as Kapellmeister in Kassel (capital city of French-dominated Westphalia). Brother Johann moves from Vienna to Linz. Several important concerts, in December premiere of Fifth and Sixth Symphonies and other important works in a landmark concert lasting over four hours.
Compositions: Sixth Symphony, *Pastoral* (pub. 1809); Two Piano Trios op. 70 (pub. 1809); Choral Fantasia op. 80 (prem. Dec. 1808, rev. 1809, pub. 1810).
- 1809 Annuity established for Beethoven by Austrian aristocratic patrons guarantees lifelong income; Beethoven declines position in Kassel. Death of Haydn. May: French bombardment of Vienna; Beethoven suffers great physical and psychological distress. Archduke Rudolph begins composition lessons and remains a student, patron, and close friend into the 1820s.
Compositions: Fifth Piano Concerto op. 73 (prem. Nov. 1811, pub. 1810); String Quartet op. 74 (pub. 1810); Piano Sonatas opp. 78 and 79 (pub. 1810); Piano Sonata *Das Lebewohl* op. 81a (fin. 1810, pub. 1811); Fantasia for Piano op. 77 (pub. 1810); Overture and Incidental Music to *Egmont* op. 84 (prem. June 1810, overture pub. 1810, incidental music pub. posth.).
- 1810 Beethoven befriends Bettina Brentano von Arnim, and her brother and his wife Franz and Antonie Brentano in Vienna; Bettina writes to Goethe about Beethoven, preparing for their encounter in 1812. Publication of Fifth Symphony op. 67; review by E. T. A. Hoffmann in AmZ.
Compositions: String Quartet op. 95 (revised 1814?, pub. 1816); Piano Trio op. 97, “Archduke” (fin. 1811, rev. 1814–15?, pub. 1816).
- 1811 Close friendship with Antonie Brentano (probable “immortal beloved” of 1812). Devaluation of Austrian currency reduces value of annuity income. Exchange of letters with Goethe.
Compositions: Symphony no. 7 op. 92 (fin. 1812, prem. December 1813, pub. 1816).
- 1812 Diary (“Tagebuch”) kept by Beethoven until 1818. Travel to Bohemian spas in summer; letter to the “immortal beloved” suggesting that Beethoven is breaking off his relationship with her; Beethoven abandons hopes of marriage. Meets with Goethe: mutual ambivalence.
Compositions: Eighth Symphony op. 93 (prem. February 1814, pub. 1817); Violin Sonata op. 96 (rev. 1814–15?, pub. 1816).
- 1813 Successful public performances of Seventh Symphony and *Wellington’s Victory* before and during the Congress of Vienna (1814). Brother Carl ill, names Beethoven as guardian of Karl after his death. Hoffmann reviews op. 70 Trios for the AmZ.
- 1814 Congress of Vienna: Beethoven gives numerous successful public concerts and the final version of *Fidelio* is performed by Beethoven. Patriotic works often include *Wellington’s Victory* op. 91 (comp. 1813, pub. 1816), and Cantata *Der glorreiche Augenblick* op. 136 (pub. posth.). Beethoven plays the piano part of the “Archduke” Trio op. 97 in a public performance in April; Spohr critical of his playing.

- Compositions: Piano Sonata op. 90 (pub. 1815); Cantata *Meeresstille und glückliche Fahrt* op. 112 (fin. 1815, pub. 1822); *Elegischer Gesang* op. 118 (pub. 1826).
- 1815 Last public appearance as pianist. Charles Neate brings to Vienna a commission from the Philharmonic Society of London for three overtures (opp. 113, 115, and 117). Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna commissions an oratorio; Beethoven accepts contingent on suitable text, but the commission remains unfulfilled. Before his death in November, Carl appoints his wife Johanna as co-guardian with Beethoven of Karl. Legal struggles between them over Karl continue until 1820.
- Compositions: Song-Cycle *An die ferne Geliebte* op. 98 (fin. 1816, pub. 1816); Two Cello Sonatas op. 102 (pub. 1817). Work on a piano concerto begins and is broken off.
- 1816 Karl in Beethoven's care; Beethoven appointed legal guardian. Carl Czerny teaches Karl piano.
- Compositions: Piano Sonata op. 101 (pub. 1817). Work (sketching) on an unfinished piano trio.
- 1817 Illness. Invitation from Philharmonic Society of London to visit London and compose two symphonies. Beethoven requests a loud piano from the piano maker Streicher in Vienna.
- Compositions: Piano Sonata op. 106, "Hammerklavier" (fin. 1818, pub. 1819). Intermittent work on first movement of Ninth Symphony op. 125 (fin. 1824, prem. May 1824, pub. 1826).
- 1818 Illness. Trip to London cancelled. Legal and personal problems with Karl and Johanna continue; Beethoven unable to prove his aristocratic lineage; case heard in lower court. Beethoven receives a new Broadwood piano from the English manufacturer. Beethoven begins to use conversation books, deafness complete.
- Compositions: Folksong settings op. 108, published by Thomson in Edinburgh. Some work on Ninth Symphony.
- 1819 Beethoven ordered to give up guardianship of Karl, who returns to Johanna. Beethoven conducts Seventh Symphony in a concert in January. Brother Johann purchases a large estate; Beethoven's attempt to buy a house fails.
- Compositions: work begins on "Diabelli" Variations op. 120, interrupted by composition of *Missa solemnis* op. 123, 1819–23.
- 1820 March: Elevation of Rudolph as Bishop, *Missa solemnis* not finished in time for the ceremony. April: Beethoven awarded custody of Karl, who soon moves in with him. Three piano sonatas (opp. 109–11) accepted for publication by A. Schlesinger.
- Compositions: Piano Sonata op. 109 (pub. 1821). Work continues on *Missa solemnis*.
- 1821 Prolonged illness.
- Compositions: Piano Sonatas op. 110 (fin. 1822, pub. 1822) and op. 111 (fin. 1822, pub. 1823). Completion of Five Bagatelles for Piano (later op. 119, nos. 7–11) for Friedrich Starke's *Wiener Pianoforte-Schule*.

13 Some thoughts on biography and a chronology

- 1822 Meetings with Friedrich Rochlitz (?) and Rossini in Vienna. Letter to Goethe with copy of the cantata *Meeresstille und glückliche Fahrt* op. 112 on Goethe's poem; Goethe does not reply. Schubert reputedly brings to Beethoven's residence a copy of his Piano Variations op. 10, dedicated to Beethoven. Negotiations with publishers for *Missa solemnis*. Prince Nikolaus Galitzin (St. Petersburg) commissions three string quartets. Compositions: Bagatelles nos. 1–6 of op. 119, complete set of eleven pub. 1823. Work resumes on "Diabelli" Variations; work continues on Ninth Symphony.
- 1823 Successful revival of *Fidelio*. Beethoven seeks, unsuccessfully, an opera libretto. Meets with and hears Liszt play (?). Invitations throughout Europe to royalty and other notables for deluxe subscription edition of *Missa solemnis*. Compositions: completion of "Diabelli" Variations op. 120 (pub. 1823). Intensive work on Ninth Symphony until Spring 1824.
- 1824 April: Premiere of *Missa solemnis*, St. Petersburg. May: Premiere of Ninth Symphony, Vienna. Invitation to London from Philharmonic Society. Compositions: Bagatelles for Piano op. 126 (pub. 1825). Work begun on String Quartet op. 127 (fin. 1825, pub. 1826), first of three quartets for Galitzin. Work on last quartets (three for Galitzin plus two more) continues until 1826.
- 1825 Unrealized plans for a complete edition of Beethoven's music with Schott. April: first London performance of Ninth Symphony, Finale sung in Italian. First performance (Vienna) of String Quartets op. 127 and op. 132. Compositions: String Quartet op. 132 (pub. 1827); String Quartet op. 130 (first version with *Grosse Fuge* fin. January 1826, substitute finale fin. November 1826, pub. 1827). *Grosse Fuge* published as op. 133, 1827. String Quartet op. 131 (fin. 1826, pub. 1827).
- 1826 July: Karl attempts suicide. Fall: Beethoven suffers continuous worsening illness – dropsy, pneumonia. December: first of three operations. Compositions: String Quartet op. 135 (fin. Oct., pub. 1827). In November Beethoven begins but does not complete his last major work, String Quintet WoO 62. His last finished work is a puzzle canon composed in December for Karl Holz: "Wir irren allesamt" ("we all make mistakes").
- 1827 January: Karl begins military service. January–March: Two more operations. Possible reconciliation with Johanna. 26 March: death of Beethoven. 29 March: large public funeral service in Vienna. April–May: Publication of *Missa solemnis*, String Quartets opp. 131, 132, 135, and *Grosse Fuge* op. 133.