

Handel's *Messiah* as model and source for Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*

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Handel's *Messiah* as Model and Source for Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*

Amy Carr-Richardson

Beethoven had the highest regard for Handel, claiming on more than one occasion “he was the greatest composer who ever lived.”¹ In a letter to Archduke Rudolph written during the composition of the *Missa Solemnis* and dated 1819, he wrote that “the old masters . . . have real artistic value (among them, of course, only the German Handel and Sebastian Bach possessed genius).”² While in his earlier years, Beethoven claimed that Mozart was the greatest composer, he indicated a preference for the works of Handel and Bach when he reached his own mature years. In 1823, Beethoven also spoke of *Messiah* with highest praise, and he said of Handel, “I would uncover my head, and kneel down at his tomb!”³ In the last few months of his life, Beethoven received a gift of the Arnold complete edition of Handel’s works, which he described as “glorious;”⁴ and even during his final illness, in February 1827, Beethoven reportedly told his doctor that “if there were a physician who could help me, his name shall be called Wonderful!”⁵ These statements are considered to be consistent with the view of Handel’s music as serious and appropriate for grand state occasions in

¹Alexander Thayer, *The Life of Ludwig van Beethoven*, revised and edited by Elliot Forbes, (Princeton: 1967), 871.

²Emily Anderson, trans. and ed., *The Letters of Beethoven* (London: 1961), 822–23, no. 955; *Ludwig van Beethovens sämtliche Briefe*, ed. Emerich Kastner, rev. Julius Kapp (Leipzig: 1923), 511, no. 900.

³Thayer-Forbes, 871.

⁴Anderson, letter 1550.

⁵Thayer-Forbes, 1038.

Vienna. The monumentality of Handel's choruses and the effect of the choral sublime had an influence on Beethoven's music.⁶

Beethoven's knowledge of the earlier composer was considerable: along with the keyboard suites, six keyboard fugues, and concerti grossi (op. 6), Beethoven definitely knew Handel's *Julius Caesar*, *Esther*, *Alexander's Feast*, *Saul*, *Solomon*, *Belsazzar*, and *Judas Maccabeus*, as well as *Messiah*.⁷ A reference to the "Dead March" from Handel's oratorio *Saul* is found in a conversation book entry of 1820. Based on this inscription, Beethoven apparently considered composing variations on the march.⁸ His knowledge of Handel's music stemmed, in part, from his access to private music libraries and musical performances in Vienna. Baron van Swieten, Austrian ambassador to North Germany, played a pivotal role in this situation. He hosted weekly Sunday afternoon musical gatherings at his home, which focused on the instrumental and vocal music of the Bach family and Handel. Beginning in April 1782, some of Mozart's

⁶ See Nicholas Mathew, "Beethoven's Political Music, the Handelian Sublime, and the Aesthetics of Prostration," *Nineteenth-century Music*, 33:2 (fall 2009), 110–150; see also James Webster "The *Creation*, Haydn's Late Vocal Music and the Musical Sublime," in *Haydn and His World*, ed. Elaine Sisman, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 57–102.

⁷ Warren Kirkendale, *Fugue and Fugato in Rococo and Classical Chamber Music*, revised and expanded second edition, trans. Margaret Bent and the author (Durham, North Carolina: 1979), 215–217. Also see Carol Ann Bruner, *The Genesis and Structure of Beethoven's Overture "Die Weihe des Hauses,"* op.124, Thesis (M.A.) - University of Victoria, 1985.

⁸ Ludwig van Beethoven, *Konversationbefe*, 1, ed. Karl-Heinz Köhler and Grita Herre, (Leipzig: Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1972), 322.

letters referred to these gatherings, in which Beethoven participated after his arrival in Vienna in 1792. The baron frequently invited Beethoven to his home and took an active interest in the composer's counterpoint studies with Haydn and Schenk.⁹ Under van Swieten, Handel's oratorios were performed occasionally in Vienna—between 1792–99, at least six such productions took place, including one of *Messiah*. After his death in 1803, the number of these productions declined, but they did not cease. In fact, another Viennese performance of *Messiah* took place in 1815.¹⁰

Beethoven's admiration for Handel's music contributed directly to some of his own compositions. For example, Beethoven composed twelve variations (WoO 45) for 'cello and piano on the theme from Handel's chorus "See the conquering hero comes" from *Judas Maccabaeus*: this particular composition could have been inspired by the Viennese performance of *Judas Maccabaeus* organized by van Swieten in the spring of 1794.¹¹ Similarly, Beethoven's overture, "Die Weihe des Hauses," op.124 (1822) indicates the retrospective character often associated with his late works, particularly through his emulation of Handel's direct contrapuntal style.¹² This work may have been influenced by *Solomon*, as Beethoven had transcribed the fugue from

⁹ Teresa M. Neff, "Baron van Swieten and Late Eighteenth-Century Viennese Musical Culture," Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1998.

¹⁰ Kirkendale, *Fugue*, 219.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 216–17.

¹² Bruner, *Die Weihe*, provides a discussion of Handel's broader influence on Beethoven and on this piece, as well as a detailed analysis of the work.

Solomon's overture for string quartet (Hess 36), and as Warren Kirkendale points out, the opening melodic gestures of the two works are generally similar: "Beethoven may have had the theme of this overture (with fifth-step melody) in mind when he wrote his overture."¹³

In addition to the direct influence from Handel's music that may be traced with variations on one of his themes, direct transcriptions of his fugues, or the general evocation of Handel's style in Beethoven's choral fugues, this article proposes that Beethoven may have borrowed specific musical ideas from Handel's *Messiah* and reworked them for use in his own *Missa Solemnis*. Scholars have previously noted stylistic resemblances between choruses of the *Missa Solemnis* and those written by Handel, and more specifically how Beethoven may have based the fugal subject of his *Dona nobis pacem* (from the *Agnus Dei*, m. 215) on Handel's "and He shall reign forever and ever" in the Hallelujah Chorus.¹⁴ The autograph score

¹³ Kirkendale, *Fugue*, 216–217. Willy Hess's *Verzeichnis der nicht in der Gesamtausgabe veröffentlichten Werke Ludwig van Beethoven*, (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf und Härtel), 1957, was intended as a catalog that would supplement and act as an addendum to the old Gesamtausgabe. It included unfinished works and attempted to present a more complete edition of Beethoven's works. *The New Hess Catalog of Beethoven's Works* by James F. Green (West Newbury, Vermont: Vance Brook Publishing), 2003, contains a revised edition of the original catalog, including new appendices and an expanded concordance.

¹⁴ Warren Kirkendale, "New Roads to Old Ideas in Beethoven's *Missa solemnis*," *Musical Quarterly* 56, no. 4 (October 1970), 665–701. Kirkendale and others have asserted that Beethoven undoubtedly borrowed from the Hallelujah chorus in a conscious manner. Based on his study of sketches for the mass, William Drabkin claims that perhaps this passage was not

of the Gloria has been missing since the nineteenth century, but extant sketches for this movement provide some opportunities to explore its genesis.

In discussing the plagal cadence that sounds at the end of the Gloria, Birgit Lodes notes that “. . . Beethoven might have found his models in older music, from Renaissance vocal polyphony or religious works by Handel, or C.P.E. Bach rather than the mass repertory of his own time. There is evidence that Beethoven took a lively interest in their church music before and during the composition of the *Missa Solemnis*.”¹⁵ She goes on to note that Beethoven copied “And the glory of the Lord,” “Lift up your Heads,” and the “Hallelujah” and points out, further, that Beethoven’s copy of the chorus “And with his stripes” in his own hand (which is based on Mozart’s version of the *Messiah*) provides evidence that Beethoven was thinking about the *Messiah* while composing his own mass: “Hitherto it has not been recognized that several sketches for the Gloria were

conceived as a quotation, and that Beethoven may have wished to cloak any perceived thematic resemblances between this passage and Handel’s theme. He also points out that no reference to this Handel chorus has ever been found in the sketchbooks, despite the presence of numerous excerpts from *Messiah*. See William Drabkin, “The Agnus Dei of Beethoven’s *Missa* solemnis: The Growth of its Form,” in *Beethoven’s Compositional Process*, North American Beethoven Studies Vol. I, ed. William Kinderman (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 131–159 and Drabkin, *Beethoven: Missa Solemnis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 3–4 and 92–93.

¹⁵ Birgit Lodes, “‘When I try, now and then, to give musical form to my turbulent feelings’: The Human and the Divine in the Gloria of Beethoven’s *Missa* solemnis,” *Beethoven Forum* 6, Lewis Lockwood, ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), 1998, 163.

entered on the last, empty page of Beethoven's copy [of this Handel chorus]."¹⁶ Scholars have also noted that Beethoven's sketches include isolated entries for "All they that see Him," and "He trusted in God."¹⁷

Composed from the spring of 1819 to 1822, the *Missa Solemnis* was corrected in 1823 and premiered in 1824. Based on his study of the sketches and conversation books, Winter has determined that work on the mass could not have started before April 1819, and that the main work on the Gloria likely extended from approximately June through December 1819. Originally conceived as a means of paying tribute to Archduke Rudolph on his installation as Archbishop in March 1820, the mass was not completed in time, with the main work on the piece being completed by August 1822.¹⁸

Beethoven made extensive study and preparation before the composition of his mass, including collecting plainchant, consulting sources in Archduke Rudolph's library of sacred music, consulting

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷As explained by Johnson, Tyson, and Winter, isolated entries for "All they that see him," and "He trusted in God," are found on page 5 of the sketchbook Artaria 197. Isolated sketches for the Gloria are found on page 21. Based on the physical condition of these pages and sketches, they may have occurred at an earlier time, prior to the assembly of the sketchbook. Douglas Johnson, Alan Tyson, and Robert Winter, *The Beethoven Sketchbooks* (Berkeley, University of California Press), 265–270.

¹⁸ Robert Winter, "Reconstructing Riddles: The Sources for Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*," in *Beethoven Essays: Studies in Honor of Elliot Forbes*, ed. Lewis Lockwood and Phyllis Benjamin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 217–250. This article also contains an appendix that lists the unstitched pocket sketches for the mass.

historical treatises, and carefully considering his setting of the text.¹⁹ Kirkendale traces the influence of traditional rhetorical figures in the Gloria and other movements, as well as that of traditional musical military idioms in the Agnus Dei. He also claims that Handel's *Messiah* was a direct model for passages of the Benedictus, which he also compares with the slow movement of op. 59/2.

The sketches for the Mass in C, op. 86, provide evidence that Beethoven's earlier sacred choral works may also have been shaped by modeling. McGrann explains that the sketches indicate a clear relationship between passages of the Gloria of Haydn's Creation Mass and op. 86, in the realms of structure, content, and text-setting. As he notes, Beethoven copied portions of this work by Haydn, and "it would appear that Beethoven grafted the opening Allegro of his Gloria onto Haydn's Gloria . . ." ²⁰ Haydn's *Missa in*

¹⁹ Kirkendale, "New Roads," 699. For further discussion of Beethoven's knowledge of earlier sacred music, see Richard Kramer, "In Search of Palestrina: Beethoven in the Archives," in *Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven: Studies in the Music of the Classical Period*, ed. Sieghard Brandenburg (Oxford, 1998), 283–300 and Sieghard Brandenburg, "The Historical Background to the 'Heiliger Dankgesang' from Opus 132," in *Beethoven Studies* 3, ed. Alan Tyson (Cambridge and New York, 1982), 161–191.

²⁰ Jeremiah W. McGrann, "Haydn, a Prince, and Beethoven's Mass in C," *Choral Journal* 50.2 (September 2009), 9–23; pg. 11; also see McGrann, "Beethoven's Mass in C, Op. 86: Genesis and Compositional Background," 2 vols., Ph.D. diss., Harvard, 1991. Other sources discussing the influence of Haydn's masses on op. 86 include Jens Peter Larsen, "Beethoven's C-Major Mass and the Late Masses of Joseph Haydn," in *Handel, Haydn, and the Viennese Classical Style*, Studies in Musicology, no. 100 (Ann Arbor: UMI Research, 1988), and J. Merrill Knapp, "Beethoven's Mass in C Major, Op. 86," in *Beethoven Essays*, 199–216.

angustiis and *Theresienmesse* may also have influenced op. 86. In a letter of July 1807 to Prince Esterházy, who had commissioned the work to celebrate his wife's name day, Beethoven claimed to be apprehensive about comparison of his new work with the late masses of Haydn. McGrann interprets this "stated apprehension" as concealing the fact that Beethoven was actually imitating Haydn.²¹

Bathia Churgin has described Beethoven's analysis of the *Kyrie* fugue from Mozart's *Requiem*, which is located on the reverse side of a sketch containing a draft for the Credo fugue from the *Missa Solemnis*. She notes that Beethoven likely studied Mozart's fugue during 1819 or 1820, perhaps while preparing to compose his own Gloria and Credo fugues.

Beethoven's notes about Mozart's fugue suggest an interest in selecting the voices for presentation of the subject and countersubject, use of double counterpoint, and the metric placement of the subject and countersubject.²²

²¹ Anderson, letter 150, page 174; McGrann, "Haydn," 21. See also Prince Esterházy's reply of 9 August 1807, in which he states that Beethoven's concern about comparison with Haydn's late masses, which had been composed for the same purpose, "only enhances the value of your work." See *Letters to Beethoven*, trans. and ed. by Theodore Albrecht, North American Beethoven Studies, vol. 2, ed. William Meredith (University of Nebraska Press, 1996), letter 123, page 192.

²² Bathia Churgin, "Beethoven and Mozart's Requiem: A New Connection," *Journal of Musicology* 5 (1987): 457–77. Reprint with additions and corrections, Min-Ad, *Israeli Studies in Musicology Online* (Vol. II, 2006): 19–39 and Addenda.

Along with the possible connections between Beethoven's mass and works by other composers, scholars have noted a close relationship between passages in the mass and some of Beethoven's other compositions. Kinderman has discussed the use of a network of referential harmonies in the mass, especially the Credo and Benedictus, the ninth symphony, and the string quartet op. 127. He describes the consistent use of these specific harmonies placed in a high register and their symbolic reference to eternal life or to the heavens.²³ Even brief musical works, such as canons, may point toward an integrated relationship between the mass and Beethoven's other works. A puzzle canon, "Gott ist eine feste Burg" (WoO 188), which was written in January, 1825, after completion of the *Missa solemnis*, shares a motivic connection with it. The "credo, credo" motive of the mass (mm. 3–4 and 5–6) are exactly the same as mm. 1–2 and 5–6 of the canon.²⁴ These examples suggest an open attitude on Beethoven's part in terms of seeking musical ideas and an interest in exploiting their complete potential in a variety of musical contexts.

²³ William Kinderman, "Beethoven's Symbol for the Deity in the *Missa Solemnis* and the Ninth Symphony," *Nineteenth-Century Music* 9 (1985): 102–118; and "Beethoven's Compositional Models for the Choral Finale of the Ninth Symphony," in *Beethoven's Compositional Process*, 160–188; and *Beethoven* (New York: Oxford, 2009), 276 and 309.

²⁴ Leilani Kathryn Lutes, *Beethoven's Re-Uses of his own Compositions, 1782–1826*, Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1974, 378–379. She provides a thorough account of the types of re-use and concludes that over one-third of Beethoven's compositions were involved in some type of re-use of material.

Voice-leading

The method by which Beethoven may have reworked materials from Handel's music includes the use of composite melodies, whereby a single melodic statement is presented by different voices and in different registers. An instance of this compositional technique is shown in example 1, which contains an excerpt from Beethoven's string quartet arrangement of a four-voice fugue from the *Well Tempered Clavier*. Created in 1817, this arrangement (Hess 35) adapts the counterpoint by redistributing the original melodic lines.

Note in example 1b how the second violin begins this passage with a segment of the soprano line, but then continues with a segment of the alto line, while violin 1 begins with the alto line and continues with the soprano line. A similar situation occurs in the *Agnus Dei* of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, where according to the sketches, he planned to quote the name "BACH" (see example 2a).

Example 1a: Bach, B minor fugue, WTC, Book I, mm. 30-33.

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Example 1b: Beethoven's string quartet arrangement of Bach's B minor fugue, violin parts, mm. 31-33 (transcription from Willy Hess, "Eine Bach- und Handlbearbeitung Beethovens," *Schweizerische Musikzeitung* 94 (1954), 142-43).

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Example 2a: Beethoven, sketches for *Agnus Dei* of *Missa Solemnis*, from Artaria 197, p. 62 (William Drabkin, "The Sketches and Autographs for the Later Movements of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*," *Beethoven Forum* 2, 1993, 97-132; sketch examples are from p. 122).

a. p. 70

b. p. 71

Example 2b: Beethoven, sketches for *Agnus Dei* of *Missa Solemnis*, from Artaria 201, pp. 70 and 71 ((William Drabkin, "The Sketches and Autographs for the Later Movements of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*," *Beethoven Forum* 2, 1993, 97-132; sketch examples are from p. 122).

As William Drabkin has explained, an actual quote is not retained in the final version, but Beethoven did not abandon this idea immediately. In the sketches from *Artaria 201*, the melodic segment B \flat —A—C—B \natural is preserved in the soprano line, and then divided between the tenor and soprano parts (see example 2b). Note that a voice-exchange occurs between the tenor and soprano at the point where the signature motive transfers from tenor to soprano: pitch-classes A and C are exchanged here. In the final version, only remnants of the reference to “BACH” remain: not only are the notes spread between different voices and sung in different octaves, but they are also separated by two measures: G—B \flat —A (tenor solo, mm. 198–99) and A—C—B (alto solo, mm. 202–204).²⁵ The three pairs of square brackets on example 2b (pages 70–71 of the sketchbook *Artaria 201*) are mine and have been added to clarify the specific usage of the BACH motive, and especially its composite setting.²⁶

²⁵ William Drabkin, “The Sketches and Autographs for the Later Movements of Beethoven’s *Missa Solemnis*,” in *Beethoven Forum* 2, ed. Lewis Lockwood (Lincoln, Nebraska: 1993), 97–132.

²⁶ In his transcription of Beethoven’s sketchbook *Artaria 195*, which includes many notations related to the mass, Kinderman includes his own transcription of the first sketch shown in example 2 above (*Artaria 197*, page 62). It differs only slightly from that of Drabkin by including letter-name labels for two of the pitches (G4 and D4) that remain unmarked in example 2. Kinderman’s commentary acknowledges the difficulty of reading this particular sketch. See William Kinderman, *Artaria 195: Beethoven’s Sketchbook for the Missa Solemnis and the Piano Sonata in E major, Opus 109*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003), vol. III, ix.

Beethoven once remarked that his late quartets contained a new type of “voice treatment (part writing), and thank God there is no less imagination than ever before.”²⁷ Perhaps the use of composite melodies, as shown in examples 1 and 2, is one aspect of the new compositional technique to which he referred. While the examples just discussed may provide easy opportunities for tracing composite melody because they consist of an arrangement (example 1) and an ordered series of sketches (example 2), other musical characteristics of a passage may aid in identifying the path of a composite melody. In most cases, one of three situations occurs when the composite melody shifts to a new voice: a voice-exchange (such as in the sketch from the *Agnus Dei* cited above), a melodic or harmonic octave or unison between the two voices, or the use of the same distinct register in the two voices presenting consecutive segments of the melody.

²⁷ Thayer-Forbes, 982; from Holz’s recollections as recorded in Wilhelm von Lenz, *Eine Kunst-Studie*, (Hamburg: Hoffman and Campe, 1860), part 5, page 217. Holz’s recollections were transmitted orally to Lenz in 1857, but are generally considered reliable. In a separate passage, Holz acknowledged the high degree of independence among the four voices in Beethoven’s late quartets; see Lenz, part 5, page 213. For further discussion on this aspect of the late quartets, see William Drabkin, “The Cello Part in Beethoven’s Late Quartets,” in *Beethoven Forum* 7, ed. Mark Evan Bonds (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 45–66, and Lewis Lockwood, *Beethoven: Studies in the Creative Process* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 130.

The fourth number in *Messiah*, the chorus “And the Glory of the Lord,” offers an example of thematic economy through Handel’s use of stretto (see example 3). Two passages from the chorus incorporate close imitation with the theme in two different ways. First, the passage in measure 20 and following contains stretto statements within the last half of the main theme (example 3a, with the text “shall be revealed”), and with the soprano imitating the bass at a timespan of one measure. Secondly, a passage in measure 110 and following (example 3b) places the two halves of the theme in counterpoint, with the soprano’s concluding phrase (“shall be revealed”) overlapping with the lower voices’ opening phrase (“and the glory of the Lord”).

In addition to these imitative choral uses of the theme, the upper string parts of the opening measures embody an underlying sequential pattern that may suggest close imitation (see example 3c). While the first violin states the main theme in the opening measures, violin two contains a series of descending thirds arranged in a rising scalar contour (B-G#, C#-A, etc.). If the pattern’s second melodic third (C#-A) were considered as passing in nature, the second violin’s melody in measures 2–4 would approximate a stretto treatment of the theme, with the imitation occurring on G# and with a time interval of only two beats between the statements.

Example 3a: Handel, *Messiah*, “And the Glory of the Lord,”
mm. 19–23 (text: “shall be revealed”)

Example 3b: Handel, *Messiah*, “And the Glory of the Lord,”
mm. 110–114 (text: “and the glory, the glory of the Lord/shall
be revealed”)

Example 3c: Handel, *Messiah*, “And the Glory of the Lord,”
violin parts, mm. 1–4.

This article proposes that Beethoven was likely attracted to the thematic economy embodied by the explicit and latent stretto in Handel’s chorus, and furthermore, that he exploited this characteristic as he borrowed materials from this chorus for use in the *Gloria* of his own mass. The borrowings are not overt quotations that are immediately recognizable, but rather are disguised by the compositional techniques, such as stretto and composite melody, that Beethoven employs.

A series of layered stretto statements on E \flat is given by the chorus in measures 162–73, where E \flat is tonicized within the broader context of B \flat major. The choral statements are given in example 4.

Handel

Beethoven

Example 4: *Missa Solemnis*, Gloria, mm. 162-173, three composite statements of *Messiah* “glory” theme, top. Text: “Gratias agimus tibi propter magnum gloriam tuam” (“We give thanks to you for your great glory”)

The first E^b is adjusted to E^{\natural} , where the local harmony is a secondary dominant-seventh chord with a root of C. The final pitch of each of the composite statements is E^b , however. Each of the three statements is given as a series of layers, with the original melody's opening descending thirds being combined harmonically in a pair of voices, while a third voice (bass or soprano) provides the final ascending scalar motive (analogous to Handel's passage with the text "glory of the Lord"). In the first case (mm. 162–65), the opening thirds (G — E^b and B^b — G) are given in the soprano and alto parts, which move in parallel sixths, while the solo bass sings the concluding scalar segment of the statement at the same time. The end of this first statement overlaps by one measure (m. 165) with the second statement, where the counterpoint is inverted: the men's voices state the melodic descending-third motives, now in parallel thirds, and the ascending soprano line concludes the melody (mm. 167–69). The third and final statement in this example is the most compressed occurrence of the borrowed theme, in that the three layers begin nearly simultaneously at the downbeat of m. 170. The final portion of this last statement is lengthened through added chromatic motion in the bass.

An isolated entry from Beethoven's pocket sketchbook of 1819–20 may support this idea of a harmonic perspective on Handel's melody (see example 5a). The published transcriptions of this sketchbook do not include clefs or key signatures. The examples containing sketches show the exact transcriptions as created by Joseph Schmidt-Görg,

except that clefs have been added. Below each sketch transcription, an example with clef and key signature summarizes the content of the sketch and the possible relationship with Handel's melody.²⁸

Handel, "Glory" melody

Example 5a: Beethoven, from *Drei Skizzenbücher zur Missa Solemnis I, Ein Skizzenbuch aus den Jahren 1819/20*, page 25, staves 1-2 (transcribed by Joseph Schmidt-Görg and published by the Beethovenhaus, Bonn, 1952), and Handel's "Glory Melody," pitches only.

If the sketch in example 5a were based on a harmonic treatment of Handel's melody, it would represent two strands of the melody (its first 5 pitch-classes) verticalized as harmonic thirds (that is, melodic segments C# to A and E to C# combined harmonically). This sketch may thus support the previous example (example 4), in which Handel's melody was represented in layers containing parallel thirds or sixths. The climactic ascent of Handel's melody, F#–G#–A is partially represented in the

²⁸ Joseph Schmidt-Görg, trans. and ed., *Drei Skizzenbücher zur Missa Solemnis I, Ein Skizzenbuch aus den Jahren 1819/20* (Bonn: Beethovenhaus, 1952), page 25, staves 1–2.

sketch as F[#]–G[#], which are the highest pitches in the sketch. And the final motive of Handel’s melody, E–D–C–B, is given in the alto strand, overlapping with the parallel thirds and partially superimposed on them. Thus, the sketch may represent two means of using Handel’s theme: verticalizing distinct melodic strands as parallel thirds, and representing distinct, yet common segments of a borrowed melody (here, pitch-classes E–D–C#) as superimposed.

Another sketch from the same page (staves 4–7) may signal Beethoven’s consideration of the possibilities of stretto with Handel’s “glory” melody (see example 5b). If the two melodic parts are read in tenor and bass clefs, the bottom line states the beginning of Handel’s melody in D, the same key as the *Gloria*. Simultaneously, the line’s climactic ascent, B–C#–D, would be provided by the upper voice. The third strand of counterpoint in this sketch contains the descending perfect-fourth scalar motives from the end of Handel’s melody. Both motivic scalar segments are found in the sketch, with the first of these descending fourths (B–A–G–F#) being superimposed on the third through fifth pitches of Handel’s melody (A–G–F#). The sketch thus supports the idea of the borrowed melody being given in three contrapuntal layers, which are perhaps arranged in a way that takes advantage of repeated segments in Handel’s melody (A–G–F#).

Further, as is also shown in example 5b, the sketch contains a condensed statement of Handel's melody on F#. Its first pitch-class (A) is shown in square brackets to indicate that it is not present in the sketch. The full theme is represented, however, including the final descending fourth, which is given as a group of eighth notes in a distinct voice. The sketch contains composite melodic statements on two pitch levels, and the statements are intertwined, sounding simultaneously and sharing some pitch content. Some of the pitch content in the sketch serves multiple functions: for example, the A tied between measures 1 and 2 acts as part of two distinct strands of the statement on D as well as part of the statement on F#. Thus, the sketch supports the notion that Beethoven experimented with using segments of Handel's melody in stretto and in composite fashion.

Beethoven's highly abstract usages of the choral theme with a layered stretto technique cannot be perceived directly by a listener, and the foregoing examples are illustrative of a possible means of compositional method rather than an audible form of musical quotation, in any traditional sense. Further studies, especially studies of the surviving sketches, would be necessary to make a feasible case for widespread use of the modeling and voice-leading techniques proposed above. The fact that the autograph score for the Gloria is missing adds to the challenge of considering these ideas in relation to this particular movement.²⁹ What is being suggested,

²⁹ Joel Lester has explained that the autograph score of the mass's Kyrie contains extensive alterations. He also notes the significance of the autograph's cue staff, which contains valuable information for a study of the movement's genesis. See Lester,

however, is that this method—the creation of counterpoint through composite melodies—could be one means by which some passages of the mass were created. A metaphor for this contrapuntal layering technique may be found in visual art—in the process of lithography, whereby the artist repeatedly applies various colors of ink to the image on stone and then records the image on paper with the use of a press, working through the printing process in several stages (once for each color). While each layer of printing may not be distinctly perceptible to a person viewing the finished artwork, the full image and its shades of colors and mixed colors visible in the completed print are a direct result of this multi-layered process.

The Gloria's climactic fugue on the text "in Gloria Dei patris" may also be linked to Handel's chorus. As shown in example 6, the first half of Handel's melody may be generated by an interval series of a descending third followed by a rising fourth (or alternatively, the pattern may be viewed as a rising scale, with each pitch followed immediately by a descending third). On the example, the parenthetical pitches given below violin 2 would complete the interval pattern and would serve a passing function, or they would be implied by the continuation of the pattern. Note how the second violin's counterpoint in measure 2 of the *Messiah* chorus not only suggests stretto with violin 1, but also states this scalar pattern of melodic thirds for a span of 3 measures (with four consecutive melodic thirds given in mm. 2–4). As illustrated in example 6, the same intervallic pattern (rising fourth and falling

"Revisions in the Autograph of the 'Missa Solemnis Kyrie,'" *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 23:3 (fall 1970), 420–438.

third) underlies the *Gloria's* fugue subject, which may thus embody a “composing out” of Handel’s theme. The intervallic pattern is made more explicit by the oboe and clarinet’s partial stretto imitation of the subject and answer in mm. 361–62 and mm. 365–66.³⁰

The image displays two musical excerpts for comparison. The top excerpt is from Handel's *Messiah*, measures 361-362, featuring two violin parts (vln. 1 and vln. 2) and a bass line. The vln. 1 part has a melodic line with a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note, and a quarter note. The vln. 2 part has a similar melodic line. The bass line is labeled "underlying sequence (passing)" and consists of a series of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The bottom excerpt is from Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, measures 360-364. It features three parts: oboe/clarinet (ob./cl.), bass (subject), and tenor (answer). The ob./cl. part has a melodic line with a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note, and a quarter note. The bass part has a melodic line with a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note, and a quarter note. The tenor part has a melodic line with a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note, and a quarter note. The bass line is labeled "underlying sequential pattern" and consists of a series of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4.

Example 7: *Missa Solemnis*, *Gloria*, concluding fugal subject (top) in comparison with *Messiah* “glory” theme (below)

³⁰ Birgit Lodes describes the underlying structure of the *Gloria's* sequential fugal subject in a similar way (alternating rising perfect fourths and descending thirds), and she points out how some melodic content of the *Agnus Dei* (m. 107 ff. and m. 139 ff.) follows the same underlying melodic pattern. Birgit Lodes, *Das Gloria in Beethovens Missa Solemnis*, Münchner Veröffentlichungen zur Musikgeschichte, vol. 54. (Tutzing: 1997), 178–184.

In the fugal passage described above, Beethoven may have exploited a basic pattern that underlies a melodic idea borrowed from Handel. Other movements of the mass contain basic sequential patterns involving melodic thirds, as well. One setting of the text “dona nobis pacem” in mm. 96–100 of the *Agnus Dei*, contains six descending thirds (spanning from E4 to G2, in the combined tenor and bass lines). As the same text is restated later (mm. 187–199), the three upper parts join to present a series of thirteen melodic thirds, given as a composite melody that migrates twice from the soprano through the alto to the tenor part, before concluding with the soprano. As discussed by Kinderman, the Credo fugue from the *Missa Solemnis* is also marked by chains of thirds.³¹

Overall, Beethoven’s *Gloria* exhibits not only general, stylistic similarities, but also specific musical parallels with Handel’s chorus. Through Beethoven’s borrowings and compositional techniques, Handel’s melody creates the full substance of some passages of the mass, even without being quoted directly. In addition, Beethoven plays on the original imitative

³¹ See Kinderman, *Artaria 195*, who discusses the substantial effort made by Beethoven with plans for the descending-third based fugue subject for the text “et vitam venture saeculi amen,” 65–72, and Kinderman, *Beethoven*, 269–275, in which he describes chains of thirds in op. 106, the choral finale of the ninth symphony, and passages of the *Missa Solemnis*. See also Maria Rivers Rule, “The Allure of Beethoven’s “Terzen–Ketten””: Third-Chain Studies by Nottebohm and Music by Brahms,” Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, 2011. She documents the presence of circles of thirds found in Beethoven’s sketches as well as completed works, and the study of these tonal patterns by Nottebohm and Brahms. The combination of B-flat and G and the use of third-chains in op. 106 is discussed by Charles Rosen, *The Classical Style* (New York: Norton, 1972), 409–434.

relationships found in Handel's "Glory" chorus and extends them, in an abstract sense, by using his own stretto techniques, pacing segments of the borrowed melody so that they are given simultaneously rather than just in a quick imitative manner. In the *Gloria*'s concluding fugue subject (example 6, above), a recurring interval pattern acts as a "musical germ," just as in Handel's chorus. Thus, Beethoven's fugal subject may be viewed as a "composed-out" version of Handel's melody. The core interval pattern of descending third and rising fourth is given explicitly in violin 2 in the very opening measures of Handel's chorus, providing counterpoint for the main melody. Because of this tight motivic relationship between the theme and its counterpoint, they may be viewed as a single idea, which is shown in its "purest" state in the counterpoint line. Thus, Beethoven's usage and extension of Handel's thematic ideas and stretto techniques literally draw upon Handel's counterpoint and incorporate it in the *Missa Solemnis* in ways that metaphorically place Handel's work "in counterpoint" with that of Beethoven.

This raises the larger issue of musical borrowing, which inevitably creates questions of motivation. Many studies have addressed this topic, both in terms of music and other arts (literary criticism, for example).³² If Beethoven did model his *Gloria* on ideas from the *Messiah*, his reasons for doing so could

³² Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: a Theory of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1973. Many studies have considered similar circumstances of influence among eighteenth-century composers, including Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven: for example, see Jeremy Yudkin, "Beethoven's 'Mozart' Quartet," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 45, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 30–74.

have been mixed, characterized both by a desire to pay respect to Handel and also an interest in competing with his musical accomplishments. We know that Beethoven referred to the *Missa Solemnis* as “the greatest work that I have composed thus far.”³³ While Beethoven’s motivations can never be known completely from our perspective, it seems he may have believed that by drawing upon the works of his two predecessors to whom he ascribed “true genius” (J.S. Bach and Handel), and by placing his music “in counterpoint” with theirs, he was paying homage to them and also linking himself with the legacy of their musical greatness.

³³ This statement was made in a letter to publisher Carl Peters, dated 5 June 1822; see Anderson, letter 1079.

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Abstract

Beethoven had the highest regard for Handel, claiming on more than one occasion “he was the greatest composer who ever lived.” Beethoven’s knowledge of the earlier composer’s music was considerable. In addition to the direct influence from Handel’s music that may be traced with Beethoven’s variations on one of his themes, direct transcriptions of his fugues, or the general evocation of Handel’s style in Beethoven’s choral fugues, this article proposes that Beethoven may have borrowed specific musical ideas from Handel’s *Messiah* and reworked them for use in his own *Missa Solemnis*.

The method by which Beethoven may have adapted materials from Handel’s music includes the use of composite melodies, whereby a single melodic line is presented by different voices and in different registers. Sketches for the *Gloria* of Beethoven’s *Missa Solemnis* indicate that Beethoven considered using this type of voice-leading technique in adapting the opening melody from Handel’s chorus “And the Glory of the Lord.” Analytical examples illustrate how these composite statements of the borrowed melody could have been incorporated in the *Missa Solemnis*, and further, how the fugal theme of Beethoven’s *Gloria* may consist of a “composed out” version of Handel’s theme. Beethoven’s music plays on the original imitative relationships found in Handel’s “Glory” chorus and extends them, in an abstract sense, by creating counterpoint from the borrowed melody.

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