



From the desk of Pierre Beaudry



LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

PIANO SONATA QUASI UNA FANTASIA, OPUS 27 No. 2

By Pierre Beaudry, 4/8/2011



“The tension between something that is unattainable and the yearning for its mastery is the nature of the irony that every poet hates and cherishes at the same time; because, being on an ocean without a shore and constantly subjected to their ebbs and flows, the poet is forced to steer his course by the higher principle of the stars.”

Dehors Debonneheure

“Let the Lydian intervals be the wines that fill the cup of your soul.”

Dehors Debonneheure

1. THE BEETHOVEN PRINCIPLE OF AGAPE.

Throughout history, poets, musicians, and artists alike have related to one another's works in such great proportions that when they recalled one another's kindred spirit of creative processes, the *motivfuhrung* of their artistic compositions, informed by the anti-entropic principle of *agape*, was capable of nourishing the creative flows of mankind for years to come. In our times, this is no longer the case, and it is crucial that we understand why. For example, this is how Francois Rabelais' Panurge recalled the Platonic and Pythagorean *Tetradic Steps* of courage during his visit to Lanternland, in the same proportion that the first movement of Beethoven's *Sonata quasi una Fantasia No. 14, Opus 27, no. 2* was an echo of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*.

When Andras Schiff gave his series of master classes on Beethoven's 32 sonatas, he demonstrated how this 1801 Sonata in C Sharp Minor was the most misunderstood of all of Beethoven's sonatas. There is like a "thick layer of false tradition on it, ..." he said, "and the music is like a great painting that has a lot of dust on it, and a lot of dirt, and you want to restore it, so you can get to the real colors."

Indeed, in 1936, it was the foolish critic, Ludwig Rellstab who gave the nonsensical identification of "Moonlight Sonata" to this composition, when he compared it to his own fantasy on Lake Lucerne. On the contrary, what characterizes this sonata is the sublime love of creativity, as opposed to romantic pleasure and pain. It is the Promethean victory of *agape* over *eros* that one must look for in this Beethoven composition. Moreover, it is not an accident that Beethoven's *The Creatures of Prometheus* was written during the same year.

Beethoven left several notes in his manuscripts establishing his intention. According to these notes, Beethoven composed the first movement of his sonata as a funeral memorial to Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. The notes refer to the specific section right after *Don Giovanni* stabbed the *Commendatore* to death. Not only does the sonata replicate the same *ostinato triplets* that Mozart used to express the dying moments of the Commendatore, but the same passages are rendered in C Sharp Minor. This homage was, as I will now show, Beethoven's way of thanking Mozart for his own great Lydian revolution.

At the opening measures of the first movement, Beethoven noted: "*Adagio sostenuto. Si deve suonare tutto questo pezzo delicatissimamente e senza sordini*" (Slow and sustained. One must play this whole movement with great delicacy and without dampers), that is to say, with sustained pedals on modern pianos, in order to maintain a continuous flow of the musical ideas. Furthermore, if this movement is to be understood as a *motivfuhrung* expression of the sublime, then, it cannot be played extra-slow like it is usually played. The point is that the piano must express the dynamic tension between the fear of individual death and the yearning for the immortality of mankind. Here is Beethoven's opening measures and the Mozart section of *Don Giovanni* that he derived his musical idea from. (See **Figure 1** and **Figure 2**)



Figure 1. Beethoven Sonata quasi una fantasia, Opus 27, No. 2. Opening measures.

Figure 2. Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Measures 186-189 mark the *ostinato triplet palpitations* of the *Commendatore* after he has been wounded mortally by *Don Giovanni*. Note the singing phrase of the *Commendatore*: “*sento l’anima partir...*” (I feel my soul leaving...) and, simultaneously, *Leporello* singing: “*palpitar il cor mi sento.*” (I feel his heart palpitating), and *Don Giovanni* who sings: “*palpitante veggo l’anima partir*” (through the palpitations, I see his soul leaving.) Thus, the perfect confusion of three different sense-perceptions.

However, such an elementary musical idea as an *ostinato triplet palpitation* is very difficult to play properly on the keyboard, because it must also express, in substance, the Lydian principle of its ordering. In other words, the last heartbeats of a dying man, must also express the continuous process of

change through which ideas are generated. During those dying moments, the *Commendatore* sings: “Now the pains of death invade me. From my breast my soul is soaring to eternal night or day...” The note is explicit about the transposition of the Mozart *ostinato* triplets in C sharp Minor referring to the heart palpitation of the dying Commendatore, but also expressing the palpitating idea of a fluid axiomatic change in musical ideas about the very form of the sonata.

Beethoven noted in his manuscript:

Once this relationship to Mozart is understood, you can no longer make the case of a romantic moonlit ride on Lac Lucerne.

Here, Mozart played on the sensitive ambiguity between the pulse of the body and the pulsating of the musical triplet idea. The point is not simply the internalization of the heart throbs of the dying man, but also the fact that he is singing the swan song to his own body. He is telling his body that his soul is getting ready to leave it behind and soar into immortality. There is a crucial change, here, that Beethoven is stressing with emphasis, and that can only be expressed as the delicate flow of the motion of a singularity passing from life into death, and then, into immortality, *delicatissimamente*, as in a phase change relationship which must take place between two axiomatically different moments. The flow, however, must be expressed as an extended continuity of change, without percussiveness, and in a way where the continuum of change reflects causality *Adagio sostenuto*. That is the idea that Beethoven developed throughout the first movement of his sonata and which is extremely difficult to replicate.

Like Schiff said, the whole first movement is strange because it is a funeral theme where all of the intervals strengthen one another in such a manner that all percussive relationships are excluded and no breaks must be sensed within the entire movement between the elements and the process that cause the element to change: *the discontinuity must be continuous*, as in the Leibnizian principle. In other words, this Sonata is not like any other Sonata. It is a musical revolution in the sense that its method of composition pertains to universal physical principles. The movement is not a sonata movement, as such, but an introduction to something that is completely new, a sort of introductory prelude to the other two movements. As Schiff put it, dynamically, everything must be “played *pianissimo* (very softly), almost like a Bach Prelude!” Remember how Gounod’s Ave Maria had transformed Bach’s first Prelude into a funeral memorial, for his deceased friends, Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn, that is the idea, but without emphasizing the effect of the discontinuity that Gounod introduced. Only the Lydian tension must be maintained throughout, and then released at the appropriate moment.

2. THE LYDIAN MEASURES OF CHANGE.

The very first measures of the sonata give the tone of the entire movement as a lamentation with a repetitive quadruple series of triplets which define the *ostinato* (obstinate) character of the emotion of a funeral march which is ironically as rapid and as steady as a beating heart. This is an almost exact replica of how Mozart wrote the score for the dying moments of the *Commendatore*. (See measures 186-89 in **Figure 1.**) The entire movement is unique in the sense that the same idea is repeated persistently in the same musical voice. The triplet intervals are intentionally written not to express the same weight and the same tension and to vary in their repetitions until they reach a point where the tension of the whole process is changed by inversion, releasing explicitly the Lydian principle that had been generating its entire dynamics from the beginning. (Measures ... This middle section of ascending and descending series of Lydian clusters (that people identify wrongly as being merely diminished sevenths) are actually the resolution of the whole process. These clusters also need to be played as triplets, but as actual conscious generative inversions of the entire movement. It is because most musicians do not understand this Lydian agapic mood of Beethoven that they play this movement much too slow, and therefore, they miss the *motivführung* unity of effect of this principle of composition.

From the first movement to the third movement, the same triplets are interlaced as to confront the listener with two very strongly opposing emotions, one very soft and the other very tempestuous, both of which are intertwined with the same musical material. The same three note motif of the opening first movement, for example, notably C#, Ab, C#, and E, is reintroduced at the beginning of the third movement, in an expanded rhythmic development, which Beethoven marked as *presto agitato*, as if to emphasize the point that a funeral march can be transformed into a fiery Promethean force of change which is what this sonata that has succeeded in accomplishing. Of course, that idea was already in Beethoven's mind even before he played the first triplet of the first movement.



Figure 2. Beethoven *Sonata quasi una fantasia, Opus 27, No. 2*. The series of Lydian clusters underlying the *ostinato triplet palpitations* from the beginning.

This is where the lack of melody turns to counterpoint. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of Bach, Mozart, and Haydn’s discovery of the Lydian clusters of minor thirds as the most revolutionary aspect of counterpoint during the eighteenth century. This is what will make Beethoven most happy at that period of his life when he realized he was going to become permanently deaf. As he wrote to his dearest friend Amanda on July 1, 1801: “A sad resignation must be my refuge, although, Indeed, I am resolved to rise above every obstacle.” This, without a doubt was the time when Beethoven had no choice but to settle his account with the domain of sense perception and consecrate the rest of his live to the domain of Classical artistic composition. However painful it must have been for Beethoven to accept his infirmity, his resignation before the fact that he would not become a virtuoso, or a famous conductor might have been a God sent gift to humanity. This is what led Thayer to raise the terrible question in his Biography: “Who can say that the world has not been a gainer by the misfortune which stirred the profoundest depths of his being and compelled the concentration of all his powers into one direction?” (*Thayer’s Life of BEETHOVEN*, revised and edited by Elliot Forbes, Princeton University Press, Princeton New Jersey, 1973, p. 282.)

These are the historically specific conditions under which it can be said with a fair amount of certainty that during the short period of 1800-01, Beethoven made one of the greatest breakthroughs in Classical artistic composition with the *Sonata quasi una fantasia*. As he wrote to Amanda: “What is there that I might not accomplish? Since you left, I have composed everything except opera and church music.” (Beethoven letter to Amanda, July 1, 1801 in Op. Cit, p. 282.)

I was reminded recently about Lyn’s piece on *Truth is Beauty, and Beauty is Truth: Understanding the Science of Music, September 1986?...* and the double-connectedness of the musical scale that Lyn referenced in that piece with respect to the science of music, especially to Abelian functions. (Quote from Lyn on Truth is Beauty...)

The way to look at those Lydian clusters of minor thirds is to look at them as Plato looked at generating mean proportionality in his Timaeus; that is to say, in a manner such that one cannot be generated without generating another; the first creating a second that generates the third which, in turn produces the first. Thus, all three clusters are so intertwined into each other that they are all means of one another, and, therefore, they are all come to be one.

THE WHITE OWL EFFECT OR THE SCIENCE OF EARLY WARNING SIGNALS OF PSYCHOPHYSICAL CORRELATIONS.

Now, how does an axiomatic singularity occur in the mind? Think of how a new idea emerges suddenly as something that did not exist before. In fact, it had the potential to exist, but it did not exist in any given form. The question is, therefore, how does the form of a new idea take shape? The hypothesis that I will propose to you corresponds to what Lyn used to call the White Owl effect. Think of this effect as a metaphor for generating new ideas, that is, as a signal of what does not yet exist but is about to come in the near future. This is an effect that is of the domain of Riemannian and Abelian functions, in a playful way, which is not mathematical, but which announces the coming into being of all sorts of wave phenomena.

Here, I want you to concentrate on the emergence of an axiomatic singularity that takes place inside of a torus. The best pedagogical device I have found to express that connection can be viewed as a dissonance that produces a tension inside of the relationship between the poloidal and the toroidal waves of a doubly connected process such as the steam rings of Mount Etna.



Figure 3 The White Owl effect coming out of the steaming crater of the Mount Etna, Italy, 2007.

Back in the 1970's, Lyn used the example of the White Owl effect to describe the process of formation of the planetary orbits inside of a solar system, a process that was announcing the formation of solid planets orbiting around the Sun. Such an early warning system can be applied to almost any apprehensive phenomenon in the universe. Let me show you how the principle can be applied in the three cases of the Lithosphere, the Biosphere, and the Noosphere.

The [steam rings of Mount Etna](#) (vapor and sulfuric dioxide) are warning signs that the volcano is about to erupt. They are produced by pressured gas and generated through shock waves through a narrow cylindrical conduit of the crater. Some of those rings last up to 10 minutes and appear to be formed within mushroom clouds generating poloidal steam rings around the main toroidal ring. Their most interesting behavior is that, after they have gone through an initial shock wave, they produce a series of contractions between two forms of circular action, the toroidal and poloidal motions of double connectedness. Such vortex ring phenomena are rarely understood as reflecting the complexity of generating ideas, but they do.

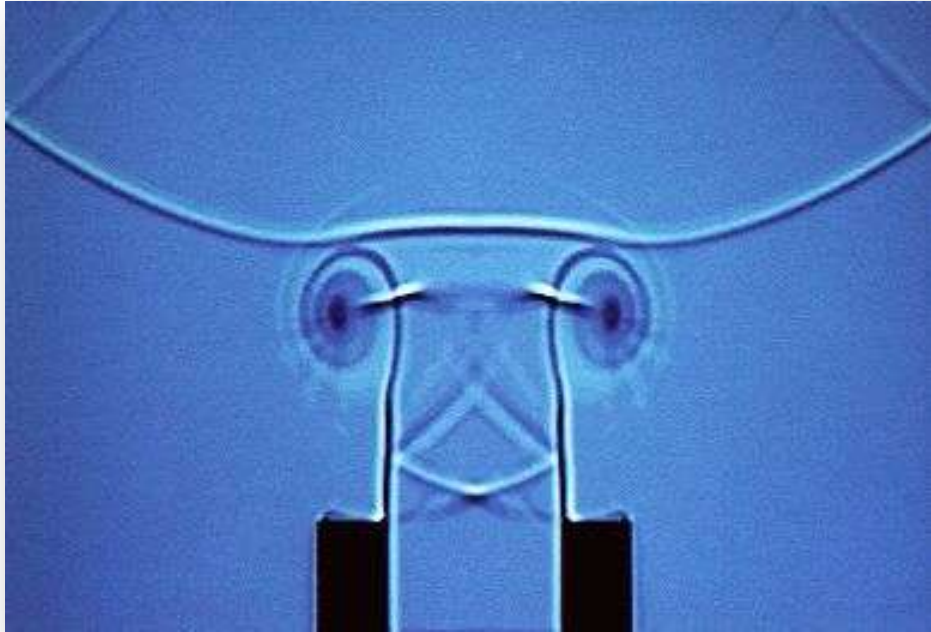


Figure 4. Shock wave effect generating vortex flow. Professor of Fluid Dynamics, T. T. Lim, University of Melbourne, Australia.

Moreover, Dolphins are also known to blow hollow [bubble rings underwater](#) just for fun, in anticipation of jumping through real hoops, as they often do. So you see, if dolphins can generate playful anticipatory ideas, like volcanoes do, and glide through them playfully, so can you. The point to be made, however, is to properly understand this conception of double-connectedness of rotary action. As you look into your own mind to study the phenomenon, think of an idea that you want to create that did not exist before, and willfully establish that such an idea is necessary for humanity. This implies the interaction of two different motions, one is the orbiting field of the history of ideas, and the other is the emergence of a new idea within that field. The congruence between those two motions is what you want to concentrate on.

Then, before it gets to be completely formed, evaluate the content of this new idea by going all around the historical memory of mankind as if you were testing its value through the lens of a new discovery of principle that you have recently made. You will discover, as you go along, that other ideas you had formed in the past either reject the new idea or have been changed, dramatically, by this new idea as it comes into contact with them through the toroidal wave that carries each one of them, from the back to the front of your mind. That is the form of change that you want to think about as the result of the double-connectedness of your own mental process.

Since a compression shock induces a wave motion in the same direction as the motion of the flow, the wave dynamics of the whole process is propagating in different ways throughout the whole process. Because the pressure inside of the tube is different than the atmospheric pressure outside of the tube. The wave which then comes out of the nozzle is initially a Prandtl-Meyer expansion flow, then, the wave system changes into a circular helix as it hits the shock front of the cooler atmosphere. That is precisely what happens when you have a hot idea to develop, and nobody wants to listen to you.



CHANGE IS THE BEETHOVEN LYDIAN AGAPIC MODD

People have a wrong sense of what change is, because they think of change as movement. That is the wrong way to look at change. You don't look at change as the motion of a planet going around the Sun, or something that goes from one place to another. No, what change means is transformation, axiomatic transformation of something which goes into something completely different. That is to say, creative change in which your identity has been modified completely to the point you are no longer recognizable; a change in which your old friends say: "that's not him." When this happens to an entire society, such an axiomatic change implies that you no longer recognize the former laws that governed society; or you recognize that they are no longer valid. The change is such that nothing is the same anymore. That's what change is about, ontologically speaking, and that is the source of every other form of change or movement. That is the form of change that Beethoven was introducing with the *Sonata quasi una Fantasia*.

You can only begin to understand this more profoundly when you think of music in terms of what Lyn identified as "an interval of intervals," and where the musical interval of intervals is the primary source of anti-entropic change. In an interview that he gave from Jail to Phil Rubinstein and Khushro Ghandi, in November of 1993, Lyn reported:

"You have to see that causality is determined by this type of change. This type of change is ontologically primary. Now, for example in music, which a lot of people are having good fun with, now at least in the music work on conceptualizing the interval between intervals, where the interval is considered the primary sensory phenomenon – the interval as located in the domain – in its analysis situs – upward and downward. So, it's not a physical interval because upward and downward are two different intervals, even though they are the same distance, so to speak, they have different intervals. So, the interval between intervals which takes you completely above the sensory domain – forget the overtones have nothing to do with music, as such, they are simply an imperfection of music, if you focus on them and try to work with them. So, this type of change – and as I've stressed – there's another aspect to this, if we can map, using this interval between intervals, as a root of counterpoint, and we can map the *motivfuhrung* elaboration, implicitly. The best way to map is to take a number of major compositions, which are *motivfuhrung* compositions and map those, and do it for a number of different kinds of compositions, and now you've got a sense of what it is to map a composition from the *motivfuhrung* standpoint. And you'll see those that do and don't map." (Lyndon LaRouche, DOCS: [61] 93393PR_001.DOC-INTERVIEW_WITH-LHL_PHIL_KHUSRO;1)

This is what changing the past from the future is about. What Lyn identified as the Beethoven *motivfuhrung*, the underlying unity of composition as the epistemological interval. , as opposed to the physical intervals that Beethoven's *Sonata quasi Una Fantasia* represents with respect to Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. The ostinato triplets, for example are all similar physical intervals, ordered by the modality of the Lydian minor third clusters, but the constant equivalence that is going on between the mind of Beethoven and the mind of Mozart is the true interval of change, or measure of change between them, which corresponds to the Heraclites principle of "everything changes except change. That is the constant difference that binds Beethoven and Mozart together. This is the contrapuntal memory to be use rather than the rooting memory for the purpose of composition.

Death is not death; it is an axiomatic change into a new beginning, a rebirth. This is why it is important to understand that what Mozart is referring to with the triplets is not the palpitation of the heart of a dying man, it is the rhythmic idea of how the same changes all the time in a regular and lawful way. Compare this unity of effect, this *motivfuhrung* with the last stanza of Ode to the West Wind by Percy Bysshe Shelley:

"Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O, Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?" (P. B. Shelley, *Ode to the West Wind*.)

This is how death can be transcended, that is, changed into immortality. But how is it done? How do you transcend the tragic to go into the sublime? This is not a technical question, although there are technical means of doing it. The question is a moral question. It is the agapic commitment to improve mankind through the creative process of irony. So, for a moment, we are have elevated above our mortal coil when the poet gives us a taste in his mastery of overcoming death, with his reflection of the universal immortality of humanity. Now, that is when you get a sense of this process of change as a process of causality.

So, how does Beethoven perform such a change in the *Sonata quasi una fantasia*?