

Trope III

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Commissioned by the
Pennsylvania Academy of Music
as part of the Beethoven Symposium Series
to celebrate the opening of their new facility,
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Instrumentation

Vibraphone (*medium hard mallets and bowed*)
Soprano
Violin
Violoncello
Piano

Duration about 10 minutes

The term *trope* refers to the addition of new music to a pre-existing work, either by inserting new sections between the existing phrases, or adding new layers. This technique was extremely popular in Mediaeval times, and has seen somewhat of a resurgence among contemporary composers (for example George Benjamin's wonderful *Dance Figures*, which are an orchestration and recomposition of his own *Piano Figures*). As the title suggests, this is the third *Trope* I have written, though the first to use the music of another composer.

In keeping with the theme of the concert series - in which new works were commissioned to reflect on Beethoven's music in a series of concerts that featured all the piano sonatas - **Trope III** uses the music of Ludwig van Beethoven, the last movement of the Sonata in E major Op. 109, which I chose for its almost otherworldly sense of calm and serenity only occasionally broken by an outburst of emotion. The structure of my piece follows precisely that of the Beethoven.

Trope III is a musical exploration of Beethoven's deafness, which many authorities believe was the result of a severe form of tinnitus, in Beethoven's case, it took the form of a "roaring" sound in his inner ear. The quotations from the sonata represent the "ideal" sound of Beethoven's musical imagination and the new music the emotional turmoil of his inner dialogue, his growing frustration and despair caused by his loss of hearing. Thus the discourse of the piece is the tension and interplay between the two different types of music, with Beethoven sometimes near the surface, sometimes distant and sometimes absent all together.

The choice of a woman's voice rather than a male is multi-layered. She represents at once the "ewig Weibliche" and the "ferne Geliebte" (both powerful elements in Beethoven's creative psyche) and the fact that he was cut off from normal means of communication by his disease. To hear his words sung by a female voice emphasises not only his isolation but also the intimacy of his communication.

The text is extracted from the Heiligenstadt Testament, written in 1802, in which Beethoven pours out his anguish about his increasing deafness. By the time he composed this sonata, around 1820, his deafness was total, and one can only imagine how his relationship with his "malady" had evolved in the intervening years. His isolation, sense of despair but dedication to his art are movingly described. I believe that the serenity of this sonata movement reveals that somehow he carved out, by sheer willpower, a hard-won tranquility which is the source of his strength, and enabled him to continue to create in the face of intransigent odds.

The melody that opens the movement, and is the basis of the variations, paints in sound Beethoven's conviction that ultimately beauty will defeat ugliness, hope will defeat fear, joy is more long lasting than anger.

Text

O when, Divine One, shall I find joy again in the temple of nature or men?

O you who think that I am malevolent, stubborn or misanthropic, how greatly do you wrong me!
You do not know the secret cause which makes me seem that way to you.

From childhood my heart and soul have been full of the tender feelings of good will.
But reflect now that for six years I have been a hopeless case, cheated year after year in the hope of improvement,
finally compelled to face the prospect of a lasting malady, forced to isolate myself, to live in loneliness.

Ah, how could I possibly admit an infirmity in the one sense which ought to be more perfect in me than others?

Ah! I cannot do it!

What humiliation when someone stood beside me and heard a flute in the distance and I heard nothing!
Or heard a shepherd singing, and I heard nothing, nothing.
Such incidents brought me to the verge of despair.
But a little more and I would have put an end to my life - only my art withheld me.

With joy I hasten towards death.
Will it not free me from a state of endless suffering?
Come when thou will, I shall meet the bravely.

Trope III was premiered by the Newstead Trio: Michael Jamanis, violin, Sara Male, cello, with the composer substituting for Xun Pan, piano.
Steve Goss was the vibraphonist.

Trope III

after the last movement of the
Sonata in E major Op 109 by
Ludwig van Beethoven

Simon Andrews

Vibraphone

Soprano

Violin

Cello

*Gesangvoll, mit innigster Empfindung
mezza voce*

7

Musical score for strings and piano. The strings (top two staves) play eighth-note patterns with dynamics *cresc.*, *sf*, and *mezza voce*. The piano (bottom staff) provides harmonic support with sustained notes and chords. Measure number 13 is indicated.

Musical score for vibraphone and piano. The vibraphone (top staff) plays eighth-note patterns with dynamic *p*. The piano (bottom staff) provides harmonic support with sustained notes and chords. Measures 17-18 show the vibraphone playing eighth-note patterns with dynamic *pizz.* and the piano providing harmonic support. Measure 19 shows the vibraphone playing eighth-note patterns with dynamic *pp*.

Musical score for strings and piano. The strings (top two staves) play eighth-note patterns with dynamic *Molto espressivo*. The piano (bottom staff) provides harmonic support with sustained notes and chords. Measure 19 shows the strings playing eighth-note patterns with dynamic *p*.

Vib.

This musical score page contains four staves of music for Vibraphone and Piano. The Vibraphone part (top staff) consists of treble clef staves with various rhythmic patterns and grace notes. The piano part (bottom two staves) includes both treble and bass clef staves, featuring sustained notes and chords. Measure 23 begins with a piano bass note followed by a vibraphone eighth-note pattern. Measures 24-25 show the piano providing harmonic support with sustained notes and chords while the vibraphone plays eighth-note patterns. Measures 26-27 continue this pattern, with the piano's bass line becoming more prominent. Measure 27 concludes with a piano bass note. Measure numbers 23 and 27 are indicated at the bottom left of the piano staves.

Vib.

7:6

when

when,

sul pont.

p 5:6 4:3

arco

cresc.

sf

p

28

Vib.

f *p*

quasi recit.

when, Di - vine One shall I find joy a - gain

(ord.)

p *p*

accel.

ff

Ré.

*

[33]

Vib.

in the tem - ple of na - ture or men?

O you who say that I am ma -

36

p

7

Rex.

Vib.

le-vo - lent, stub - born or mi - san - thro - pic, how great - ly do you wrong me!

39 *Rédo.*

Vib.

You do not know the secret cause which makes me seem that way to you.

mf

p

pp

42 *

R&D.

Vib.

(take bow)

48

Tempo di Variation II ♩ = 56

Vib.

From child - hood my heart and

pizz.

pp

pizz.

pp

51

Vib.

soul _____ have been full _____ of ten - - - der feel - ings of good

55

Vib. bowed

p

quasi recit.

will. But re-flect now that for six years _____ I have been a

p

pp

58

Rex.

Vib.

p

hope - less case, cheat-ed year af - ter year in hope of im - prove-ment, fi - nal - ly com-

arco

pp

arco

pp

7

pp

f

p

8^{va}

7

62 *

*

Vib. (take mallets)

pelled to face the pro - spect of a last - ing ma-la-dy.

forced to i - sol-ate my - self,

[65]

Vib.

"Speak loud - er, shout!"

to live in lone - li - ness.

How, how, how could I say to peo - ple,

"Speak loud - er, shout!"

"Speak loud - er, shout!"

"Speak loud - er, shout!"

Allegro Vivace

(mallets)

Vib.

pp

for I am deaf."

ff

Ah! _____ how could I poss -

freely

ff

mf

74

This musical score page contains four systems of music. The first system features a vibraphone part with a melodic line. The second system includes piano parts and vocal parts with lyrics. The third system continues the piano parts. The fourth system concludes with piano parts and includes measure numbers. Dynamics such as *pp*, *ff*, and *mf* are used throughout the piece.

Vib.

as if in independant meter

gathering point: now synchronise with ensemble

- - i - bly ad - mit an in - fir - mi - ty in the one sense

f

79

80

Vib.

the one sense which in me ought to be more perfect than in

84 85

Vib.

oth - ers? _____ Ah! _____ I can - not do it,

pp

90

Slower

Vib.

p

bowed

pp

when some-one be - side me heard a flute in the dis-tance

What hu - mi-li - a - tion!

95

Vib.

but I heard no-thing! What hu - mi - li - a - tion! or heard a she-pherd

99

Vib.

sing - - - - - ing, and I heard no - thing,no - thing! What hu - mi - li - a - tion!

Vib.

pp

Such in - ci - dents brought me to the verge of des - pair.
But a lit - tle more a

p

p

105

Vib.

(mallets)

ff *Red.*

lit-tle more and I would have put an end to my life

ff *Red.* *

108

etwas langsamer als das Thema

Vib.

The musical score consists of five staves. The top staff is for the Vibraphone (Vib.) in treble clef, 3/4 time, with dynamics *pp*. The second staff contains lyrics "on - ly my art," repeated three times. The third staff is for the Bassoon in bass clef, 3/4 time, with dynamics *p*. The fourth staff continues the bassoon part with dynamics *p*. The fifth staff concludes the piece with a bassoon note and a page number 111 followed by an asterisk.

on - ly my art,

on - ly my art,

on - ly my

p

p

111 *

Vib.

art with - held me.

115

2

Vib.

(with a sense of ecstasy) *With joy* — I

119

28

Vib.

3

slow gliss.

(spoken)

ha - sten to-wards death..

"Will it not free me from a state of endless suffering?"

with abandon

123

128

Vib.

7

ff

Come _____

f

tr

f

tr

f

tr

f

131

Vib.

when thou will,

tr *tr* *rit.* *cantabile*

pp

134

mf

5

I shall meet thee brave - ly, _____

p

3

brave - ly, _____

pp

3

brave - ly. _____

137

cresc.

p

142

ritard.

cresc.

sf

p

ritard.

148