

Beethoven, the Living Experience of Creativity

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The following is an edited transcript of Mr. Sigerson's opening remarks to Panel 4, "A Human Future for Youth: A Beethoven-Driven Renaissance of Classical Culture," of the Schiller Institute's December 12-13 Conference, The World after the U.S. Election: Creating a World Based on Reason.

Let me attempt to introduce to you the real Ludwig van Beethoven, and to indicate why Beethoven's mastery of the Coincidence of Opposites in the domain of Classical, well-tempered polyphonic music, is so crucial for us to grapple with today. For those of you who aren't yet familiar with this kind of music, that's probably an advantage, since you'll have less useless academic opinion to clear away.

I shall begin with a glimpse of Beethoven through the eyes of another great creative genius, Lyndon LaRouche, for whom Beethoven resonated so strongly through his life. I'll then dig into how Beethoven threw off the chains, not just of his own deafness, but also of the "prison of the mind," which the British-German philosopher Immanuel Kant constructed during Beethoven's lifetime, and which continues to corrupt so many minds up to the present day! I'll counterpose this to Nicholas of Cusa's utterly different, liberating approach of the Coincidence of Opposites, and will indicate, with brief examples from Beethoven's great overture to *Fidelio* and from his great celebratory mass, the *Missa Solemnis*, how Beethoven adopted Cusa's method, through what LaRouche termed Beethoven's "double-fugal" method.

And to conclude, we'll experience the Schiller Institute NYC Chorus in a performance of the opening "Kyrie" movement of the *Missa Solemnis*: a virtual performance which we've prepared as best we could under the present near-impossible conditions for musical performance.

On December 8, 1985, over German TV, Lyndon LaRouche watched the concluding concert of a two-week Extraordinary Synod of Catholic bishops, presided over by Pope John Paul II and Cardinal Joseph

Ratzinger (the future Pope Benedict XVI). With the Pope, cardinals, and bishops leading the 10,000 people attending, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* was performed in the Vatican's Sala Nervi, as an affirmation of the great potential for good which the synod represented. A few days later, LaRouche produced an [article](#) titled, "The Pope's Synod and Interpretation of International Law," which appeared in the December 13, 1985 *EIR*, in which he wrote:

As the television cameras panned over the assembled audience, on the faces of some of the cardinals and bishops, joy was evident. Other faces showed a stunned expression. The Papacy was using every weapon at its disposal, including the weapon of well-tempered Classical polyphony, to lead the entire world into an about-face, away from the past hundred years' trends in European culture's degenerating cultural-paradigm shifts.

Unfortunately, since then, those degenerating shifts have grown far worse, in no small part due to the subsequent persecution and imprisonment of Lyndon LaRouche.

LaRouche added:

Even those who are merely not musically illiterate, and who hear merely adequate performance of Beethoven's greatest work, his *Missa Solemnis*, must sense some extraordinary power at work through this music. The power of the "Credo" section to evoke tears of joy, is beyond any experience to be found in any musical composition yet known.

So, what is this power, which LaRouche experienced, perhaps more acutely than anyone else on that occasion? Earlier, in 1977, in an [article](#) titled, "The Secret of Ludwig van Beethoven," LaRouche lifted the veil on his own unique and intimate relationship with the composer. He wrote:

Beethoven's essential quality is that of an epistemologist, but one who developed his own epistemological world-outlook by treating music as a rigorously lawful domain of human practice. To restate this: the key to discovering Beethoven's creativity is to view him as one of the greatest creative *scientific* minds in history, whose compositions, taken within the process of his musical self-development, are the subsumed predicates of a process of fundamental, epistemologically ordered discoveries.

This writer has been specially advantaged to solve that aspect of the problem on two interrelated grounds. First, because music—most emphatically Beethoven's music—was established early as most agreeable and beneficial to his own internal mental self-development. Second, because this writer has pursued a course of intellectual self-development throughout his life which has, during the past two decades, brought him to the forefront among the intellectual influences contributing to a fundamental, epistemological breakthrough in our understanding of the nature and implications of what we call science.

The interconnections among these two elements within the writer enables and obliges him to defend Beethoven from Beethoven's mean enemies and misguided admirers of today. Not so much to defend the importance of Beethoven's music, but the identity of Beethoven himself, the living Beethoven who created the music....

Over the years, Beethoven became increasingly important to this writer's projects.... In this process, it was the inner aspect of Beethoven, the ordering principle expressed in the developmental features of his music, rather than the music in itself, which the writer's needs seized upon as "something social which echoes my sense of the quality of humanity resonating within me from the preceding work." As the writer has deepened his moral agreement with Beethoven, his successive outbursts of new and deeper insight into Beethoven, that process has always occurred notably in the immediate aftermath of some sustained creative effort.

LaRouche never tired of rising to the defense of Beethoven against the Aristotelians, who, being unable to deny Beethoven's power, were, and are, nonetheless dead set on corrupting and destroying that power, by in-

sisting that Beethoven's genius was just an unknowable freak of nature, unfit as a guide to human practice, which could be conveniently relegated to the dustbin of history.

Indeed, in 1787, the philosopher Immanuel Kant, the cleverest of the Aristotelians, set out to construct a prison of the mind for anyone who even considered attempting to think like Beethoven. In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant used formal logic to "prove" the futility of attempting to do so, because, so he claimed, that attempt always leads to logical contradictions!

In his typically convoluted language, Kant ranted:

Hence, ... the antinomy of pure reason will present us with the transcendental principles of a pretended pure (rational) cosmology,—not, however, to declare it valid and to appropriate it, but—as the very term of a conflict of reason sufficiently indicates, to present it as an idea which cannot be reconciled with phenomena and experience.

Kant presented four, what he called, antinomies. Let's examine just one of them:

Thesis:

Causality according to the laws of nature, is not the only causality operating to originate the phenomena of the world. A causality of freedom is also necessary to account fully for these phenomena.

Antithesis:

There is no such thing as freedom, but everything in the world happens solely according to the laws of nature.

With supreme sophistry, Kant proceeded to argue that both the Thesis, and the Antithesis, could be proven logically to be true, and that therefore, neither of them has any bearing on real human experience! And with a neat trick, which marijuana smokers will certainly appreciate, he equates "freedom" with mere mindless, causeless "spontaneity." Kant later wrote an entire book about "practical reason" which argues that all art, and all probing into final causes, is ultimately a total waste of time.

Neither Beethoven, who was a teenager when Kant built that prison, nor Friedrich Schiller, would have any of this! For them, freedom and necessity were *provably* one, and indeed *had* to be one. As Beethoven famously penned as the motto of his supreme *Große Fuge*, his *Great Fugue*, "*So streng wie frei*," that is, as lawfully necessary, as it is free! Beethoven and Schiller followed

in the footsteps of Nicholas of Cusa, who over three hundred years earlier, in 1453, wrote the following prayer in his *Vision of God*:

O Lord, Thou Sweetness most delectable, Thou hast left me free to be mine own self, if I desire. Hence, if I be not mine own self, Thou art not mine. For Thou dost make freewill necessary, since Thou canst not be mine if I be not mine own. Since Thou hast thus left me free, Thou dost not constrain me, but Thou awaitest that I should choose to be mine own. This resteth, then, with me, and not with Thee, Lord, who dost not limit Thy supreme lovingkindness, but dost pour it out most abundantly on all able to receive it....

But how shall I be mine own unless Thou, Lord, shalt teach me? Thou teachest me that sense should obey Reason and that Reason should bear sway. I am, then, mine own when sense serveth Reason ... Whence I now perceive that, if I hearken unto Thy Word, which ceaseth not to speak within me, and continually enlighteneth my Reason, I shall be mine own, free, and not the slave of sin, and Thou wilt be mine, and wilt grant me to behold Thy face, and then I shall be whole.

This is clearly Schiller's concept of the Beautiful Soul.

But let's now see how we can get at this in Beethoven's music itself—or, rather, in how Beethoven *organizes* his music. Here we're not talking about mere themes or melodies, but rather about the generative principle behind those themes or melodies. These generative principles are implicitly polyphonic, that is, they imply multiple voices—implicitly human singing voices—interacting simultaneously and in opposite ways.

The first concept to grasp, therefore, is what is often termed inversion—a practice in music comparable to *rotation* or *refraction* in physical action. Let me play, for example, the first notes of the main theme of Beethoven's *Leonore Overture No. 3*, his most profound condensation of his opera *Fidelio*:



Beethoven first introduced, but didn't develop, this little theme in the concluding bars of the "Gloria" section of his earlier *Mass in C*. It goes up a major third, then up a minor third, and up a step, in this case a whole

step.

But part of the beauty of the well-tempered system as pioneered by J.S. Bach, is that it has modes, each of which implies *all* the other modes. Let's therefore play this in another mode, called minor:



Now, those of you who know something about great Classical music, will perhaps recognize this as the opening notes of J.S. Bach's *Musical Offering*. We only need to complete it with one more note.



I could say so much more about this, but let me now just invert this material:



And now listen to this slight variation:



Listen to the overture, and you will hear this as the second theme, introduced later. And therefore, what appears to be a different theme, is merely an inversion of the first theme, or what might be even better termed a *rotation* of the theme in the Gaussian complex domain.

I'll not go further into this piece. Just listen to it, listen to Bach's *Musical Offering*, and roll these themes around inside your head. Think of Bach, and think of Beethoven thinking about Bach, and you will be delighted.

Now for my second example, and my introduction of the *Missa Solemnis* itself: Today the chorus will be presenting the opening "Kyrie" section, which is a cleansing of the soul in preparation for worship of the Creator. In his 1985 review, LaRouche pointed to the central role of the later "Credo" section, the affirmation of faith, which we're rehearsing right now, however I must point out that when I, along with my wife Renée, and with Mindy Pechenuk, visited Lyndon in prison on January 4, 1993, we found him preoccupied with yet another section of the mass, namely the transition from the "Benedictus" (blessing) to the concluding "Agnus Dei" (Lamb of God) section.

But back to the "Kyrie," sung to the words "Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy."

Here we'll get a glimpse of Beethoven's double-fugal method. It opens with three related falling figures

on the word “Kyrie” (Lord), each one sung by a different solo voice.

forward. And by the way, the German word for development is *Entwicklung*, which literally means “unfolding.”

Soprano Ky - - ri - e

Alto Ky - - ri - e

Tenor Ky - - ri - e

This is then immediately followed by a second idea on the word “eleison,” introduced by the alto and then picked up by the full chorus:

Alto e - lei - - son.

Especially the second rising note-pair is important (it’s an interval called the fourth):

Alto e - lei - - son.

Now let’s visit the second section, “Christe eleison” (Christ, have mercy).

As you will experience, despite sounding different, it is in every way both an *enfolding*, and simultaneously an *unfolding* of the opening Kyrie section! For one thing, this section is in the minor mode, which is a rotation of the major mode, but much more. The pairs of “Christe” should be obvious:

Soprano Chri - ste, Chri - ste

But then there is a simultaneous, implicitly fugal second theme on the “eleison”:

Soprano Chri - ste, Chri - ste

Tenor e - lei - - - -

This takes the rising fourth we heard in the earlier section and folds it into its own inversion, now proceeding stepwise downward.

And it is these actions which drive the development

And thus we have, simultaneously, both an *unfolding* and an *enfolding* in Beethoven’s double-fugal method.

Here’s what Cusa has to say about this, again in his *Vision of God*:

Trusting in Thine aid, Lord, I return again to find Thee beyond the wall of the coincidence of enfolding and unfolding, and, as I go in and go out by this door of Thy word and Thy concept, I find sweetest nourishment. When I find Thee as the power that unfoldeth, I go out: when I find thee as the power that alike enfoldeth and unfoldeth, I go in and go out alike. I go in, passing from the creatures to Thee, their Creator, from effects to the Cause; I go out, passing from Thee, the Creator, to the creature, from Cause to effects. I go in and go out simultaneously when I perceive how going out is one with going in, and going in with going out.

In this manner one that reckoneth [talking about the scientist, as Beethoven was in fact] doth alike enfold and unfold, for he unfoldeth the power of unity, and enfoldeth number in unity. For the creature, to go forth from Thee is to enter into the creature, and to unfold is to enfold. When I behold Thee, my God, in Paradise, girt by that wall of the coincidence of opposites, I see that Thou dost neither enfold nor unfold, whether separately or together. For disjunction and conjunction alike are that wall of coincidence, beyond which Thou existest, set free from all that can be spoken or thought.

Sigerson’s presentation was followed by Beethoven’s “Kyrie,” performed virtually by the Schiller Institute NYC chorus.