

## Beethoven's Theatrical Quartets

Beethoven's middle-period quartets, Opp. 59, 74 and 95, are pieces that engage deeply with the aesthetic ideas of their time. In the first full contextual study of these works, Nancy November celebrates their uniqueness, exploring their reception history and early performance. In detailed analyses, she explores ways in which the quartets have both reflected and shaped the very idea of chamber music and offers a new historical understanding of the works' physical, visual, social and ideological aspects. In the process, November provides a fresh critique of three key paradigms in current Beethoven studies: the focus on his late period; the emphasis on 'heroic' style in discussions of the middle period; and the idea of string quartets as 'pure', 'autonomous' artworks, cut off from social moorings. Importantly, this study shows that the quartets encompass a new lyric and theatrical impetus, which is an essential part of their unique, explorative character.

NANCY NOVEMBER lectures in musicology at the University of Auckland. Her research and teaching interests centre on the music of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Her recent publications include essays on the early performance of Beethoven's string quartets, and their performance history in the recording age. She has also published aesthetic and analytical studies of Haydn's music, considering contexts of musical melancholy (*Eighteenth-Century Music*, 2007), the use of register in his string quartets (*Music Analysis*, 2008) and conceptions of 'voice' in his early string quartets (*Music and Letters*, 2008). Her edition of Adalbert Gyrowetz's String Quartets Op. 29 is forthcoming, and an edition of six sextets by Paul Wranitzky was published in 2012. Her awards include an Edison Fellowship from the British Library, an Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship, and a Marsden grant from the New Zealand Royal Society. She is currently editing a three-volume set of fifteen string quartets by Beethoven's contemporary Emmanuel Aloys Förster.

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The Beethoven music examples are based on the relevant Henle editions of *Beethoven Werke*. Thanks are due to Sean Scanlen for the typesetting of all musical examples and to Henle for permissions. Editorial additions in round brackets in the string quartet examples emanate from the editions by Paul Mies (1968), while those in square brackets are my own. I have altered several readings from the Henle editions to conform to the autograph scores of the respective works, added clefs and key signatures in transcriptions of Beethoven's drafts, and specified the instrumentation only in examples that are not drawn from Beethoven's quartets.

This book is dedicated to the memory of my grandmother, Mary Haeri, with whom I greatly enjoyed staying on visits to the British Library; to Aron Gohr, who has added much to the joy of being in Bonn; and to my parents, Janet and Peter November, for their love, support and enthusiasm throughout.