

Review Article

Letting Beethoven's Hair Down: Dancing and Musicking in Vienna

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Erica Buurman, *The Viennese Ballroom in the Age of Beethoven*. Cambridge University Press, 2022. xi + 194 pp. ISBN: 9781108863278 (ebook).

Nancy November, *Beethoven's Symphonies Arranged for the Chamber: Sociability, Reception, and Canon Formation*. Cambridge University Press, 2021. xvii + 258pp. 9781108924207 (ebook).

It feels fitting to have worked on this review in Baden bei Wien, in which Beethoven spent many summers. This pretty town southwest of Vienna boasts not only a Beethoven-Haus, but also a Beethoven-Panoramaweg, Beethoven-Rundwanderweg, Beethoven-Spazierweg, and even an imposing Beethoven-Tempel, offering a scenic view; notions of decentring, decolonizing, or even critically engaging with Beethoven's canonic status feel not only remote, but also faintly inappropriate in this, as many other, Beethoven-designated spaces. Moreover, at the time of writing, the international press is reporting that Beethoven's skull fragments are being returned to Vienna, as though they are holy relics.¹ Such material traces of Beethoven's canonicity seem to mock attempts to rattle the ideological cage, yet two recent books by Erica Buurman and Nancy November make significant contributions.² The former indirectly poses questions about Beethoven's relationship to Viennese dance culture, while the latter is a deeply impressive account of the chamber music arrangements of Beethoven's symphonies. Both left me a touch nostalgic for the now marginal cultures of formal dancing and musical arrangement, which dominated the soundscape of early nineteenth-century Vienna.

Both topics have received considerable attention in recent years as scholars have sought to reinscribe onto music functions which were eradicated when they were turned into 'works', stable objects for abstract contemplation.³ Specific studies have concentrated on

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¹ See 'Beethoven Skull Fragments Return to Vienna', BBC News <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-66261623>> (accessed 23 July 2023).

² The Beethoven literature is too vast to be surveyed here, but I will mention Tia de Nora's *Beethoven and the Construction of Genius: Musical Politics in Vienna, 1792–1803* (University of California Press, 1997); also relevant is the work of Scott Burnham and Mark Evans Bonds. Laura Tunbridge's recent popular biography has also greatly enriched our understanding of Beethoven's life: *Beethoven: A Life in Nine Pieces* (Faber, 2020).

³ See, for example, Elizabeth Aldrich, 'Social Dancing in Schubert's World', in *Schubert's Vienna*, ed. Raymond Erickson (Yale University Press, 1997), 119–40; and the substantial work by Davinia Caddy and Maribeth Clark (eds.), *Musicology and Dance: Historical and Critical Perspectives* (Cambridge University Press, 2020).

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string playing, which lies at the heart of November's study.⁴ Other authors have explored how musical 'doing' was transformed into acts of preservation and veneration.⁵ Buurman and November offer two different kinds of what might be termed Beethoven-adjacent research, by which I mean work which directly or indirectly invokes Beethoven's significance, is tacitly justified by his proximity, yet which ultimately charts new territory in which the man himself often retreats to the background, allowing other protagonists to emerge.

The two studies have overlapping settings and priorities. The backdrop is the stifling regime of Chancellor Klemens von Metternich, since both dancing and the playing of chamber music were (within limits) permitted forms of social gathering at a time when sociability was strictly policed. Both are also concerned with a culture of *doing*, rather than only contemplating: for Buurman, dancing in Vienna implies a host of linked activities detailed later; for November, creating and playing symphony arrangements reflects the pragmatic transfer and communication of repertoire across myriad contexts, as well as the creation of meaning through self-directed performance. Beethoven features in both studies, but not as one might expect: Buurman's study references 'Beethoven's Vienna' in the title, but reveals that he was quite remote from Vienna's dance culture; November's main topic is the arrangement of Beethoven's symphonies for a wide range of players, but she reminds us early on that the composer himself 'moved quickly into the upper echelons of musical society in Vienna, where he had the means, motivation, and opportunity to compose highly original new works for connoisseurs'.⁶ Thus, in both studies, Beethoven is one protagonist within complex processes of social activity and musical dissemination.

The timespan of Buurman's book – 1770–1830 – overlaps both with Beethoven's active years and with the emergence of the first Viennese public dance halls, but this is an instance of correlation, not causation. Over seven chapters, Buurman introduces the public ball in Vienna. Three inner chapters explore the waltz, minuet, and contredanse. A fifth chapter traces the relationship between stage repertoire and dance music, reaffirming the interconnectedness of popular repertoires across genres, spaces, and forces. The book closes with two fascinating chapters on battle waltzes (a dance genre which re-enacts military events), for which I could imagine no modern equivalent, and the dances for the 1815 Vienna Congress.

Beethoven aside, the more interesting story here is how 'the city's dance culture [developed] along commercial lines in the coming decades, where ballroom owners, composers and other individuals involved in the dance business increasingly responded to consumer demand rather than aristocratic taste'.⁷ Moreover, the dance repertoire was vast, the new season's music needing to be 'transported in a wheelbarrow'.⁸ Dance halls redefined the city's spatiality; opulent (and exorbitant) suburban dance halls such as the Apollo-Saal outclassed the imperial

⁴ See, for example, Mary Hunter, "The Most Interesting Genre of Music": Performance, Sociability and Meaning in the Classical String Quartet, 1800–1830', *Nineteenth-Century Music Review*, 9/1 (2012), 53–74 and the substantial contribution of Marie Sumner Lott, *The Social Worlds of Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music: Composers, Consumers, Communities* (University of Illinois, 2015), which recasts the worth of a vast amount of repertoire through the lens of playability.

⁵ See, for example, Christina Bashford, *The Pursuit of High Culture: John Ella and Chamber Music in Victorian London* (Boydell, 2007).

⁶ N. November, *Beethoven's Symphonies Arranged for the Chamber: Sociability, Reception, and Canon Formation* (Cambridge University Press, 2021), 42.

⁷ E. Buurman, *The Viennese Ballroom in the Age of Beethoven* (Cambridge University Press, 2022), 12.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

ballrooms in the city centre. Nevertheless, the grand socio-political narrative of ballroom dancing is not one of greater equality and mixing, but of the retreat of the aristocracy so they could recreate their exclusivity elsewhere.

Buurman writes sympathetically of musicians whose careers were destroyed and refashioned by top-down initiatives, such as the church musicians made redundant through the secular reforms of Joseph II, or orchestral musicians jettisoned in the disbanding of court orchestras in the late eighteenth century; dance halls, she suggests, provided valuable alternative sources of employment (this alertness to and sympathy for the precarity of musicians' working lives also characterizes November's book, as discussed later).⁹ Buurman reveals the complex ecosystem of dance repertoire creation, publication, performance, and consumption, itself situated in a network of activities including hearing (or equally, not hearing) the dance music, dancing, eating, socializing, and admiring the beautifully designed halls (sometimes with spectacular indoor gardens), as well as the attendees' glamorous clothing (sometimes including costumes and masks). Essential to Buurman's project is the rich range of primary sources she cites, listed towards the end of the book.

The opening chapter, 'The Public Ball in Viennese Musical Life, 1770–1830', unrolls a large canvas. Buurman explores the pushme-pullyu relationship between dance and social mobility; the shifting roles music and musicians played;¹⁰ the synergy with other activities such as theatre-going; the transfer of repertoire, through arrangements, between dance hall and private home; and the geographical transfer of dancing from city centre to bourgeois suburbs. This enthralling social history depicts a city in transformation, in which 'even servants attended dancing schools'.¹¹ Chapter 2 explores early Viennese waltz dances, explaining the various waltz-type forms which proliferated before 1820 while noting that 'there is still some uncertainty about the precise nature of the eighteenth-century versions of the waltz'.¹² Surviving dance treatises did not always describe the associated steps; seemingly similar dances had different names, for example, the *Wickler* (winding dance) and *Almerische* (Alpine dance), to which the *Schwäbische* (from South Germany) and the *Steyrische* (from Styria) may be related. One source from the 1760s refers to *Teusch* and *Steyrisch* dancing, though the terms 'were apparently synonymous'; one wonders whether a dance is named for its place rather than its actual steps.¹³ Equally, Buurman rightly points out that the word *German*, to denote a dance, could not indicate a specific geographical region at that point in history – and the *Strassburger* was danced within the German.¹⁴ In turn, the *Strassburger* invokes *La Strasbourgeoise*, the name of a Parisian *contredanse allemande*. Moreover, all these dances were evolving, so 'There is some evidence to suggest that the terms *allemande*, *Strassburger* and *Deutsche Tanz* could all be understood to refer to the same dance by the end of the eighteenth century.' Buurman resolutely tackles this thicket of terminology, shedding light where sources permit.

The following chapter on the minuet builds on a more substantial evidence base, doubtless preserved because of the genre's longstanding aristocratic associations. However, Buurman argues that 'the minuet derived its expressive association with nobility from a tradition of widely understood conventions that did not necessarily align with contemporary dance practice'.¹⁵

⁹ Ibid., 19.

¹⁰ See, for example, *ibid.*, 26.

¹¹ Ibid., 12.

¹² Ibid., 33.

¹³ Ibid., 34.

¹⁴ Ibid., 35.

¹⁵ Ibid., 56.

Our current understanding of the topical associations of the minuet is enriched, for instance, by the knowledge that by the late eighteenth century, anyone (including maidservants) could dance the minuet; I could not help but wonder who the male corollaries of those servant girls were, and also, what the socio-political implications of servants dancing minuets were; what did it mean to working-class people to evoke aristocracy on the dance floor, or to aristocrats to know their servants were doing this? Buurman touches on this on page 61 but does not allow herself further speculation. Indeed, the class implications are further muddled by the popularity of *Bauernhochzeiten*, private dance events at which the nobility dressed as peasants and danced rustic dances. Certainly, carnival balls fostered the exciting possibility of being ‘other’, and it would be rewarding to explore further how consistent practices of masking and costuming actually were. For instance, Buurman quotes one 1793 fictional letter which complains that ‘few wore amusing masks to the *Redoute* any more’, and this is supported by more evidence from 1808 and the 1830s. Buurman states that by 1830, the *Redoute* was ‘no longer the fantasy world of exotic characters and secret identities that it had been at the end of the eighteenth century’.¹⁶ But the sources are, as so often, inconsistent; another piece of evidence suggests that the masked balls (*Redouten*) were still taking place in the 1850s – indeed, ‘If *Wiener Faschings Lust* is taken at face value, the Viennese masquerade apparently remained alive and well by 1854, and still represented the pinnacle of carnival entertainments.’¹⁷

Chapter 4 turns to the relatively anti-hierarchical contredanse. Here, Buurman explores the contredanse’s role in multi-movement instrumental works, an unexpected approach, since dancing would not take place in that context. She also states that contredanses ‘played a marginal role in Vienna’s public ballrooms’,¹⁸ and it is telling that the one relatively egalitarian dance was not actually danced publicly, but was associated with socially segregated private circles. In other words, the contredanse becomes not so much a vehicle for equality as a means of reinscribing exclusivity. This was partly a practical issue, since the space-hungry dance was practically impossible to execute at the crowded *Redoutes*. However, as with the waltz, the terminology around the contredanse is confusing, and while Buurman is understandably cautious with definitions, I wondered whether the reader could have been helped more. The term connotes a whole family of dances with various sub-dances (including the cotillon, the quadrille, the ecossaise, and the *Tempête*). Archival material is again scarce, with little source material associated with the contredanse in Vienna, in contrast with Paris and London, meaning it is not always clear what the Viennese would have understood through the word ‘contredanse’.

Buurman deals skilfully with slender material, but it remains difficult to grasp what the various titles signified, which were danced where, who danced, and who spectated, and therefore what forms of social interaction they fostered. A summary of each dance’s range of potential meanings and functions at the head of each chapter might have helped organize this information. I remained sceptical about Buurman’s claim that contredanse – as danced formally only by elites – could ‘still communicate the ideals of [...] communal participation’¹⁹ – this is only so if one reads ‘communality’ within an exclusive, elite group.

Chapter 5 explores the synergy between stage and dance repertoires. Buurman observes that even without going to the theatre, people would hear the latest operatic hits in many other

¹⁶ Ibid., 67.

¹⁷ Ibid., 66–67.

¹⁸ Ibid., 77.

¹⁹ Ibid., 91.

forms, not least arranged as dances. Theatre works could effectively be advertised through dance arrangements to boost their success (such repertoire synergies are also key to November's book, discussed later).²⁰ Buurman convincingly suggests that arrangements by the dance composer Stanislaus Ossowski were crucial to the popularizing of a waltz from Vicente Martín y Soler's hit opera *Una cosa rara*. The comparison with the relatively lukewarm initial success of Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, both as an opera and in dance arrangements, raises interesting chicken-and-egg questions; would a good arranger have managed to shift the dispiriting early fates of works such as *Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Così fan tutte*, and prevent them from being 'flop[s]' 'in the context of the ballroom'?²¹ Beethoven's *Fidelio* seems not to have inspired dances, whereas Weber's *Freischütz* generated various popular dance arrangements, as did much of Rossini's work, in Diabelli's thoughtful and enjoyable arrangements.

The most intriguing chapter concerns battle waltzes, a bizarre idea realized in works such as the immensely successful *The Battle of Prague*, a programmatic keyboard sonata by Franz Kotzwara (c. 1750–91). Ossowski again reappears with a substantial programmatic contribution, and though the idea of depicting a battle narrative through dance did not catch on (for obvious reasons), elements resurfaced, especially in the codas of dance sets, an extraordinary intertwining of entertainment and military-political events which seems to have no modern corollary. Similarly, in Chapter 7, Buurman explores the dance festivities associated with the 1815 Congress of Vienna, claiming that the 'the Congress organisers drew from established traditions in Viennese public ball culture by using dance to shape the interactions between monarchy and public in the mixed-class environment of the ballroom'.²² Buurman offers a historical correction, showing that Congress dancing is more correctly represented by the elite polonaise rather than only the egalitarian waltz.

Notwithstanding the sparse and complex source material, Buurman's book is truly a valuable addition to scholarship, leaving me with one small quibble, and one larger one. The first concerns the physicality of dancing. In her Introduction, Buurman promises a tempting methodological richness; she rightly observes that 'considerations of the experiential and bodily aspects of dance were generally absent from investigations of dance music', suggesting that this omission will be rectified in her own study, however, an actual evocation of what dancing in a Viennese ballroom felt like remained elusive.²³ The larger quibble concerns the repeated invocation of Beethoven. The introduction refers several times to 'Beethoven's Vienna', but dancing Vienna is not Beethoven's Vienna, any more than one would consider Lachenmann or Grisey at the disco (this may well have happened, but is hardly definitive). Since 'dance music played a relatively marginal role in Beethoven's compositional output', he could perhaps feature less without reducing the considerable value and interest of Buurman's study.²⁴ His dance contributions are modest, including works such as WoO11, WoO14, WoO83, and WoO86, and his few dances for the *Redouten*. Buurman certainly identifies overlooked synergies by juxtaposing popular dance music with the 'serious music culture with which Beethoven is usually associated'.²⁵ But Beethoven's circle of aristocratic patrons was largely put off by the

²⁰ Ibid., 93.

²¹ Ibid., 108.

²² Ibid., 149.

²³ On this topic, see Maribeth Clark, 'The Quadrille as Embodied Musical Experience in 19th-Century Paris', *Journal of Musicology*, 19/3 (2002), 503–26.

²⁴ Buurman, *The Viennese Ballroom*, 10.

²⁵ Ibid., 1.

idea of mixing with the public in dance halls. The boundary lies not between ‘serious’ and ‘popular’ music, but between ‘exclusive’ and ‘inclusive’ social groups.

A bolder approach is taken by Nancy November in her study of Beethoven’s symphonies in arrangement, which she argues is the ‘first detailed study of the art and culture of arranging music in the early nineteenth century’.²⁶ November’s recent output is steadily transforming our understanding of the chamber music landscape in early nineteenth-century Vienna and beyond, ranging across performance, editing, cultural history, genre, and canon. Her *Cultivating String Quartets in Beethoven’s Vienna* (Boydell Press, 2017) depicted a living culture of music-making through a genre usually regarded as elite. Her edited collection *Performing History: Approaches to History across Musicology* (Academic Studies Press, 2020) romps across the globe, critiquing the relationship between performance, notions of authenticity, and the creation and maintenance of tradition. In other words, November is no stranger to the bigger questions of musicology. In *Beethoven’s Symphonies Arranged for the Chamber*, she seizes the bull by the horns, stating:

These canonical works are often considered to be paradigmatic musical works, touchstones for the development of the musical work that reside essentially in the complete orchestral versions left by the composer, which correspondingly demand fidelity to the composer’s intentions in editing, performance, and study.²⁷

Anyone who works in a conservatoire (and many who do not) will recognize such thinking. But November challenges the ‘anachronistic idea that the music of Beethoven and his contemporaries resides essentially in “complete”, unified works, in their original form as left by the composer – the so-called *Fassung letzter Hand*. Performance and pragmatism were central to the understanding and realization of the musical work in the early nineteenth century.’²⁸ November engages with a large range of thinkers, including Goehr’s influential writing on the work-concept.²⁹ She persuasively proposes an interruption in Goehr’s transition from a pre-1800 work being pragmatic, that is, generally composed for an event or occasion, and a post-1800 understanding of the work as open and regulative.³⁰ William Weber contributes to her thinking on canon development.³¹ And though she does not cite him, I thought repeatedly – perhaps sentimentally! – of Christopher Small’s *Musicking*, with which November’s work shares many principles.³²

²⁶ November, *Beethoven’s Symphonies Arranged for the Chamber*, 1.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 3.

²⁹ L. Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music*, 2nd edn (Oxford University Press, 2008 [1992]).

³⁰ As November points out, she is not the first to question Goehr’s neat division of music into pre- and post-1800 categories, nor Goehr’s concentration on Austro-Germany, citing Harry White, Stephen Davies, and Jim Samson.

³¹ William Weber, among others, has contributed richly to our understanding of canon formation; November invokes his tripartite division into scholarly, pedagogical, and performing canons. See, for example, William Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste: Concert Programming from Haydn to Brahms* (Cambridge University Press, 2009). See also William Weber, ‘The History of Musical Canon’, in *Rethinking Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (Oxford University Press, 1999), 336–55. See also Simon McVeigh, *Concert Life in London from Mozart to Haydn* (Cambridge University Press, 2013) and various significant contributions by Mary Sue Morrow.

³² I am not alone in this; as November reminds us, both Roland Barthes (in his essay ‘Musica Practica’) and Theodor Adorno (in ‘Vierhändig, noch einmal’, 1933) shared a nostalgia for piano arrangements as a form of embodied experience marginalized by mechanical reproduction. Quoted in November, *Beethoven’s Symphonies Arranged for the Chamber*, 207.

Much evidence supports November's claim that 'the degree to which musical arrangements shaped the social, musical, and ideological landscape in this era deserves considerably more attention than it has had'.³³ Beethoven himself referred to an age of musical 'translation', which November compellingly situates within wider discourse; arrangements – provided they were authorized and correctly labelled – were welcomed by composers as an effective and enjoyable means of disseminating repertoire.³⁴ They could function as a pedagogical tool to learn the art of composition,³⁵ and a means of getting to know a work deeply, as exemplified by Liszt's arrangements of Beethoven's symphonies created in 1837–65. Composers themselves could understand their own music differently through rearrangement; for example, from winds to strings and keyboard. Arranging generated income (November shares Buurman's compassion with musicians' financial precarity). Arrangements facilitated access to music for countless people who could not get to public performances.

While acknowledging the fact that the idea of the 'original' was important early on, arrangements also complicated the ontology of the musical work when issued simultaneously with or even before the original. Certainly, the music-maker would know best the version they themselves played, yet they could still engage with emerging ideas of canon or the sublime while fostering sociability and *Bildung*. Each stage is, in effect, a performance:

The arranger partly 'performs' the work in creating a new edition, which 'rehears' the original work in a new generic guise [...] But the performer 'completes' the work in performance, adding the necessary articulation or modifying what is set out in the edition to make it suitable for the technical standards and tastes of the ensemble.³⁶

As with Buurman, November reminds us of the vast networks in which arrangements were generated, intertwined with the world of authorized 'final' versions. These big questions are tackled through examples by five important arrangers including Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778–1837), Ferdinand Ries (1784–1838), and the lesser-known Michael Gottlieb Fischer, William Watts, and Carl Zulehner, focusing on the musical skill and quality evinced in their arrangements and encouraging a reappraisal of the criteria by which music is judged. For instance, November's comparison with Liszt's arrangements of Beethoven's symphonies is instructive; Liszt's deification of Beethoven allows Liszt himself to take on the role of high priest, in comparison with Hummel's more accessible arrangements.

November's own stance on the eventual hardening of 'authorised' versions is clear:

These people – composers such as Beethoven, critics such as the 1808 reviewer cited previously, publishers such as Steiner, and professional performers such as Ignaz Schuppanzigh – initiated a move towards a new and narrow understanding of chamber music, which would ultimately exclude arrangements. They sowed the ideological seeds for privileging certain elite and relatively fixed products of chamber music, epitomised by Beethoven's original string quartets.³⁷

³³ Ibid., 1.

³⁴ Relevant here is Philip V. Bohlman, 'Translating Herder Translating: Cultural Translation and the Making of Modernity', in *The Oxford Handbook of the New Cultural History of Music*, ed. Jane F. Fulcher (Oxford University Press, 2011), 501–22.

³⁵ November, *Beethoven's Symphonies Arranged for the Chamber*, 7.

³⁶ Ibid., 112.

³⁷ Ibid., 18.

Given the shroud of exclusivity which continues to surround classical music, November is correct in suggesting that the gains from this stance are outweighed by significant losses. There is, of course, a temptation to paint a rosy picture of active community musicking, depicting chamber music playing as a 'hands-on musical experience that promoted sociability and *Bildung* in the domestic sphere';³⁸ however, various social groups were excluded by lack of leisure and means, and women were excluded from string playing for different reasons (though this latter omission is arguably more than compensated for by the dominance of the piano). Still, November depicts a musical world which is characterized by devotion to playing chamber music for pleasure and edification, the repertoire itself characterized by flexibility of instrumentation and timbral diversity.

Chapter 2, 'Arrangers and Authority', considers the world of pirated and unauthorized arrangements, as exemplified by the (over-)assiduous Carl Zulehner (1770–1841). November touches on the international network of publishers who colluded with all sorts of practices which were ethically suspect if not legally forbidden in that pre-copyright age (Hummel memorably called publishers 'awful [...] note thieves').³⁹ Notwithstanding this issue, Zulehner's popular, well-crafted arrangements not only contributed to Beethoven's emerging renown but also demand musical investigation on their own terms: November's description of his four-hand arrangement of the First Symphony on page 61 and following is very tempting to a pianist.

Chapter 3, 'Selling Arrangements, Constructing the Canon', focuses on the publishers: Simrock in Bonn, Breitkopf & Härtel in Leipzig, and Lavenue and Monzani & Hill in London. It is not clear whether November feels publishers encouraged the proliferation of arrangements as a means of engaging with music in more detail, or discouraged the use of arrangements when 'the real thing' became more readily available. She seems to lean towards the former, but the truth probably lies in the middle, that is, listeners who felt insecure about their musical abilities, lacked time and leisure to practise, or were ideologically inclined to revere 'authentic' items, might well stop playing themselves, restrict their engagement with music to attending 'correct' performances, and construct an accompanying ideological justification. Such shifts are also bound up with factors such as changing work/travel patterns, though this is understandably beyond November's remit. She also does not comment on the more interactive nature of public concert life, with audiences participating in choosing repertoire (indicated by the words 'auf Verlangen' on programme), demanding and receiving encores, leaving if they were bored, and so forth, but again, this is not her focus.

Beethoven was a willing party to sanctioned arrangements, as detailed in Chapter 4, 'Beethoven and Steiner's Plan', November points out that in 1816, in collaboration with the Viennese publisher Anton Steiner, *Wellingtons Sieg* and the seventh and eighth symphonies were published as orchestral score and parts, and arrangements for solo piano, two pianos, four-hand piano, piano trio and string quintet.⁴⁰ But publishers did far more than publish; Steiner's shop was a networking hub, and the astute Tobias Haslinger, whose role in canon formation really deserves a dedicated study, was a composer himself. November also tries to tease out the agency of the end-user, drawing on memoirs, building on and critiquing

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Quoted in *ibid.*, 173.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 117.

Parakilas's influential essay on domestic music-making.⁴¹ This prompts a fascinating passage on how cannon effects in *Wellingtons Sieg* might have been realized in the domestic setting, for example, through 'appropriately noisy and theatrical' foot-stamping.⁴²

'Musical Arrangements and Musical Works' (Chapter 5) touches on a question which has troubled me for some time, namely *why* critics so assiduously fostered an ideology of *Werktreue*, praising faithfulness ('selflessness')⁴³ rather than upholding access and sociability. Though November reminds us that critical discourse represents just the upper-middle-class male and the musically literate perspective, she does not answer the question of why these men promoted *Werktreue*, and in what way they benefited from this policing of music.⁴⁴ Though November does not mention it, emergent scientific thought surely also fed into the critics' concern with precision and accuracy, and this surely complicates ideas of the aesthetic sublime (which itself is linked with the decline of formal religion). Moreover, how do those upper-middle-class male critics differ from other upper-middle-class male critics who still evaluated works according to their practicality; for example, the reviewer of the *Eroica* Symphony writing in London's *Harmonicon* in 1827 who found the work too difficult and long?⁴⁵

November suggests an earlier shift towards score-centrism than evidence perhaps allows; the 2014 edited volume *Brahms in the Home and the Concert Hall* provides considerable evidence of the importance of arrangements throughout the century, despite – indeed, in interaction with – the increasing number of professional public performances.⁴⁶ It would be valuable to explore further her claim that the diversity of arrangements reduced, increasingly moving towards piano only; my chapter in *Brahms in the Home* with Katy Hamilton and Helen Paskins uncovered a large range of instrumentations in arrangement, but a bigger study would illuminate the matter.⁴⁷ November turns to this later period with a rich reflection on the piano in the salon (rather than the concert) as the route to silent, attentive listening. Her final example is Anton Halm's arrangement of Beethoven's *Große Fuge*, op. 133 for four hands, and here again November's musical experience enables her to interpret from the inside the strengths and weaknesses of the arrangement, as well as identifying essential haptic aspects of the original quartet.⁴⁸

A great strength is November's easy shifting between macro- and micro-issues. For instance, though she does not attempt a taxonomy of arrangements, she distinguishes between their various functions, and uses quantitative data wherever available. She maintains

⁴¹ See James Parakilas, 'The Power of Domestication in the Lives of Musical Canons', *Repercussions*, 4/1 (1995), 5–25.

⁴² November, *Beethoven's Symphonies Arranged for the Chamber*, 144.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 156.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 153.

⁴⁶ See Katy Hamilton and Natasha Loges, *Brahms in the Home and the Concert Hall: Between Private and Public Performance* (Cambridge University Press, 2014).

⁴⁷ Helen Paskins, Katy Hamilton, and Natasha Loges, 'Brahms and His Arrangers', in *Brahms in the Home and the Concert Hall*, ed. Hamilton and Loges, 178–220.

⁴⁸ The rich literature on four-hand repertoire is drawn on here, including Thomas Christensen, 'Four-Hand Piano Transcription and Geographies of Nineteenth-Century Musical Reception', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 52/2 (1999), 255–98; and Adrian Daub's book-length study *Four-Handed Monsters: Four-Handed Piano Playing and Nineteenth-Century Culture* (Oxford University Press, 2014).

focus admirably, despite touching upon so many social, geographical, financial, legal, practical (playability, performance practice, and publication), and aesthetic issues, including genre and the emergence of the *Werktreue* ideal, all supported by a wealth of sharp-eyed musical and archival detail. As more information about women's musical activities emerges, it will be interesting to see whether her differentiation between women's use of arrangements in the pursuit of sociability and courtship, and men's to foster *Bildung* and networking might shift.⁴⁹ It would be worthwhile to explore what the gender split in amateur pianists was, and therefore what the gender implications of a general move towards piano arrangements later in century were (Brahms's circle, for instance, included both male and female competent amateur pianists). Moreover, the century witnessed countless successful female professional pianists, and those lives and works are only gradually being woven into the fabric of nineteenth-century music history.⁵⁰ Finally, we are only just beginning to understand queer identities in history, and these, too, may complicate associations between genders and instruments – the bourgeois *Hausfrau* playing four-hand piano with her best friend while her husband is at work may not be as transparent a figure as has been assumed.⁵¹ For this reason, I look forward to future research responding to November's interpretation of the role of four-hand piano arrangements, which she reads as 'tying [works] more firmly than ever before to institutional and ideological moorings'.⁵² Speaking as a keen player of those arrangements, I would argue that meaning-making, expression, indeed *control* still feels very much in my hands, rather than Beethoven's.

Both November's and Buurman's studies add more than nuance to our picture of early nineteenth-century Vienna; they prompt (tacitly in Buurman's case, more explicitly in November's) a rethink of Beethoven's position during the first third of the nineteenth century. Buurman illuminates the often-forgotten relationships between music and dance, and the situating of both activities within a time of social, political, and economic change. She reveals Beethoven's role within that genre, but ultimately demonstrates that the story of Viennese dance music transcends his importance in the city, thus encouraging us to recalibrate the political associations which have accreted around him over the past two centuries. November reminds us that the sound of Beethoven's symphonies, for the vast majority of listeners, well into the century, was not the monumental orchestral sound now understood as an ideal; more importantly, arrangements did not only mediate Beethoven's vision, but enabled anyone with an instrument and some music literacy to co-create that vision. She also claims that 'in practice the shift to understanding music, especially instrumental music, as transcendent was far from complete by 1800'.⁵³ Given the popularity of arrangements throughout the century, one might wonder whether that shift ever *was* complete, indeed whether it gained any real traction outside the upper-middle-class,

⁴⁹ November, *Beethoven's Symphonies Arranged for the Chamber*, 66–67. See, for example, the recent conference on Women's Agency in Schubert's Vienna, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 3–5 November 2022, conference proceedings forthcoming.

⁵⁰ For instance, Marianna Auenbrugger, Barbara Auernhammer, Maria Theresa de Paradis, Marie Bigot, Dorothea von Ertmann, and Marianna Martines.

⁵¹ An exceptional female amateur whose life overlapped with Beethoven's is Irene Kiesewetter (1811–72). From a male perspective, see, for example, Philip Brett, 'Piano Four-Hands: Schubert and the Performance of Gay Male Desire', *19th-Century Music*, 21/2 (1997), 149–76. An important recent addition is Simon Joyce, *LGBT Victorians: Sexuality and Gender in the Nineteenth-Century Archives* (Oxford University Press, 2022), though it does not focus on German-speaking lands.

⁵² November, *Beethoven's Symphonies Arranged for the Chamber*, 233.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 189.

highly literate, white male milieu from which it emerged. Finally, the chilling world of Metternich should not be forgotten, and nor should the disadvantages of the often-dubious business practices of publishers and arrangers. Both books offer refreshing, insightful, and original views of early nineteenth-century Vienna.