



Beethoven and church music

The exhibition starts in room 5.

Beethoven's Bonn Instrument

Here on display is the console of the old organ from the The Greyfriars' Church in Bonn, today The Church of St. Remigius. In his youth, Ludwig van Beethoven regularly played this organ in services at the church. Notably, he performed for the early service at 6 a.m. When only eleven years old he deputized for the court organist Gilles van den Eeden († 1782). According to the court 'cellist Bernhard Mäurer Beethoven played in 'such a surprising way that one could not help thinking that he had intentionally held himself back'. Because of the quality of his improvisations he was allowed to continue playing for 'longer than was usual for fantasies'. When in Vienna, Beethoven recollected playing on this organ. In a notebook he recorded the 'measurements of the Greyfriars' pedal in Bonn', probably to compare with the pedalboards of organs in Vienna.



On the right of the console, a photo shows the organ before it was destroyed in the Second World War; it was of relatively large size.

The Frenchman François Lamathe Dom Bédos de Celles de Salelles (1709–1779), usually known simply as Dom Bédos de Celles, was a Benedictine monk and organ builder. Between 1766 and 1778 he wrote his *L'Art du facteur d'orgues* (The art of organ building), commissioned by the French Academy of Sciences. The four volumes constitute a thorough-going and detailed treatise on organ building with copious engravings to illustrate the text. Plate 52 shows a cross-section of a four-manual organ with at the top left the tracker system with which the key lever allows the wind into a pipe, below the man serving the bellows to provide wind for the organ; the main divisions of the organ are shown in the centre; the organist playing the lowest of the four keyboards is shown on the right and behind him the division known as the choir organ in English or *Rückpositiv* in German is shown. The organist is wearing official clothes, similar to those worn by the young Beethoven; as a court musician, he too had to wear a sword.

Beethoven probably composed his *Zwei Präludien durch alle Dur-Tonarten* (Two preludes through all the major keys) in 1789, presumably inspired by Johann Sebastian Bach's *Wohltemperiertes Klavier*, which Beethoven studied in his youth. He must have been convinced



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of the quality of the two pieces; in 1803 – when he had already earned a considerable reputation – he had them engraved in Leipzig by *Hoffmeister & Kühnel*. The *Präludien* sold well, in Beethoven's lifetime the publishing house made new impressions and other publishers made further editions.

On the wall in the passageway to room 7 hang lithographs of three of Beethoven's teachers. In the centre is Johann Georg Albrechtsberger (1736–1809) who taught Beethoven counterpoint throughout 1794 and until early in 1795. Albrechtsberger was not only one of the best known music theorists of his time. In Vienna he was famous as Court Organist and Choir Master at St. Stephen's Cathedral. In Vienna he was especially known for his improvisations and was compared with J. S. Bach; in 1808 Ignaz von Mosel wrote in his *Uebersicht des gegenwärtigen Zustandes der Tonkunst in Wien*: 'Herrn Albrechtsberger, director of music at this city's cathedral, perhaps the greatest organist of the world and certainly one of the most knowledgeable of composers, may be considered as Vienna's Johann Sebastian Bach and honoured as such.'

Room 7

The character of church music in Beethoven's time in Bonn

Showcases 1 and 2

The so-called *Siegburg organ book* reflects the liturgical practice in Beethoven's time in Bonn. The book is opened at a page showing the usual setting of the Kyrie for a Sunday mass with interludes between the sections. The setting of the chant is not modal but follows the then modern taste in which major and minor keys were used instead. The writing above reads: 'L. van Pethoven'; the handwriting is certainly not Beethoven's however, which, in the absence of other documentation, means that the authorship of the setting cannot be established as Beethoven's with any certainty.

Reiner Kirchrath (1747–1826) was *Succentor* (that is, artistic leader of the choral singers) between 1771 and 1780 and thereafter abbey vicar at the Minster in Bonn. Florid church music, only performed on special occasions in the Abbey Church of SS. Cassius and Florentius, necessitated borrowing court musicians. Usually, plainchant was sung, although towards the end of the eighteenth century less and less so. In 1782 Kirchrath tried to revive the chant with his *Theatrum musicae choralis*, a tutor for singing masters. In the foreword he complained of 'the deplorable and deteriorating state of the art of singing' provoking 'the laughter and mockery of the audience in not a few churches'. To correct this situation, Kirchrath described the most important rules and rudiments of the theory of chant, not only the Roman Gregorian chant but, to





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achieve the widest possible dissemination of his work, also the style used locally that followed the precepts of Guy Aretin. The *Theatrum musicae choralis* is shown open here at a double page where a description is given of the various intervals. The description is given as the lyrics to the notes so that the facts could be committed to memory more easily.

Nearly fifty years later, in 1829, the choir director and organist of Münster Cathedral, Franz Joseph Antony (1790–1837), an ordained priest, published his *Archäologisch-liturgisches Gesangbuch des Gregorianischen Kirchengesanges*, an erudite work in which he pleaded for the revival of Gregorian chant and an improvement in the quality of its performance. Antony considered not only the Roman manner of singing, but, as did Kirchrath before him, the local traditions in Münster and Cologne. The open pages give the Roman form of the Easter recitation on the left and the form used in Cologne with footnotes referring to Kirchrath's *Theatrum musicae choralis* on the right. The underlaying text in italics describes the melodic phrases defined by the respective punctuation.

Ferdinand d'Antoine (1746–1793) was a composer and a member of the Bonn branch of the Illuminati. To this 'secret society', dedicated to the cause of the Enlightenment, belonged such prominent musicians in Bonn as the composer, organist, choir master and musicologist Christian Gottlob Neefe (1748–1798) and the violinist Franz Anton Ries (1755–1846), both teachers of Beethoven. In the winter of 1784/85 d'Antoine published a series of articles containing his ideas for the reform of church music. In them, d'Antoine did not direct his attention to Gregorian chant, but complained in his remarks about 'the excesses of our gallant style' found in musical settings that 'have also infiltrated our churches and houses of God' such that 'the honoured, old art of writing, spared of luxuriance, has by now been destroyed and banned from our temples. How many masses, vespers and oratorios are unable to move our hearts to prayer but instead to dancing?' (p. 296). This mischief all comes 'from foreign parts; especially the effeminate taste of the Italians, generated by a hot climate, has hit our church music the worst.' (p. 297) On the following pages d'Antoine emphasizes that in principle, he does not want to damn Italian music out of hand – his sister was married to Andrea Luchesi (1741–1801), organist, composer and court *Kapellmeister* in Bonn from 1774 to 1794 – but that he considered the new style inappropriate for the church, promoting instead noble simplicity as conducive to worship.

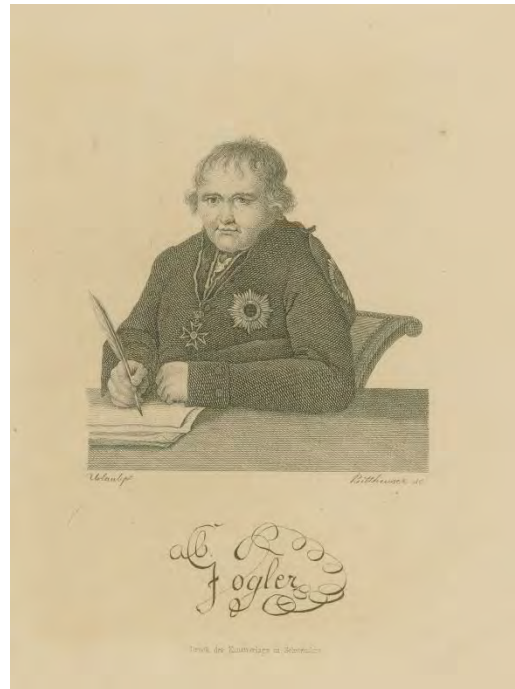




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The *Engeltal organ book* was written for the Augustiner Convent Engeltal near today's Beethoven-Halle. As does the *Siegburg organ book*, it reflects the liturgical practice of the end of the eighteenth century but at the same time is clearly more comprehensive and more carefully made. Although it outwardly appears to deal with the Gregorian tradition, the church modes are obsolete, as is clear from the headings that each refer to a major key.

In 1790 the famous organist *Abbé* Georg Joseph Vogler (1749–1814) announced a monetary prize for the best setting of the *Magnificat* in order 'to revive the spirit of church pathos'. Vogler's intention was to reform church music according to his standards. The focus should be on the 'understanding of pure harmony' as well as the composition of two 'fugues, worked out with artistic insight.' The winning compositions by Joseph Schlett (1764–1836) and Justin Heinrich Knecht (1752–1817, portrait on the wall) were engraved in 1791 by Beethoven's earlier publisher, Boßler of Speyer. Some errors were corrected by Vogler and some fragments were reworked by him.



Teaching books and studies

Showcases 3 and 4

Daniel Gottlob Türk (1750–1813) was organist at The Church of Our Dear Lady in Halle. He published a number of teaching books of which the *Von den wichtigsten Pflichten eines Organisten* (Of the most important duties of an organist) was one of the most successful. Beethoven possessed a copy. Although Türk directed this *Beytrag zur Verbesserung der musikalischen Liturgie* (Contribution to the improvement of the musical liturgy) at Protestant organists, his aims were similar to those of his Catholic colleagues: the accompaniment of the choral should be well played, something only possible with a thorough knowledge of figured bass; the organist should be able to make a suitable prelude; he should be practised in the art of accompaniment and also be able to play with unusual harmonies. He should also understand organ building in order to be able to look after his instrument. The open pages show part of Türk's explanations of harmony, which, as far as possible, should be made in a manner that supports the text.

Sebastian Prixner (1744–1799) was a monk, capitulary and finally priest at the Benedictine Abbey of St. Emmeram in Regensburg where he was also organist, seminar inspector and choir



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director. His *Orgelschule* (School for organ) probably came into being as the result of his own practise as a teacher. It was 'made for the nursery of the Imperial Monastery of St. Emmeram'). The tutor was so successful that it went through a number of editions. The formulation of the title, which assumes that it is possible to learn to play the organ in two or three months, makes clear that Prixner did not intend it for complete beginners but for diligent pupils who already had enjoyed a musical grounding. On his first journeys to Vienna, Beethoven often stayed in Regensburg. He may well have heard Prixner playing the magnificent 1669 organ by Christoph Egedacher the Younger (1641–1706) at St. Emmeram's. The organ still stands today.

The *Gerüstsatz eines Kyries* by Beethoven came into being during his time with Albrechtsberger at the beginning of 1795. In this piece Beethoven was learning to set texts to parts of fugues. For this exercise Albrechtsberger preferred texts from the mass. The piece is fragmentary and comprises only the insets of the themes of a double fugue. The other voices are not given.

The *Dona nobis pacem* fugue of 1795 also came into being under Albrechtsberger. Unlike the *Kyrie* it is completed and was corrected by the master. The theme for the fugue, given by Albrechtsberger, is derived from the subject of Haydn's fugue *Dona nobis pacem* from the *Missa Cellensis* ('Mariazeller Mass') Hob. XXII:8. Joseph Haydn, a friend of Albrechtsberger, also taught Beethoven.



Justin Heinrich Knecht, mentioned above as one of the winners of Abbé Vogler's competition, was a composer and director of music in Biberach where he was also organist. His *Vollständige Orgelschule* (Complete organ school) in three volumes formed part of Beethoven's estate when the latter died. The third part, of 1798, includes *eine theoretischpraktische Abhandlung über*



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das Choralspiel auf der Orgel (a theoretical-practical treatise on playing chorales on the organ), written for 'both Catholic and Protestant services'. Knecht was appointed in 1792 as organist at St Martin's church, Biberach, a church used simultaneously by Catholics and Lutherans. The *Vollständige Orgelschule* is shown here open at a double page that illustrates the use of interludes between the verses of the choral. Knecht described this practice both for Catholic hymns in Latin and for Protestant hymns in German. That such musical interludes were usual is shown by both the Siegburg and the Engelthal organ books shown in showcases 1 and 2, and also, for example, in J. S. Bach's Choral arrangement 'Gelobet seist Du, Jesu Christ', BWV 722, in which quasi improvised, richly ornamented interludes are found between the verses.

Exemplary people and contemporaries

Showcase 5

Johann Christoph Schmügel (1727–1798), organist and *Cantor* in Lüneburg und Mölln, learnt composition with Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1767). Schmügel's *Préludes, fugues et autres pièces pour l'orgue* appeared in 1778. These original and colourful pieces impressed Beethoven. A note in the relevant place in the inventory of the Electoral music reads 'Preludien von Schmügel hat H. Beethoven' (Beethoven has the preludes of Schmügel), showing that Beethoven had borrowed Schmügel's *Préludes, fugues et autres pièces* from the library.

In February 1826 the violinist Karl Holz (1799–1858) noted in one of Beethoven's conversation books: 'M. Artaria has a number of vocal pieces by the oldest composers such as Palestrina etc. in score; he asks you to look through them and give your opinion as to whether he should bring them out or not.' This has to do with manuscripts collected by Christian Carl Gottlieb Sigmund von Tucher von Simmelsdorf (1798–1877) on an Italian journey made in 1824 and that were to be published by Mathias Artaria in Vienna. Beethoven's interest in the pieces was apparently considerable; his intense study of the proofs delayed the publication of the edition. The first issue of Tucher's *Kirchengesänge der berühmtesten älteren italiänischen Meister* (Choral works for the church, written by the most famous older Italian masters) appeared in March 1827 and is dedicated to Beethoven. The pages shown open here comprise two motets by Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525?–1594). The texts of the motets are given in two languages: the original Latin and a German translation, the latter reflecting Tucher's deeply rooted interest in the revival of choral practice in the Evangelical church.

In Beethoven's time in Vienna florid church music was on the wane. In mid-December 1823 an unknown person asked Beethoven in a conversation book about simple liturgical music: 'Which Mass do you recommend to me, e.g. by Bixi | Have you written something similar? | [...] | In Frankfurt they no longer play the organ for the mass. | There is a great lack of small masses for the country.' Maximilian Stadler (1748–1833), composer, organist and director of the Imperial Music Archives complained at the end of March 1826: 'We have no more singers for the old church pieces.' Composer Antonio Diabelli (1781–1858) instinctively wrote for the market with his catchy, simpler compositions for the church including his earlier masses and his *Missa Pastorale* (op. 147, 1830), well within the reach of modest voices. That Beethoven would have been virtually incapable of writing in this way is clear from the gravity and compass of the



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Missa solennis (op. 123, 1819–1823) in its expression almost the opposite extreme of Diabelli's work. Beethoven's *Missa solennis* was originally intended for the inauguration in 1820 of his friend, patron and pupil Archduke Rudolph of Austria (1788–1831) as Archbishop of Olmütz but was not finished until three years later. The portrait painted by Friedrich Johann Gottlieb Lieder (1780–1859) of Archduke Rudolph in about 1820 has been newly acquired by the Beethoven-Haus and shows the young archduke, then 32 years old, in his new vestments as archbishop.

Plans for church music

Showcase 6

Beethoven composed only two masses, one in C major, op. 86 (1807) and the *Missa solennis* in D major, op. 123 (1819–1823). Nevertheless, liturgical music occupied him throughout his creative life and to a far greater degree than is generally known.

In a letter of July 1808 to the publishers *Breitkopf & Härtel* in Leipzig Beethoven announced that he would 'make in some time a present to them of an *offertorium* and *graduale* for the mass'. The two motets would enlarge the mass op. 86 and thereby make it more profitable. Nothing came of Beethoven's intention in this respect.

Parallel to the composition of the *Missa solennis* Beethoven planned a further setting of the mass. At the beginning of 1820 the idea of a *Messe zu zwei Chören* (Beethoven spelled the word *Köhren*) as keyword among sketches for a *Credo*, a *Sanctus* and an *Agnus Dei* for this mass. Already in the Spring Beethoven had been thinking of another mass, also for two choirs, for the Augustine Court Parish Church in Vienna.

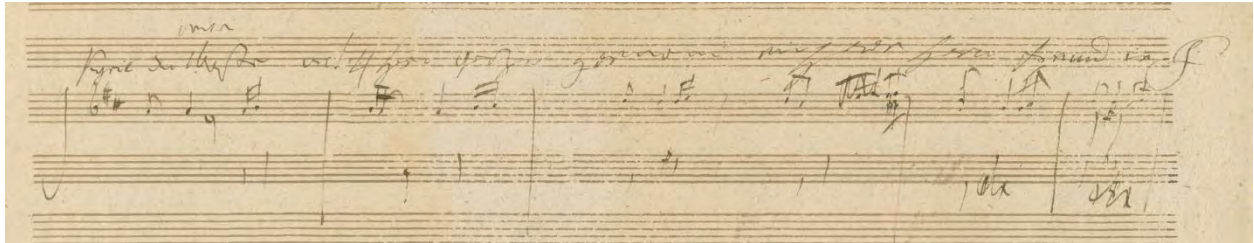
A project for another mass became more concrete at the end of 1822 and the beginning of 1823. In November 1822 the court composer Anton Teyber (1756–1822) died; Beethoven then applied for the deceased man's position. Despite being turned down as court composer Beethoven decided nonetheless at the beginning of 1823 to write a mass for Emperor Franz I and therefore enquired of his friend, Prince Moriz von Dietrichstein- (1775–1864) regarding the taste of the emperor. The prince was a minor composer, director of the court theater and of the court library. Beethoven's enquiry was related by Dietrichstein in a letter he wrote to *Graf Moritz von Lichnowsky* (1771–1837), a friend of Beethoven's and the younger brother of Prince Karl Lichnowsky (1761–1844), Beethoven's patron and sometime friend. Dietrichstein enclosed with his letter a mass written by the court *Capellmeister* Georg Reutter (1708–1772), knowing that the emperor preferred Reutter's simple style. Reutter's portrait hangs here on the wall.

The composition of a *neuen Messe* (new mass) continued to occupy Beethoven's thoughts. In the Spring of 1824 an idea for a *Kyrie* in D major came into being. The heading declares the orchestration: 'Kyrie of the [new?] mass with 4 horns, a complete wind ensemble with an outside pair of horns in F'. Already in December 1821 Beethoven had thought about a mass accompanied by wind instruments and organ. The 'pair of horns in F' could be an indication of the concept of the *Kyrie*. Natural horns in D would have been needed for the first and third section in D major – the *Kyrie eleison* – while the middle section – the *Christe eleison* – if it were in d minor,



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would have required a pair of horns in F, the major key whose relative minor is d minor. Without valves, different keys required different horns or extra *corps de rechange*.

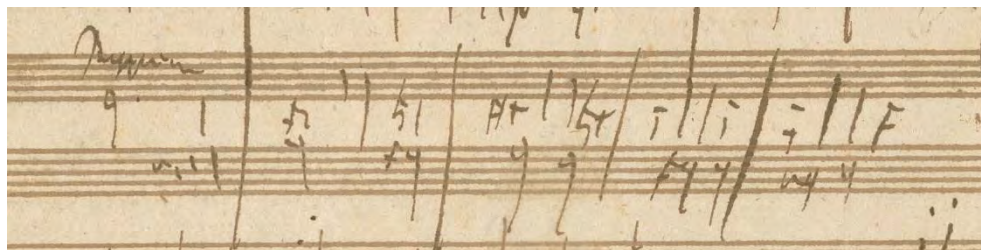


A sketch in the so-called Rolland sketchbook of the late summer of 1823 shows an idea for a motet. Recitation tones are given, as in Gregorian chant; a preliminary note states: 'in the 3 pieces the beginning of a tristis Recit[ativo] oblig[ato]'. *Tristis*-settings in music have a long tradition, especially for Lent and the Passion week; their words draw mostly on the lament of Christ on the Mount of Olives, as given in the New Testament. Regretfully, Beethoven never worked further on this plan. The sketchbook, which Beethoven mainly used for the Ninth Symphony, also contains a transcript, not even filling a whole page, of a *Tantum ergo* by Johann Stadlmayr (circa 1575–1648) for four voices.

Plans for a *Requiem* and for *Trauermusic* (music for mourning)

Showcase 7

In the 'Petter' sketchbook of 1812, between his ideas for the Seventh and Eighth Symphonies, Beethoven noted the idea of a *Requiem*. The structure is entirely conventional and the offset sighing motives are reminiscent of Barock examples. A few pages earlier – sheet (BH 119), which although separated, belongs according to tradition to the sketchbook – another idea emerges which has to do with the Office of the Dead: a motet setting of the text *De profundis*. Psalm 130 belongs to the Office and has been set for this purpose numerous times in the course of music history.



The best-known *Requiem* project of Beethoven is the commission by the cloth merchant Johann Wolfmayer, who in April 1818 wrote to Beethoven offering him 100 ducats for the composition of a requiem. Beethoven then appears to have carried the idea of this requiem with him in his



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head but never set a single note for it on paper. At regular intervals friends and acquaintances asked whether any progress had been made for Wolfmayer's requiem. At the end of April 1824 the newspaper publisher Johann Schickh brought this to Beethoven's attention: 'If you set a *Te Deum* and a *Requiem*, you will certainly benefit! These parts still have to be written by you | A *Dies irae* by you is a must.' The idea that if Beethoven would set the *Dies irae* to music it would be particularly impressive is also present in a conversation with Karl Holz of August 1825. Holz wrote: 'The Requiem would be one that would quote the devil out of hell.' That Beethoven had a surprisingly different and a much more peaceful conception in his mind, Holz related years later; apparently Mozart's depiction of the Last Judgement was too wild and terrifying for Beethoven: 'He was happier with the concept in Cherubini's first Requiem than with Mozart's. A Requiem should be a melancholy remembrance of death; one should not make too much of the world court of justice.'

***Requiem* reception: Mozart and Cherubini**

Showcase 8

Beethoven was interested in Mozart's *Requiem*. At the end of January 1812 he wrote a letter to *Breitkopf & Härtel* in Leipzig ordering the *Requiem* as well as some opera scores by Mozart which *Breitkopf & Härtel* had also published. The score of Mozart's *Requiem* had already appeared in 1800. In 1818 the same publishing house produced a piano reduction.

des Mozartschen Requiems. 217

Allegro.

voci

Christe e-le - Christe e-

son, e-le - i - son, e-le - i - son, Ky-ri-e lei-son! Ky-ri-e Ky-ri-u. n.

son!

Christe e-le - Christe e-

voci

son, e-lei-son, e-lei-son, Ky-ri-e, Ky-ri-u. n.

son,

e-le-i-son, e-le-

und eben so im Cum sanctis: *)

*) Part. 1. Aufl. S. 174 T. 2 u. ff., u. S. 177 T. 1. u. ff. —
2. Aufl. S. 124 T. 4 u. S. 127 T. 1 ff. — Clav. Ausz.
André S. 58 T. 4 ff. und S. 59 T. 3 ff. Simr. S. 56
T. 2 ff. u. S. 57 T. 3 ff.

In 1825 Gottfried Weber (1779–1839, portrait on the wall) published an essay *Über die Echtheit des Mozartschen Requiems* (On the originality of Mozart's Requiem) in the music periodical, published in Mainz, *Cäcilia*. On musicological grounds, Weber cast doubt on the authenticity of some parts as the work of Mozart. Beethoven held the reasoning to be absurd and acknowledged this in the margin of the text angrily with the words 'Oh you arch-ass!' (p. 217) and 'oh double ass' (p. 218).



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The engraved silhouette of *Wolfgang Amadé Mozart* appeared in 1784, published by Heinrich Philipp Boßler in Speyer. Boßler was Beethoven's publisher in the latter's time in Bonn and had published some of his work of his youth.

According to the report of Karl Holz (see showcase 7) Beethoven was more moved by the first Requiem of Luigi Cherubini (1760–1842), written in 1816, than by Mozart's, even though he studied the latter in depth. In general Beethoven held Cherubini to be one of the greatest composers of his time.

The portrait of Cherubini was made in 1820. The lithograph (portrait on the wall) by Julien Boilly (1796–1874) is mounted in a double passepartout. On the reverse, the second of these includes a small fragment of a letter from Cherubini with a greeting and signature in his hand. Nikolaus Simrock's score edition of Cherubini's *Requiem* appeared as one of the first in about 1819.

After Beethoven's death a number of requiem masses were given for him: on the 3rd of April 1827 by the Viennese Art and Music Dealers Association in the Augustiner Court Parish Church; on the 5th of April by the Church Music Society of the Karlskirche and on the 26th of April by the Society of Music Friends, again in the Augustiner Court Parish Church. Because Beethoven had never written a requiem, the two best-known settings of the time were used: on the 3rd of April Mozart's *Requiem*, on the 5th and 26th of April, Cherubini's first *Requiem*. Gerhard von Breuning reported in detail on the first of these services, the one of the 3rd of April, describing the performance of 'Mozart's immortal *Requiem* for the immortal Beethoven': 'Never has anyone heard the *Dies irae* sung thus or experienced such a solemn performance of the *Requiem* as on that day. [...] Everything worked together, shattering.'

The official memorial service followed in Bonn on the 13th of July 1827 in the Jesuit Church, today the *Namen-Jesu-Kirche*, in the Bonngasse. There too Mozart's *Requiem* was given.

Julia Ronge

Translation: Michael Latcham