

A Beethoven Sketch for the Puzzle Canon "Das Schweigen," WoO 168

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In his essay on "Beethoven's Sketches for *Sehnsucht* (WoO 146)," Lewis Lockwood cites Gustav Nottebohm's pioneering essays on the subject of Beethoven's sketchbooks as primary sources for what he calls the prevailing view of the composer's creative approach to composition. Defined as a process of assiduous labor by which initial musical ideas were transformed by gradual stages into artistic substance, this view is admonished in some cases for its over-generalization and lack of accurate perspective, depth, and substance; in many cases, however, it is endorsed.¹ One example in support of the prevailing view is a manuscript leaf from the Moldenhauer Archives at the Library of Congress, containing fragmentary sketches for Beethoven's WoO 168, "Das Schweigen," the final movement of the Piano Sonata opus 101, as well as unidentified sketches in D minor.

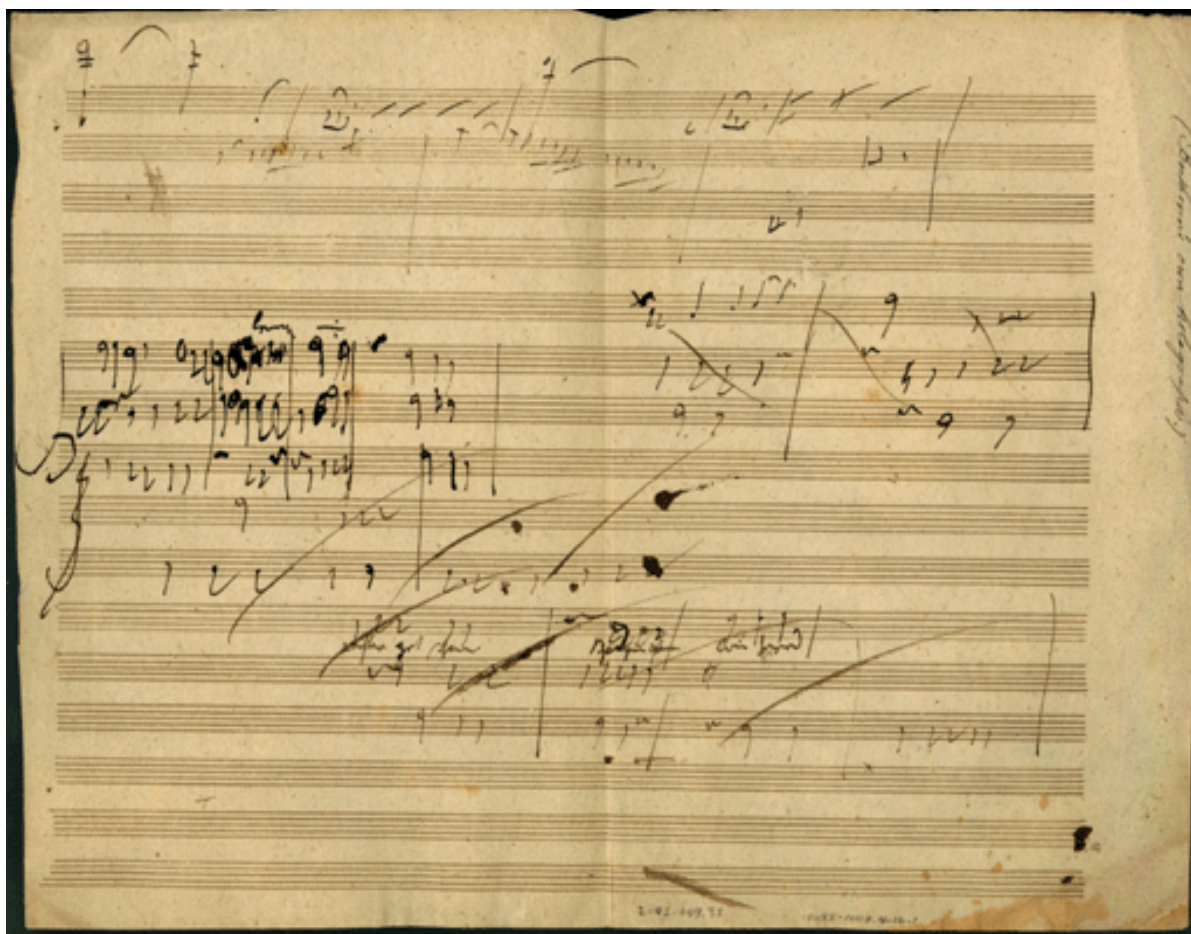
The sketch leaf was originally part of the sketchbook, acquired long since the leaf's removal and now owned by William Scheide. Beethoven used it from about March 1815 through about May 1816.² The composer's proclivity for intensive and quantitative preliminary work on his compositions is the quintessence of the Scheide sketchbook (SCHEIDE) as a whole. Portrayed as a reflection of a complex period in Beethoven's life and of a critical phase of transition for him as a composer, SCHEIDE has also been characterized as having the "function of a workshop for ideas that had run into trouble elsewhere, a place particularly suited for work on difficult problems but not to write out full compositional drafts in detail."³

SCHEIDE was purchased at the 1827 auction of Beethoven's estate by the music publisher and dealer Domenico Artaria, whose son, August Artaria, sold it to the Viennese collector Eugen von Miller in 1871. From von Miller, it passed on to G. B. Davy of Kingussie, Scotland; Louis Koch of Frankfurt-am-Main then acquired it for his collections; his heirs incorporated it into the Flörsheim collection, from which William Scheide procured it in 1965.⁴

Gustav Nottebohm provided the first extensive description of the sketchbook in an 1876 essay published in the periodical *Musikalisches Wochenblatt* and subsequently reprinted with minor modifications in *Zweite Beethoveniana*.⁵ Here he identifies the most striking physical characteristic of SCHEIDE, the loss of seventeen and three-quarters consecutive leaves between pages 32 and 33.

These leaves, which include the Moldenhauer sketch leaf, were severed from the sketchbook sometime before the initial inventory of Artaria's auction purchases was compiled.⁶

The manuscript in the Moldenhauer Archives consists of a single leaf of oblong format measuring approximately 225 millimeters by 287/295 millimeters, and is ruled on both sides with sixteen staves approximately 196 millimeters long. There are three stitch holes [?] located 6 millimeters to 10 millimeters from the left edge. Measuring from the top downwards, the first hole is at 28 millimeters (slightly above staff two), the second at 107 millimeters (adjacent to staff eight), and the third at 190 millimeters (directly below staff fourteen). The watermark consists of the letters [S]LING located along the upper left corner and the letters JJ along the lower right edge of staves twelve and thirteen;⁷ nine vertical chain lines, positioned approximately 32-millimeter to 35-millimeter intervals apart, are also discernible. Sometime after its extraction from the sketchbook, the manuscript was folded in half in the middle. Additional idiosyncrasies include the following: on the recto, an inscription in black ink positioned vertically along the right edge that reads "(Beethoven's own holograph)"; the numbers 2-92-243,35 in pencil along the bottom, slightly to the right of the fold; also in pencil, a partially erased number fifteen located to the right of staves fourteen and fifteen. On the verso, the inscription B5 appears in pencil along the top center.



Following four staves of unidentified music in D minor, are sketches for the puzzle canon "Das Schweigen," WoO 168 no.1, located on staves five through thirteen (recto). Beethoven's long-term attraction to the poem by Johann Gottfried Herder is substantiated by the fact that he copied the extract on at least two known occasions: first, in an 1813 entry in his Tagebuch, and again in 1815 on the inner cover (verso) of MENDELSSOHN 1.⁸

"Lerne schweigen, o Freund. Dem Silber gleicht die Rede, aber zu rechter Zeit schweigen is lauterer Gold."

"Learn to keep silent, O friend. Speech is like silver, but to be silent at the right moment is pure gold."⁹

Beethoven dedicated "Das Schweigen" along with a second canon on Herder's subsequent verse, "Das Reden," to Englishman Charles Neate, a well-known musician of the time who was a proficient pianist, cellist, teacher, and composer and whose great ambition in life was to meet and study with Beethoven. To this purpose, he traveled to Vienna in May of 1815 and arranged to be introduced to his idol.¹⁰ Not long afterwards, when Beethoven moved to Unter-Döbling that July through October, Neate followed him there and took up residence nearby. Even though the two became friends over the ensuing months, Neate's hopes to have private instruction in composition did not materialize; rather it was recommended that he study with Beethoven's former teacher Emanuel Aloys Förster.¹¹

Neate remained in Vienna from October 1815 until early February of 1816; on 24 January, a fortnight before his return to London, Beethoven inscribed the two canons, "Das Schweigen" and "Das Reden" into his *Stammbuch* with the following dedication: "Mein lieber englischer Landsmann, gedenken Sie beim Schweigen und Reden Ihres aufrichtigen Freundes Ludwig van Beethoven."¹²

Published research concerning the canon's autographs, sketches, and solutions is as disperse as it is nebulous. Although five autograph manuscripts of WoO 168 have been cited in the literature, only one has been manifested as being both authentic and extant. Neate's *Stammbuch*, mentioned above, described by Thayer in his *Chronologisches Verzeichniss* of 1865 is no longer extant.¹³ Kinsky-Halm mentions a second autograph dating from ca. 1815 and cited in Berlin antiquarian Leo Liepmannsohn's auction catalog 43, entry 578. According to this source, page one of the oblong Skizzenblatt contained music for the complete canon with text, while the opposite (fourth) side included short sketches from the same work.¹⁴ The whereabouts of this source are also unknown.

Otto E. Albrecht cites the Moldenhauer sketch leaf in his publication on Beethoven manuscripts in the United States (Census 231D); the citation, however, may be (and has been) misconstrued as it specifically identifies the music for the Piano Sonata in A Major as "sketches for the third movement," but then concludes by reporting that the manuscript "Contains also WoO 168, 'Das Schweigen.'"¹⁵ Based on this information, Kurt Dorf Müller, in his supplement to Kinsky-Halm's *Thematisch-Bibliographischen Verzeichnis*, classifies the music for WoO 168 on the Moldenhauer leaf as an autograph, rather than as a sketch.¹⁶ The authenticity of the fourth autograph manuscript (cited in Dorf Müller's Supplement as London, Royal College of Music, MS 2174) is dubious at best.¹⁷ Finally, the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna holds the only extant autograph manuscript, identified as A 18.¹⁸

A brief survey of five identified sketches for "Das Schweigen" raises the issue of two separate musical renditions based on the same text. Of the four manuscripts cited in the Schmidt *Verzeichnis*, two appear to contain music unrelated to WoO 168: the first of these in E Major, SV70, is located on page 22 of MENDELSSOHN I;¹⁹ both Schmidt and Dorf Müller indicate that a second sketch in B Major, identified as SV187 (not 185) and found on folio 39 of London, British Museum Library Add. 29997, is also independent of WoO 168.²⁰ A third manuscript, SV389, was unavailable for consultation at this writing.²¹

Thus, only the two remaining sources, SV364 and the Moldenhauer leaf (not in SV, Albrecht Census 231D), contain sketches for the puzzle canon WoO 168, which together offer a small but significant contribution toward our understanding of its solution.²² Immediately striking upon comparison is the close parallel in musical content between the two manuscripts; overall, they disclose a combination of voices, especially in measures 11 through 16 of the published solution (see below), that were obviously troublesome for Beethoven at this early stage of composition. Four separate fragments on the Moldenhauer leaf reiterate elements from measures 9 through 16; Beethoven included the text, "rechter Zeit schweigen - Schweigen ist lauterer," in the final four-measure segment (staves 11-13).

The first edition of the canon was published in the Vienna *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* on March 6, 1817.²³ Apparently, the inclusion of entry signs was recommended, perhaps due to the imitations' irregular entry periods: one voice at the lower fifth entering in measure 2 and the third voice at the octave below entering in measure 4. On June 5, 1817, the same journal published a solution, now in score form, submitted by Hyronimus Payer under the slightly inflated title: "Auflösung des Räthsels Canons von Herrn L. van Beethoven/Siehe No. 10 dieses Blättes Beylage No. 3/und zwar ganz richtig durch Herrn Hyronimus Payer."²⁴ There is no evidence in the literature that Beethoven ever objected to the content of this publication. Here is a reproduction of Payer's score.

Auflösung
des Rhapsodie Canons von Herrn L. van Beethoven
(Chalk No. 10 des Scheide Albums, Anlage No. 1)
und seiner genau richtig durch
Herrn Hyronimus Payer.

The third published solution to the canon in volume three of the German edition of Thayer's biography of Beethoven interjects a puzzle of its own by replacing the signature of F Major with B-flat Major, without transposing the melody.²⁵ This would ensure that strict imitation at the lower fifth (D, C, B-flat - G, F, E-flat) is accomplished, but at the same time discredits the integrity of the work as the composer intended it. Both the Moldenhauer manuscript and SV364 verify Beethoven's resolution to the issue of precise imitation, showing a notated E-flat in the inner voice at measure 15; the note E remains natural, however, in the remainder of both sketches.

¹ See Lockwood's article in *Beethoven Studies*, ed. Alan Tyson (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1973), pp. 97-98.

² Douglas Johnson, Alan Tyson, and Robert Winter, *The Beethoven Sketchbooks: History, Reconstruction, Inventory* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), p. 241.

³ Lewis Lockwood, "The Beethoven Sketchbook in the Scheide Library," *The Princeton University Library Chronicle*, XXXVII, Winter 1976, no. 2 p. 149.

⁴ Ibid., p. 142; see also Johnson et al., *The Beethoven Sketchbooks...*, p. 241.

⁵ Gustav Nottebohm, "Neue Beethoveniana: Ein Skizzenbuch aus den Jahren 1815 und 1816," *Musikalisches Wochenblatt*, VII, 1876, pp. 609-11, 625-27, 637-39, 653-55, 669-70; and Gustav Nottebohm, *Zweite Beethoveniana*, E. Mandyczewski, ed. (Leipzig: Verlag von C.F. Peters, 1887), pp. 321-48.

⁶ According to Johnson et al., this inventory was probably completed not long after auction, but certainly before the spring of 1835. See *The Beethoven Sketchbooks...*, p. 20.

⁷ Classified as paper type 42, quadrant 4a in Johnson et al., *The Beethoven Sketchbooks...*, p. 558.

⁸ On the Tagebuch, see Maynard Solomon's essay "Beethoven's Tagebuch" in *Beethoven Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 235-36 and 247-48. A third, albeit illegible, transcription of this extract, or portions thereof, might be located on folio 10 of Add. Ms 29997.

⁹ According to Solomon, "Das Schweigen" is one of Johann Gottfried Herder's free renderings of didactic, aphoristic poetry from the *Bustan* and *Gulistan* by the Persian poet Sa'di (ca. 1184-1291) and was first published as part of the *Blumen aus morgenländischen Dichtern gesammelt in Zerstreute Blätter, vierte Sammlung* in 1792. It was reprinted in *Herders poetische Werke*, ed. Carl Redlich, *Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. 26/2 (Berlin, 1881), p. 374.

¹⁰ One of Neate's obligations on this Viennese expedition was to present a proposal to Beethoven from the Philharmonic Society, requesting three new concert overtures to be performed by the London orchestra. Instead of composing new works, however, Beethoven gave Neate manuscript copies of the overtures "Die Ruinen von Athen," opus 113, "Zur Namensfeier," opus 115, and "König Stephan," opus 117. Unfortunately, with the Eroica Symphony still fresh in their minds, these works did not meet the Philharmonic's expectations. See Emily Anderson, "Charles Neate: A Beethoven Friendship," in *Festschrift Otto Erich Deutsch zum 80. Geburtstag am 5. September 1963* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1963), p. 198.

¹¹ Alexander Wheelock Thayer, *Ludwig van Beethovens Leben* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1923), Dritter Band, p. 505. Ibid., pp. 197-99.

¹² Unfortunately, Neate's souvenir album was lost, but not before he showed it to Thayer in 1861, who copied and published the canons in 1865.

¹³ Alexander W. Thayer, *Chronologisches Verzeichniss der Werke Ludwig van Beethovens* (Berlin: Ferdinand Schneider, 1865), entry 202, p. 131.

¹⁴ 43. *Autographen-Sammlung: Versteigerung vom 21. bis 22. November 1913 bei Leo Liepmannssohn*. Antiquariat, entry 578, p. 77.

¹⁵ Otto E. Albrecht, "Beethoven Autographs in the United States," in *Beiträge zur Beethoven-Bibliographie: Studien und Materialien zum Werkverzeichnis von Kinsky-Halm*, ed. Kurt Dorf Müller (München: G. Henle Verlag, 1978), p. 6.

¹⁶ Kurt Dorf Müller, "Supplement zum Thematisch-Bibliographischen Verzeichnis von Kinsky-Halm," in *Beiträge zur Beethoven-Bibliographie: Studien und Materialien zum Werkverzeichnis von Kinsky-Halm*, ed. Kurt Dorf Müller (München: G. Henle Verlag, 1978), p. 384.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 364-65. Under the entry for WoO 60 is a brief discussion of a single-leaf manuscript originating from one of Beethoven's pocket sketchbooks, which dates from 1818 according to Nottebohm, and containing music for opus 106 (SV275). According to Nottebohm, an autograph of WoO 168, dated "24 January 1816" is written "without dedication." Dorf Müller adds the disclaimer that the authenticity of this source is yet to be proven. See also Nottebohm, *Zweite Beethoveniana*, p. 137.

¹⁸ Dr. Otto Biba of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde has confirmed this holding; the manuscript was included in the 1927 Beethoven Centenary Exhibition in Vienna.

¹⁹ Hans Schmidt, "Verzeichnis der Skizzen Beethovens," in *Beethoven-Jahrbuch*, Jahrgang 1965/68 (Bonn: Beethovenhaus, 1969), p. 46; Nottebohm, *Zweite Beethoveniana*, p. 317. The transcription for approximately five measures of music in E Major (key signature included) are accompanied with Nottebohm's comment that this canon was never published in this form.

²⁰ Schmidt, *Verzeichnis...*, p. 74; Dorf Müller, *Supplement...*, p. 384. Reported in Augustus Hughes-Hughes, *Catalogue of Manuscript Music in the British Museum*, vol. II (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1909), p. 9.

²¹ According to Schmidt, SV389 is held in Weimar's Nationale Forschungs- und Gedenkstätten der klassischen deutschen Literatur; recent correspondence with the music reference staff at the Stiftung Weimarer Klassik of Weimar's Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek contends that the manuscript is not part of their collections.

²² SV364 refers to page 55 of the SCHEIDE sketchbook; see Nottebohm, *Zweite Beethoveniana*, pp.330-31.

²³ (Weiner) *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung, mit besonderer Rücksicht auf den österreichischen Kaiserstaat*, Erster Jahrgang Nr. 10, Beylage No. 3 (6 März 1817), 80/81.

²⁴ (Weiner) *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung, mit besonderer Rücksicht auf den österreichischen Kaiserstaat*, Erster Jahrgang Nr. 23, Beylage No. 6 (5 Juny 1817), 192/93. This edition is cited by Thayer in the *Chronologisches Verzeichniss...*, p. 131.

²⁵ Thayer, *Ludwig van Beethovens Leben*, p. 533. On this subject see Ludwig Misch, *Beethoven Studies*, (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953), pp. 124-25.