

Perspectives on Beethoven's Middle and Late Periods: Developments in his Writing for Cello in the *Op. 69* and *Op. 102 Sonatas*

223

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Abstract: This article explores the developments in Beethoven's writing for the cello in the *Op. 69* and *Op. 102 sonatas*, with the premise that they reflect the overall shift in his style from his Middle to Late Periods. In order to place the *cello sonatas* in context, the traditional framing of Beethoven's work into three phases is described and well as the current state of cello writing at the turn of the century. The cello part in the *Op. 69 sonata* is then discussed, with attention to the role of the cello as compared to the piano and to the interaction between the two instruments. The *Op. 102 sonatas* are presented, also with attention to the interaction between the instruments. The suggestion is made that these sonatas illustrate Beethoven's increasingly radical treatment of form, a treatment that results in challenging instrumental writing that, while not as gratifying as that of his Middle Period, nonetheless allows him to attain a new kind of expressivity as well as formal complexity.

Keywords: Beethoven, Beethoven's Middle Period, Beethoven's Late Period, *Cello Sonatas*, *Opus 69*, *Opus 102*.

Perspectivas sobre a Segunda e Terceira Fase de Beethoven: Desenvolvimentos em sua Escrita para Violoncelo nas *Sonatas Op. 69* e *Op. 102*

Resumo: Este artigo explora o desenvolvimento na escrita de Beethoven para o violoncelo nas *sonatas Op. 69* e *op. 102*, mostrando que elas refletem a mudança geral em seu estilo, da Segunda para Terceira Fase de sua obra. Para entendermos as *sonatas para violoncelo* neste contexto, inicialmente é descrito o enquadramento tradicional da obra de Beethoven em três fases, bem como o estado da escrita para violoncelo na virada do século. Em seguida, discute-se a parte do violoncelo na *sonata Op. 69*, com atenção a seu papel em relação ao piano e à interação entre os dois instrumentos. As duas *sonatas Op. 102* são apresentadas, também com atenção à interação entre os instrumentos. Conclui-se que estas duas últimas sonatas ilustram o tratamento cada vez mais radical de Beethoven sobre a forma, um tratamento que resulta em uma escrita instrumental desafiadora, não tão gratificante quanto a de sua Segunda Fase, mas que lhe permite atingir um novo tipo de expressividade e uma maior complexidade formal.

Palavras-chave: Beethoven, Segunda Fase de Beethoven, Terceira Fase de Beethoven, *Sonatas para Violoncelo*, *Opus 69*, *Opus 102*.

Introduction

Beethoven's *sonatas for cello and piano*, composed in 1796, 1808, and 1815, provide a window not only into the development of his writing for cello, but into the contrasts and relationships between his three style periods. The idea that Beethoven's work could be divided into three distinct artistic periods was first proposed during Beethoven's lifetime and was formalized the year after he died; it has proved a useful formula for framing his works and understanding his development ever since. This is not to say that the accuracy of the divisions between the styles has not come under question since 1828, and other frameworks have indeed been suggested. But the three-period theory has only become increasingly attractive as more of Beethoven's biography is uncovered, since the breaks between the periods coincide with major crises in his life. As Glenn Stanley explains, "the new periods are precipitated by personal crises that help trigger artistic ones; the new style is the result of Beethoven's overcoming or surmounting both personal and creative problems" (STANLEY, 2000, p. 3).

Given the perspective that Beethoven's opus can be divided into three more or less distinct styles, the cello sonatas seem practically custom-designed to illustrate them. The first set, *Op. 5, No. 1 and 2*, were composed at the beginning of Beethoven's career, when he was first articulating a personal style. The fact that he chose to launch into a relatively unfamiliar genre, for which there was no existing precedent, in itself indicates something about his spirit and originality. Beethoven's next work, *Op. 69*, was composed during the middle ("Heroic") period, the same year as the *Fifth* and *Sixth Symphonies* and the *Piano Trios, Op. 70*. This sonata, which is regarded as a seminal work for the cello (LOCKWOOD, 1986, p. 18), demonstrates both artistic and technical mastery through the partnership that Beethoven creates between the two instruments. Finally, the *Op. 102 sonatas* (after the *Piano Sonata Op. 90*) mark the first emergence of Beethoven's late style, with all its complexity and contrasts.

If the cello sonatas illustrate the distinctions between Beethoven's stylistic periods, they also demonstrate certain continuities. Indeed, while the following discussion will begin with *Op. 69*, many of the technical and aesthetic issues which Beethoven's writing develops in the later sonatas are already present in *Op. 5*, and in some ways the last two sonatas seem to respond to the first (consider, to begin with, structural elements

like the layout of the movements and the pairing of two sonatas). Lewis Lockwood articulates some of these issues in the early sonatas:

The deeper originality of these works lies not in formal or even thematic design but in the varied methods by which Beethoven explores the sonorous and registral capacities of the two instruments, individually and in myriad combinations. He frames the continuity of each movement as a succession of thematic elements that are presented in complementation to one another in register, sonority, figuration, and function (LOCKWOOD, 2003, p. 305).

Beethoven's Cello Writing: Background

The cello began to be featured as a solo instrument only in the mid-1700's, notably in the works of the Italian virtuosi Luigi Boccherini; before this it was considered useful primarily as a support to bass lines. However, between 1760 and 1800 both the instrument's role and the number of accomplished cello soloists increased rapidly. Important works including C.P.E. Bach's and Joseph Haydn's cello concertos challenged and developed views of the instrument's potential in terms of range and virtuosity. Still, even in the 1790's, when Beethoven wrote his first two sonatas for cello (the sonatas were dedicated to King Friedrich Wilhelm II, cello student of the Duport brothers Jean-Pierre and Jean-Louis), the instrument was just beginning to carve a place for itself as an equal partner in ensemble situations. These were, in fact, the first sonatas written for cello and keyboard as an equal duo, with a written keyboard part and an independent cello line, rather than a 'continuo sonata' in which the cello doubled the keyboard's bass line while the right hand was free to ornament and improvise (FORTUNE, 1971, p. 211-214).

By 1808, a mere eight years later, Beethoven had gained considerable experience in writing for the cello. Not only had he featured the instrument in the two cello sonatas of 1796, but he relied on it heavily in his symphonies. According to Adam Carse, "the emancipation of the violoncello begins in earnest with the 'Eroica' symphony" (CARSE, 1925, p. 233). By the time Beethoven began writing the *A major Sonata, Op. 69*, he had also already composed the Op. 59 string quartets, which prominently feature the cello, more so than in any of his earlier quartets (in fact, the opening cello solo of *Op. 59, No. 1* is quite similar in texture and sonority to the opening solo in the first movement of the third cello sonata).

An important factor in the development of Beethoven's cello writing was his association with a number of fine cellists, including Jean Louis Duport, Bernard Romberg, Anton Kraft, Friedrich Dotzauer, and Joseph Linke. While Duport was most influential on Beethoven's early writing, the *Tagebuch* indicates that he continued to consult with other cellists (in this case, Joseph Linke) into his later years (DRABKIN, 2004, p. 125-26). Techniques in the early sonatas and variations indicate the influence of many of these cellists and even incorporate passages drawn from method books by Duport, Romberg, and Dotzauer. New approaches to bowing and fingering technique facilitated passagework; they also opened up a new, cantabile style of resonant and sustained playing. Moreover, developments in the hardware of the cello, including bridge shape, string width, and the construction of the bow, all contributed to make the playing of the instrument more fluid and virtuosic. Perhaps most importantly for Beethoven, the higher registers of all four strings became more accessible, and string crossings were easier to execute with clarity and speed (WATKIN, 1994, and LOCKWOOD, 1986, p. 18-19).

These technical developments meant that Beethoven could realistically push the boundaries of technique without making his cello parts unplayable (although by *Op. 132*, many cellists probably thought they were exactly that!). They also helped him to develop an approach to the instrument which exploits all the possibilities of its wide range. According to Lockwood, Beethoven's cello writing articulates three tessituras, each of which suits a particular musical role. It can function, first, as a bass voice, providing a harmonic and textural underpinning, second, as a tenor voice, which usually emphasizes the instrument's cantabile possibilities and often presents melodic material, and, third, as a treble (also melodic, but with a different character) (LOCKWOOD, Lewis. 1998, p. 311).

Beethoven also pushed against traditional formal boundaries of the sonata in terms of the relationship between the instruments. The tradition of the accompanied keyboard sonata was that of an unequal partnership, in part because of recent developments and interest in the clavier. William Newman explains the situation of the sonata in the late eighteenth century:

Thanks to realized clavier music and the emergence of the piano-forte, the clavier was elevated from a subordinate status to a position of melodic and technical equality—even superiority, for a while—in ensemble music. At the same time a new, genuine clavier style developed in both solo and ensemble music...One might even say that the clavier was trading places with the string instruments it had formerly accompanied (NEWMAN, 1947, p. 333).

But, given the expanding technical possibilities of the cello, Beethoven was able to approach the cello-piano partnership as one with the potential for equality. Indeed, according to William Drabkin, this was his primary interest in all of the sonatas.

The three distinct periods during which Beethoven wrote for the combination—the mid-1790s, 1808, and 1815—do show that “the distribution of tasks between the instruments” was a primary concern. They show him confronting the following theoretical problem: how does one put a cello and a piano together in music that has the tonal plans and phrase structure of the “sonata style” of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries? (DRABKIN, 2004, p.127)

Beethoven's Stylistic Shift, 1808 to 1815

In addition to the technical and formal context of the cello sonatas, they are located within the more personal context of Beethoven's stylistic evolution. A brief sketch of the characteristics of the middle and late periods will help to illuminate some of the differences, and the continuities, between *Op. 69* and *Op. 102*.

Beethoven's middle period has also been called the “Heroic” period. The beginning of this period is marked by his ‘Heiligenstadt Testament’ of 1802: an unsent letter expressing despair over his hearing loss and the growing sense that he was pitted against man and the universe. The tone of the letter is at once despondent and defiant; above all it conveys a sense of struggle. This feeling of combat (and victory) is characteristic of many of the works which Beethoven produced over the next ten years. Within sonata form he found a way to articulate and resolve conflict through the presentation and ultimate integration of contrasting material, and he does so in sweeping gestures that found their most vivid expression in his symphonies. In an article on Beethoven, Joseph Kerman describes the “forcefulness, expanded range and evident radical intent” (KERMAN, *Grove Music Online*) of Beethoven's symphonies from this period (particularly numbers 3, 5, 7, and 9). Structurally, the works are characterized by extraordinary—often multi-movement—motivic unity, and the inclusion of long, transformative development sections and codas that bear significant structural weight in

the balance of the works. In addition to the heroic sense of struggle and victory that these works convey, Beethoven's writing also demonstrates an "emerging lyrical impulse" (AGAWU, 2001, p.20), one which could certainly be felt in the first period, according to Lockwood (LOCKWOOD, 1986, 18), but which comes to fruition in works after 1808 such as the G Major Piano Concerto (*Op. 58*), the *Violin Concerto (Op. 61)*, the first movement of the *Piano Trio, Op. 70, No. 1*, and the *A Major Cello Sonata (Op. 69)*. This lyricism is in part linked to a technical ease which tempers the struggle of heroic with a kind of virtuosic tranquility. At this moment in Beethoven's compositional life he seemed to have solved many technical and compositional issues, and he turns classical forms to his expressive ends with an impressive facility.

Beethoven's late period marks his emergence from another time of great psychological strain. During the years 1812-1815 he composed very little, and much of his psychic energy seems to have gone into the doomed "Immortal Beloved" affair. Moreover, having, in a sense, conquered so many classical idioms—sonata form at its most complex, the symphonic genre, the string quartet—he seems to have gone inward, searching for a more direct and intimate mode of communication. When he emerged from this fallow period, first with the *Piano Sonata Op. 90*, and then the two cello sonatas, *Op. 102*, he would bring forth works that were increasingly complex, increasingly personal, and profoundly emotional.

The communicative quality in Beethoven's late works was often a lyrical one, and in his piano writing, his sonatas, and his last string quartets he creates moments of a profound *espressivo* character that are unmatched in his earlier works. In addition to lyricism, according to Maynard Solomon, the composer was drawn to "rhetoric, declamation, and recitative as well: speech and song together press to fulfill Beethoven's drive toward immediacy of communication" (SOLOMON, 1998, p.387). It is as though the aging composer, increasingly isolated by deafness, financial instability, and public indifference, was moving toward a kind of personal, musical language; as if by turning within he could rediscover the world of human experience and interaction through music.

Other characteristics of the late period include a fascination (Maynard Solomon calls it an "obsession") with fugue and counterpoint. His writing also demonstrates extraordinary motivic concentration, as well as the juxtaposition of contrasting registers,

characters, textures, and even incongruous harmonic motion—all of which he somehow manages to integrate with a kind of unpredictable formal efficiency. The dramatic and harmonic extremes of the late style are nonetheless always contained within the classical framework: “while Beethoven’s interests in fugue, variation, and lyricism personify the works of the late period, it is important to note that his real compositional concern was to integrate these elements into the matrix of the sonata style” (CRAWFORD, 1998, p.112).

Opus 69

Against this background of stylistic development, we can understand the *Cello Sonatas Op. 69* and *Op. 102* as discrete points along a continuum. The *A Major Sonata* represents a kind of arrival in Beethoven’s writing, in terms of the cello writing, the relationship between the instruments, and the structural content. But his impulse to push against the limits of form did not cease with this arrival, and the *Op. 102* sonatas demonstrate both a deepening and a problematization of his solutions.

In the opening of *Opus 69*, the cello presents the first theme unaccompanied for six measures, immediately establishing its importance in the instrumental partnership. There are virtually no moments of unaccompanied cello writing in Beethoven’s first two sonatas: the longest is a one-bar, gestural flourish in the “Rondo” of the *G minor sonata* (bars 17 and 19 and their corresponding recurrences in the return). The opening melody of *Op. 69*, therefore, is striking, and sets up the work as a “cellist’s sonata” (THOMAS, 1983, p. 2) – just as the opening of *Op. 59, No. 1* articulates the prominent, melodic cello role in that quartet.

In a two-voice work like the cello sonata, most themes are presented twice, either with a sense of dialogue or of integration. In Beethoven’s first two sonatas the cello generally seems secondary; the piano has a much greater role in the development of the works’ melodies, even those which are initially presented by the cello. In contrast, the *A major sonata*, set up by the solo opening, conveys a sense of the total equality of the two voices. Whether the voices are in alternation or in tandem, ‘completing one another’s sentences,’ as it were, the piano does not dominate the texture as it had in the past. Moreover, this equality is not restricted to melodic moments. Notable in the piano part of the sonata is that Beethoven practically abandons the figuration which characterized

keyboard music of the time, and which he employs regularly in the *Opus 5 sonatas*, particularly the G minor. With a few exceptions, the accompanimental material in the sonata is interchangeable between the two instruments just as is the melodic material.

The role of the cello is also emphasized in structural ways. For example, Beethoven allows the cello, for the first time, to stand alone as a bass voice. In measure 25, as part of a stormy transitional section to the second theme (a section which is drawn, with great economy, from the rising fifth motive of the opening), Beethoven's autograph of this movement shows that his original voicing had the cello playing triplets in the middle range, with the piano left hand covering the bass in octaves (LOCKWOOD, 1970, p. 43-44). Significantly, he not only reassigned the lowest voice to the cello but also abandoned the doubling of this voice: the cello stands alone and must support the entire texture.

Similar revisions in the development section show Beethoven struggling with voicing, and without exception he settles on the solution that assigns the greatest independence and equality to the cello voice. For example, bars 70-79 underwent a series of revisions; the first version placed the melody in the piano right hand, with accompanying triplets in octaves in the cello's middle register and the piano left hand. This first version uses the cello voice as a textural addition, but it is a far cry from Beethoven's final solution to the passage, which again assigns a unique role to the cello. The cello has the melody, in its lowest range, while the piano plays a frenzy of accompanimental sixteenth notes in the middle and upper registers (the rhythmic change, from more placid triplets, sets this section apart as a local high point).¹ Another innovation in the sonata is the extent to which Beethoven uses the entire range of the cello. The first two pages of the score have the cello moving fluidly between the tenor and bass registers, and between their respective melodic and bass line roles, often with no pause or transition between the two (as in measures 26-27). But it is the second theme that really opens up the cello's range, taking it from a low E to a B above middle C in three bars of fluid, scalar accompaniment (bars 38-40). And a few bars later the cello plays its first irrefutably treble melody in a moment of delicacy where both piano and cello seem to float, suspended rhythmically and registrally in a pleading *appoggiatura* at

¹ It must grudgingly be admitted that this is the most difficult moment in the piece for the cellist to be heard above all the fuss...

measure 45. This section is quite brilliant in terms of establishing a sense of equality between the voices. As the melodic line moves down the scale, the accompanying line moves up, and yet they share the same melodic texture; we hear them as a perfectly harmonious duo, independent but complementary.

In terms of motivic interrelatedness, an emerging characteristic in Beethoven's middle style, the sonata is constructed with extraordinary integrity. In his article, "The First Movement of Beethoven's *Cello Sonata, Op. 69*: the Opening Solo and its Melodic-Structural Significance," Eyton Agmon convincingly demonstrates that all of the material in the first movement is generated by elements in the opening bars. Finally, the sonata presents an excellent example of middle period writing in terms of affect; while tender and warm, thanks to Beethoven's generous use of the cello's tenor range, it conveys self-confidence, optimism, and energy.

If the challenge of the cello sonatas is, as Drabkin claims, the "distribution of tasks" and the weaving together of two unlike parts into an integrated whole, then the *Opus 69 sonata* truly meets the challenge with elegance. It seems to illustrate Kerman's point (on which his tone is almost rueful) about Beethoven's middle period; while the material is filled with passion and energy, there is no sense of struggle with the formal or technical elements of the work. His comment about the "Harp" Quartet of 1809 could apply to the *Cello Sonata, Op. 69*: "Nothing about this work is problematic" (KERMAN, *Grove Music Online*).

Opus 102

After such a solution to the problems and possibilities of the cello sonata, what could come next? Having created a work of such structural, textural, and expressive elegance, the next step was unclear; certainly, Beethoven had more to say, but the question was how to say it ever more profoundly.

The developments in Beethoven's style in the late period were, first and foremost, aesthetic ones. The technical challenges, the problems and innovations in ensemble writing, the gestures, the formal developments—all were consequences of his increasingly radical aesthetic ends as he entered the last decade of his life. The development of the "conversational" aspect that is noticeable in Beethoven's earlier

works offers one perspective on his evolution; in the late works it becomes something more like “a dialogue between two parts of the composer’s personality complete with questions and hesitations” (COOPER, 1985, p.122). According to Denis Matthews, the conversation that is portrayed in *Op. 102, No. 1* is now something “infinitely subtler, communing and confiding rather than conversing” (MATTHEWS, 1988, p.122), while *Op. 102, No. 2* is characterized by sudden shifts in affect (and, correspondingly, in range and technique): the internal conversation less gentle, the shifts more jagged.

One way that Beethoven creates a feeling of inwardness in the conversational aspect of the last sonatas is through the fragmentation and exchange of motives. This is apparent immediately if we consider the opening *Andante* of *Opus 102, No. 1* as compared to the opening solo of *Op. 69*. Both movements begin with a *dolce* cello solo, answered by the piano. But whereas the cello presents the entire first phrase in the earlier sonata, in *Op. 102* the tentative opening cello gesture (marked *teneramente*) is immediately answered by the piano’s consequent phrase. The questioning quality of the rising fifth in the first motive, along with the sigh of the falling minor third, conveys a sense of searching; in bar 6 the instruments join to search together. The feeling is quite different in the *Opus 69 sonata*, where each instrument has its say in turn, and they really only join together at the very end, in the *fortissimo* restatement of the opening theme in bar 253. Thus, while again the instruments are equal to one another, the later sonata conveys the sense that they are woven together inseparably; somehow the subject of the music is not the relationship between the instruments (as it seems to be in *Op. 69*), but their rather their shared search for something beyond.

The *C Major sonata* continues to weave the voices together in this way, with many more instances of the cello line and the piano lines complementing, rather than contrasting with, one another. This could conceivably reopen potential balance issues that were resolved in the previous sonata by maintaining separate roles for the instruments (and in truth, balance is more of an issue in this sonata). But, when the voices are in a kind of competition to project—as in the “*Allegro vivace*” of the first movement—Beethoven fragments the music to such an extent that the contours of the various lines truly stand out.

Vitally important in the *Allegro vivace* are the abrupt shifts between registers in the cello part. These sudden leaps into other registers yield a new insight—namely, that Beethoven's developing treatment of the cello in chamber music throughout his career in the sonatas, in piano trios, in quartets above all—entails a growing understanding of its expressive capacities and also an increasing awareness that the instrument possesses three distinctive tessituras or ranges, each of them approximately equivalent to a vocal range (LOCKWOOD, 1998, p. 311).

These “sudden leaps” and role changes are neither easy nor gratifying. The last sonatas have never been the most popular among audiences or performers; it is not music that highlights or serves the instruments. Rather, there is a sense that the instruments are in service of the music.

If Beethoven does not feature the instruments in these sonatas, the way that he features the piano in the early sonatas and the cello in *Op. 69*, then what is featured? I would argue that he is actually featuring form itself. At this point in Beethoven's oeuvre he was fascinated, obsessed, even, with the development of musical form at its most integrated, coherent, and complex. For Beethoven, aesthetic form was beauty: the creation of a work that, from the first notes, plays out its own internal logic to the end. This explains his fascination with fugue and with variation, as well as his indifference to the technical challenges that his music provokes.

The beauty of form in *Op. 102*, No. 1 is in its extraordinary economy of material. Agmon's exercise of unfolding the opening motive of *Op. 69* can be extended in *Op. 102*, No. 1 to encompass the entire work. T. Thomas Donley explores the extraordinary interrelatedness of the musical material in the C Major sonata in his article, “The Last Violoncello Works of Ludwig van Beethoven,” in which he connects motives and gestures from all of the movements (and sections within movements) of the sonata to the opening bars. But it is Lockwood who, though in less detail, most poetically describes the complex qualities of the opening line and its potential to unfold:

This opening shows Beethoven manipulating short motives not by asserting them in forceful, rhythmically sculpted, and memorable formulations, as in so many second-period works, but rather burying distinguishable motives within a linear stream, from which, like aquatic creatures, they will eventually surface (LOCKWOOD, 1998, p. 308).

If *Opus 102, No. 1* demonstrates the motivic and expressive concentration of which Beethoven was capable, *Op. 102, No. 2* demonstrates the possibilities of counterpoint and contrast with which he was also preoccupied. The opening theme is a case in point, at least in terms of contrast. The bombastic piano opening presents the first part of the theme: it is angular, brilliant, and filled with developmental possibilities in terms of range, rhythm, and texture, since it encompasses a range of one and a half octaves, features off-beat accents, and ends in a long, downward sweep. The cello meets the piano at the bottom of the scale with a rising arpeggio—but it transforms, mid-outburst, into a lyrical melody marked *piano, dolce!* As Donley points out, “by combining the dramatic and lyric elements in one theme, Beethoven obviates the need of composing an authentic second theme” (DONLEY, 1983, p. 7). The movement is, accordingly, compact and filled with contrasts in terms of register and expressivity, as it develops the various dynamic and textural possibilities invited by such an unpredictable opening.

The second and third movements of the last cello sonata are extraordinary examples of Beethoven’s late-period expressivity and intellectualism, respectively. The “Adagio” is the only true slow movement in any of the cello sonatas, “an ingratiatingly lyrical opportunity for the stringed instrument—a moment which never occurred before in the sonatas, nor was to recur again” (DONLEY, 1983, p. 8). The movement is unusually unified in terms of texture and instrumentation: the two instruments truly support one another, and there is a sense of timelessness in the music that only exists in Beethoven’s last periods (most notably, the quartets). The fugue which follows is complex, witty, motivically compact, and very difficult. Rather than complement or contrast with one another, here the two instruments just seem to get in each other’s way—and if the challenge in previous movements is to do justice to the work’s expressivity and Beethoven’s detailed markings, here it is just not to get lost. Again, the sense here is that the music was not written to showcase the musicians’ skill or to offer moments for them to fully exploit the idiomatic potential of their instruments. Rather, their job is to make the composer’s fugue—a form that has always represented the supreme intellectual feat—come to life.

Conclusion

235

This discussion focuses on the unfolding of Beethoven's aesthetic development, as understood through the cello sonatas, rather than strictly on cello technique. This is because I see his shift from 1808 to 1815 as a move beyond the technical to the purely aesthetic. The tools, in terms of instrumental writing and compositional structure, had been gathered in the previous decades, and now he was able, movement by movement, to move toward a 'meta-technical,' if not almost 'meta-musical,' sense of the sublime.

Technical and ensemble issues in these late sonatas, therefore, are all implied by the aesthetic shift. Many of them pertain to the juxtaposition of radically different kinds of material; it can be difficult just to arrive at the next measure on time, let alone with the right expressive affect. As Lockwood points out, Beethoven had learned by this time to exploit the various ranges of the instrument, and this means that he frequently requires sudden, large registral leaps with concurrent shifts in articulation to get the cello line from one character to another. Ensemble also becomes increasingly challenging, since the players must dovetail perfectly when their lines interweave. Overlapping lines mean that the cellist and pianist must work hard to match their sound, despite radical the differences in attack, timbre, and sustaining potential of their instruments, so that the music can be as seamless as possible (the opening of Op. 102, No. 1, and the slow movement of Op. 102, No. 2 both come to mind, in respect to their legato lines and in matching articulation of the dotted rhythms).

But the greater challenge is a conceptual one. These later works do not 'play themselves' with the ease of the A major sonata. Not only are they formally complex, but the mood shifts are so surprising that it takes time and thoughtful work to make sense of them. These works are internal, thoughtful, and unpredictable, and ultimately making them flow is a great, though profoundly rewarding, interpretive challenge.

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