

THE INFLUENCE OF THE CHRISTMAS *PASTORELLA* ON BEETHOVEN'S 'PASTORAL' SYMPHONY

FRANCES JONES

Beethoven's Symphony No. 6, the 'Pastoral' Symphony (*Pastoral-Sinfonie oder Erinnerung an das Landleben*), composed in 1808, was unconventional in a number of ways, most notably in its integration of symphonic form with the representation of extra-musical ideas. There was already a history within the symphonic tradition of works with a descriptive or narrative content, for example, in compositions by Haydn¹ and Dittersdorf.² *Erinnerung an das Landleben* means 'Reminiscence of rural life' and Beethoven's allusions to the countryside, with bird calls, murmuring brook and storm, peasants' gatherings, bagpipe-like drone effects and rustic horn calls, are all concepts explored by earlier composers; the quotation of known folk-song material in this symphony is also now well-documented.³ A closer look beneath the surface, however, reveals other musical motifs that would have had a more powerful effect on contemporary audiences than they do today. Beethoven uses as source material a number of motivic ideas that were familiar to an early nineteenth-century Viennese audience: they derive from a musical form typically used at Christmas, the *Pastorella*.⁴ This article explores Beethoven's use of *Pastorella* material and situates his quotations within the context of works by other mainstream composers who use the same motifs.⁵

The *Pastorella*

The *Pastorella* was primarily a village phenomenon, locally composed for use in church, often during Christmas midnight Mass. It was particularly popular in the Czech-speaking lands throughout the eighteenth century but, as will be seen, it was a genre familiar across Europe. Music was considered a valuable vehicle for the dissemination of the Christian message, and the texts of Christmas music in church were often vernacular accounts of the scenes surrounding the nativity described in the gospel of St Luke, with an emphasis on those that involved the shepherds and the birth of the baby Jesus (Luke 2: 6-20). These were images that would resonate with the lives of a rural congregation. The music often included or alluded to local songs, carols or dance music.

A *Pastorella* was usually a multi-movement work written for soloists or choir with a small orchestra, although it was sometimes a purely instrumental composition, when it might attract the title *Sinfonia Pastorella*: two such works by Leopold Mozart will be referred to below. Beethoven's initial title for his sixth symphony was indeed *Sinfonia Pastorella*: this appears on the parts used in the first performance; however the title was subsequently altered, perhaps in order to avoid a direct connection with the Church.⁶ His original title, however, does provide a significant clue that here Beethoven created a symphony that incorporated material commonly used in the Christmas *Pastorella*.

A pastoral setting

Beethoven wrote that his sixth symphony conveyed feelings aroused when in the countryside, rather than sound paintings of rural scenes: he prefaced the manuscript of the 'Pastoral' Symphony with the

statement that its music was ‘more the expression of feeling than painting’. Nevertheless, the symphony includes specific depictions of the natural world: Schindler recalls how Beethoven told him that the fast upward arpeggio motif in the second movement was an accurate reproduction of a yellowhammer’s song,⁷ while Beethoven notes in the score representations of the songs of the nightingale (flute), quail (oboe) and cuckoo (two clarinets).

The composer was fond of taking long walks in the country; Richard Will records that Beethoven refers in his letters to his escape from the city of Vienna for rural retreats and observes that ‘there is no mistaking the effort to conjure [in the ‘Pastoral’ Symphony] a world protected from violence, degradation, human foible – a desire to transport listeners into a haven of calm ...’.⁸ The work was indeed written at a time of intense political and social turmoil.

Beethoven gave a descriptive title to each movement of his sixth symphony:

Erwachen heiterer Empfindungen bei der Ankunft auf dem Lande (Awakening of cheerful feelings on arrival in the countryside);

Szene am Bach (Scene by the brook);

Lustiges Zusammensein der Landleute (Peasants’ merrymaking);

Gewitter. Sturm (Thunderstorm);

Hirtengesang. Frohe und dankbare Gefühle nach dem Sturm (Herdsman’s song. Joyful and thankful feelings after the storm).⁹

Three *Pastorella* carols

Beethoven used as thematic material three carols that frequently occur in Christmas *Pastorellas*. These are melodies that he is likely to have heard each Christmas from the time of his childhood and they would have been well-known to his audiences in Catholic Vienna. The three carols are identified by their opening texts as, firstly *Hajej můj synáčku* (Czech), or ‘Hush, my dear one’: this is a crib-rocking melody, a custom that will be described later. The second carol opens with the words *Něžábudka pri potôčku* (in Slovak) or *Parvule pupule dormi Jesule* (Latin), meaning ‘Sleep, baby Jesus’. The third carol begins *Joseph adstabit* (Latin) or *Es hat sich halt eröffnet* (German), or in English ‘Joseph will stand by’.¹⁰

These carols occur in a Christmas context in the instrumental works of many baroque composers including Johann Sebastian Bach, Heinrich Biber, Arcangelo Corelli, Gottfried Finger, Johann Joseph Fux, George Frideric Handel, Leopold Mozart and Antonio Vivaldi,¹¹ while elements of these melodies are also found in the works of later composers such as Josef Haydn and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. They often appear with the title or subtitle *Pastorella* or *Pastorale*.

First carol: ‘Hush, my dear one’

Beethoven opens the second movement of his ‘Pastoral’ Symphony, *Szene am Bach*, with the opening melodic contour of a gentle carol that begins ‘Hush, my dear one’. The carol, a lullaby, is frequently quoted in *Pastorellas*, generally in association with the visit of the shepherds to the manger.



Illus. 1. Šimon Brixí (1693-1735), *Pastorella*, CZ-Pnm VM421, canto solo, bars 35-8: *Hajej můj synáčku* ('Hush, my dear one').¹²

This motif was used by many composers in compositions that concern the Nativity or other pastoral themes. J. S. Bach wrote just one work entitled *Pastorella* (with the alternative title *Pastorale*): a four-movement piece for organ, BWV 590. He incorporates a number of *Pastorella* elements into this work. The fourth movement begins with the melody of 'Hush, my dear one':



Illus. 2. J. S. Bach, *Pastorella/Pastorale*, BWV 590, opening of the fourth movement.

'Hush, my dear one' in the music of Leopold Mozart

This Nativity lullaby was one of the seasonal tunes played daily each December from 1753 on a mechanical organ in the precincts of Salzburg castle. The carol had been arranged for this purpose by J. E. Eberlin and was subsequently published by Leopold Mozart in 1759 in a collection of all the melodies played by that organ. The title of the collection translates as 'Morning and evening melodic and harmonic performances from the inner yard of the Salzburg residential palace, or: Twelve pieces for the piano, of which one is played daily on the so-called musical organ, morning and evening, at Salzburg castle'.¹³ Leopold Mozart gives this melody the title *Das Wiegenlied* (The cradle song) and adds that it is played during the month of Christ's birth, *Für den Christmonat*. The description *Das Wiegenlied* is significant: the melody had long been associated with the widespread practice of crib-rocking, or *Kindelwiegen*, where rustic musicians performed around the Christmas crib in church while worshippers came forward to rock a figure of the baby Jesus in the manger. The practice apparently originated in Italy.¹⁴



Illus. 3. Leopold Mozart, *Der Morgen und der Abend*, No. 12: *Das Wiegenlied*, bars 1-6.

Leopold Mozart wrote at least two works with the title *Sinfonia Pastorella* to be performed at Christmas. In a *Sinfonia Pastorella* for *Corno Pastoricio* (herdsman's horn, or alphorn) and strings, he used the melody of the crib-rocking carol in the second movement, among a number of other *Pastorella* motifs:¹⁵



Illus. 4. Leopold Mozart, *Sinfonia Pastorella*: second movement, *Andante*, violin 1, bars 8-9.

His son Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart used this music in his Symphony No. 19, K. 132, written in Salzburg in 1772 when he was sixteen years old. The crib-rocking lullaby motif appears repeatedly in the second violin part. There are also phrases from another *Pastorella* carol 'Sleep, baby Jesus' (described later) in the same symphony, together with motifs that resemble horn calls and repeated bass notes reminiscent of a hurdy-gurdy drone.



Illus. 5. W. A. Mozart, Symphony No. 19, second movement, *Andante*, string parts, bars 34-51. The crib-rocking lullaby is quoted in the second violin part, among a number of other *Pastorella* features.¹⁶

The Italian *Pastorale*

Beethoven's use of the crib-rocking motif (see Illus. 12) also incorporates features from the *Pastorale*, an Italian Christmas celebration during which the local bagpipes (*zampogna*) and flute or double flute (*piffaro*) were often played by shepherds around the crib.¹⁷ The music is characterised by a melody that moves in thirds which often rises from the mediant to the dominant and falls back to the mediant; it is normally set in gentle dance-like triple or compound time and is supported by a drone bass. It can be found in many Christmas works, particularly those by Italian composers, such as Corelli's Concerto Grosso Op. 6 No. 8, composed around 1690, generally known as his 'Christmas' Concerto because of its sub-heading *fatto per la notte di Natale* ('composed for Christmas night'). This work culminates in a gentle movement entitled *Pastorale ad libitum*. The music is a typical Roman *Pastorale* in compound time with rocking thirds that move back and forth from the mediant to the dominant over a drone bass:



Illus. 6. Corelli, 'Christmas' Concerto: final movement, *Pastorale ad libitum*, bars 1-5. Concertino parts for two violins and cello.¹⁸

Vivaldi's Concerto *La primavera* (RV 269), or 'Spring', from *Le quattro stagioni* (The Four Seasons) of 1723 uses some of these motifs: the composer describes its third movement as a *Danza pastorale*, which is in compound time, based on these *piffaro* rocking thirds and set above a *zampogna* drone bass given to the cellos and basses. The sub-heading '*Di pastoral zampogna al suon festante. Danzan ninfe e pastor nel tetto amato*' describes the festive sound of the bagpipes that accompany the dancing nymphs and shepherds. It is gently scored, for solo violin supported by the rest of the strings:

G Di pastoral zampogna al suon festante Danzan ninfe e pastor nel tetto amato Di primavera

Danza pastorale
Allegro
tutti

Violino principale
Violino I
Violino II
Viola
Basso

(f)
(f)
(f)
(f)
(f) tutti
(f) tasto solo

Illus. 7. Vivaldi, Concerto *Primavera*, RV 269 from *Le quattro stagioni*. Third movement: *Danza pastorale*, bars 1-3.¹⁹

Pastorale motifs in the music of Bach and Handel

Both Bach and Handel draw upon the same Italian *Pastorale* tradition. The first movement of J. S. Bach's *Pastorella/Pastorale*, BWV 590, referred to earlier, is in compound time and the first ten bars are supported by a single bass note drone, with passages in rocking thirds:



Illus. 8. J. S. Bach, *Pastorella/Pastorale*, BWV 590 for organ:
first movement, bars 8-10.²⁰

The familiarity of this music as a representation of the Nativity, both in different Christian denominations and across Europe, is indicated by its appearance in the two great baroque oratorios that celebrate this event, Bach's *Weihnachts-Oratorium* (Christmas Oratorio) of 1734, written for a Lutheran congregation in Leipzig, and Handel's *Messiah* of 1741, composed for non-liturgical performance in Dublin. Both works depict the moment of the birth of Jesus with a typical gentle instrumental *Pastorale*.

In Bach's *Weihnachts-Oratorium* this is the only movement in the work without text. Not only does the composer use a musical form familiar to his congregation to depict the Nativity: he also perhaps reminds his listeners that the *Pastorale* music itself reflects the scene at the crib, without the need for text. He uses the effect of the singers' devotional silence to observe the sacred moment of the birth of Christ. Rocking thirds are set over a drone accompaniment, in compound time. The sound of the bagpipes is captured with the remarkable scoring of four large members of the oboe family: two oboes d'amore and two oboes da caccia.

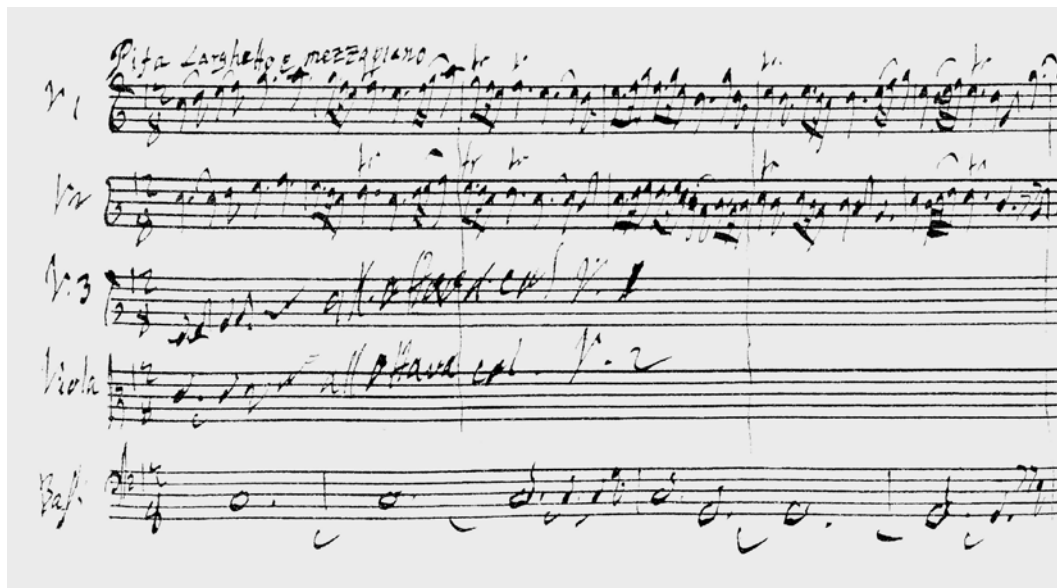


Illus. 9. J. S. Bach, *Weihnachts-Oratorium*: No. 10 *Sinfonia*,
parts for two oboes d'amore and two oboes da caccia, bars 9-14.²¹

An instrumental *Pastoral Symphony* also marks the moment of the birth of the Christ child in Handel's *Messiah*. Although the interlude includes a number of the signifiers mentioned above, it is likely that the term *Pastoral Symphony* carries none of the connotations with the audience of today that would have been the case in the 1740s. It is unclear at what stage the title *Pastoral Symphony* was first used, as only the heading *Pifa* appears above this movement in the editions of The Handel Society (1850) and Chrysander (1892). However, in the second edition of Grove's *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, issued around the same time in 1890, the movement is described in two columns of text under the heading 'Pastoral Symphony', which indicates that the title must have been in popular use by then.²² In Chrysander's 1892 facsimile reproduction of *Messiah*, Handel's contents page describes the

movement thus: 'A symphony to prepare for the following annunciation by the Angel, marked 'Pifa', i.e. *pifferari*, in imitation of the music with which at Christmas Calabrian shepherds in Rome celebrated the birth of the Saviour'.²³

In this movement, Handel begins the crib-rocking lullaby with the rising scale that forms the second half of this motif. He intensifies the pastoral atmosphere with an accompaniment in thirds, a compound time signature, a quiet tonic bagpipe-style drone and the reduced orchestral palette of strings alone. This is the only purely instrumental movement in the main body of the oratorio. The reverent silence of the voices directs full aural attention onto the moment of Christ's birth, an atmosphere similarly created by Bach in his *Weihnachts-Oratorium* eight years previously.



Illus. 10. Facsimile of Handel's *Messiah*, No. 13: 'Pastoral Symphony' (*Pifa*), bars 1-3.²⁴



Illus. 11. Shepherds play at the crib, detail from *Adoration of the Child with Saints* by Filippo Lippi, 1465. Museo Civico, Prato, Italy.

A number of these signifiers – the melodic shape of the crib-rocking carol, parallel thirds, compound time dance rhythms and *zampogna*-like drone – appear in other contexts where shepherds are mentioned. When Christ is described as the Good Shepherd, the same musical features can be found, for example in the soprano aria in *Messiah*, 'He shall feed his flock like a shepherd' (Air, No. 20) and in Bach's Cantata BWV 175, *Er rufet sein Schafen mit Namen* ('He calls his sheep by name'). Handel also incorporates some of these features in his *Ode for the Birthday of Queen Anne*

(1713) in stanza 4 for alto solo and chorus, ‘Let flocks and herds their fear forget’. There is a substantial Italian repertory of similar Christmas *Pastorales*, for example in the works of Giuseppe Torelli, Giuseppe Valentini and Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti.

Beethoven’s use of ‘Hush, my dear one’

Beethoven first uses material from ‘Hush, my dear one’ at the start of the sixth symphony’s second movement, entitled *Szene am Bach*. He does not yet quote the full lullaby melody as shown in Illus. 1, rather he combines the opening contour (the dominant rising to the submediant, followed by a descending scale) with typical *Pastorale* references to shepherds, gentle rocking thirds and compound time, to depict a peaceful pastoral scene. The second violins, doubled at the octave by a solo muted cello, play a version of the lullaby phrase; violas and a second solo muted cello move in parallel thirds in the style of a *piffaro*. Alongside these musical allusions to shepherds, the title *Szene am Bach* also conveys the image of gently flowing water. The motif is developed into a string semiquaver accompaniment figure that first appears in bar 7 and is subsequently used as a backdrop in a number of passages in the movement.

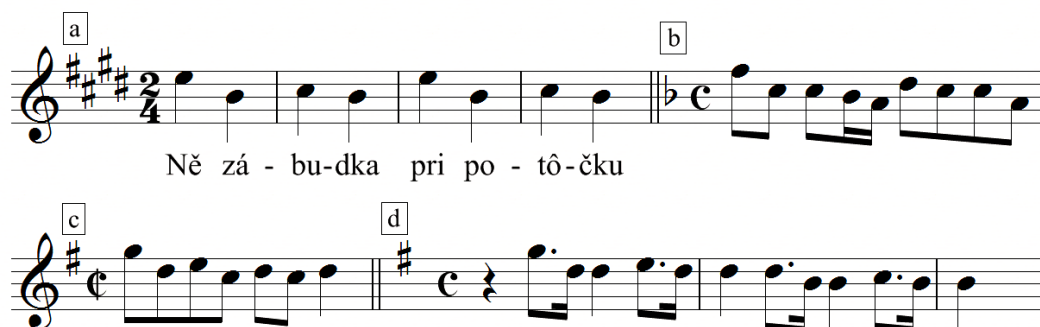


Illus. 12. Beethoven, ‘Pastoral’ Symphony, second movement, *Andante molto moto*, bars 1-3.²⁵

The opening phrases of both this carol and the second carol, discussed below, are first used by Beethoven in a gentle setting; they are subsequently transformed into sinister motifs that pervade the music of the storm in the fourth movement, which will be described later.

Second carol: ‘Sleep, baby Jesus’

This carol was popular across Europe in the eighteenth century. Its opening phrases are typically used in a *Pastorella* to denote the shepherds, either when they are in the fields and receive the news of Christ’s birth from the angel, or when they arrive at the crib to worship the baby Jesus.



Illus. 13 (a) The opening of *Něžábudka pri potôčku*;
(b) to (d) show how it typically appears at the start of a *Pastorella*.²⁶

In Italian, the term '*la pastorella*' means 'the shepherdess' and there is a recurring interplay between *Pastorella* shepherds' carols and the same music used in a secular context when there is reference to shepherds and shepherdesses. The frolics of Arcadian nymphs and shepherds were a common subject in Italian literature and music. Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741) wrote a Concerto in D for flute, oboe, violin, bassoon and continuo entitled *La pastorella*, or 'The Shepherdess': its first movement uses a version of the 'Sleep, baby Jesus' *Pastorella* opening motif given above. Italian composers often prefixed the motif with an up-beat, to accommodate the definite article in the title *La pastorella*.



Illus. 14. Vivaldi, Concerto in D, *La pastorella*, RV 95/95a:
first movement, *Allegro*, flute part, bars 7-8.²⁷

A further potential overlap of musical meaning, alongside the twofold interpretation of the word *pastorella*, appears in compositions inspired by Battista Guarini's *Il pastor fido* ('The faithful shepherd').²⁸ Although Guarini's text is a typical story of love between nymphs and shepherds, the term *il pastor fido* also means 'the faith-filled, or devotional, shepherd' who is always, even today, an essential figure in a Christmas crib. The catalogue of Vivaldi's works includes a set of six sonatas Op. 13 which bears the title *Il pastor fido*; they are scored for musette, vielle, flute, oboe, violin and continuo. However, the set is now generally attributed to the French composer and musette player, Nicolas Chédeville (1705-82).²⁹ The fourth of the Vivaldi/Chédeville Sonatas has as its third movement a *Pastorale ad libitum* in the style of the Roman *Pastorale*, while the *Pastorella* motif quoted above is used here to open three of the other movements:

Allegro. Tempo di Gavotta

a. 

Allegro

b. 

Un poco Vivace

c. 

Illus. 15. Vivaldi/Chédeville, *Il pastor fido*. The opening bars of the flute parts of (a) Sonata No. 1, second movement, (b) Sonata No. 1, fourth movement, and (c) Sonata No. 5, third movement.³⁰

Beethoven opens the third movement of his ‘Pastoral’ Symphony (*Peasants’ merrymaking*) with the notes of ‘Sleep, baby Jesus’, using the version with an up-beat. It is initially presented *pianissimo* and *staccato* by the strings. The motif is used in both F major and D major (bar 33) and appears eleven times, interspersed with an arpeggio phrase that resembles a pastoral horn call. It rises to a joyous *fortissimo* by bar 53.

Allegro



pp

Illus. 16. Beethoven ‘Pastoral’ Symphony, opening motif of the third movement, violin 1.³¹

Pastorella carols in the fourth movement of Beethoven’s ‘Pastoral’ Symphony

Although Beethoven’s fourth movement, entitled *Gewitter. Sturm* (‘Thunderstorm’) remains one of the most remarkable depictions of a storm in music, its effect is to some extent lost on audiences of today who may not recognise that much of its thematic material derives from the two gentle *Pastorella* carols, the crib-rocking lullaby ‘Hush, my dear one’ and ‘Sleep, baby Jesus’, used by Beethoven in the previous two movements of the symphony. Beethoven introduces the thunderstorm with an ominous *pianissimo* rumble of tremolo cello and bass. The melodic shape of the opening of ‘Hush, my dear one’ appears in bar 3, given to the second violins, *pianissimo* and *staccato*, in the dark key of D flat major. He replaces its customary triple dance metre with 4/4, although the metronome mark specifies minim = 80. The accentuation of the melody thus highlights the notes of the tritone, known as ‘the devil in music’ (*diabolus in musica*). The tritone is also given to the first violins two bars later, which reinforces its sinister quality.

The image shows a musical score for the beginning of the storm in Beethoven's 'Pastoral' Symphony, fourth movement, bars 1-6. The score is for Violino I, Violino II, Viola, Violoncelli, and Bassi. The second violin part is highlighted with a box and labeled 'PP'. The tempo is marked 'Allegro' and the dynamic is 'PP'.

Illus. 17. Beethoven, 'Pastoral' Symphony, fourth movement, bars 1-6 (the beginning of the storm). The opening motif of the lullaby 'Hush, my dear one', is given to the second violins.

The mutation of the theme into the minor key at bar 13 strengthens the characterisation of the thunderstorm.

The opening notes of 'Sleep, baby Jesus' first appear at bar 35 in the composer's depiction of the storm. The motif is distorted into the minor and presented with persistent sforzando accentuation on tutti strings, with menacing effect. Here Beethoven does not use the version with a gentle upbeat: he builds a striking phrase from the opening motif (a falling fourth followed by an upward step) which he presents six times:

The image shows a musical score for the opening motif of 'Sleep, baby Jesus' in Beethoven's 'Pastoral' Symphony, fourth movement, bars 35-39, violin 1. The score is in 4/4 time and features a falling fourth followed by an upward step, repeated six times.

Illus. 18. Beethoven 'Pastoral' Symphony, fourth movement, *Allegro*, bars 35-39, violin 1.

Once the storm is spent, the *Pastorella* lullaby theme 'Hush, my dear one' is transformed into a prayer-like chorale given to the oboe, with scoring reminiscent of an organ. While the melody gently descends and comes to rest on a tonic chord in the first bar of the final movement, at the same time Beethoven extends the rising line on the flute, which soars upwards as if into the heavens:

Illus. 19. Beethoven, ‘Pastoral’ Symphony, fourth movement, bars 142-55, the end of the storm.

Third carol: ‘Joseph will stand by’

As the gentle lullaby ‘Hush, my dear one’ is brought to rest, Beethoven introduces a third *Pastorella* motif, derived from a joyful Christmas carol that opens with the Latin text *Joseph adstabit cunas agitabit*; in English the opening phrases are ‘Joseph will stand by and rock the cradle; heaven will smile and the sun will banish the cold’. The carol originates from Swabia, in southern Germany. The melody resembles a horn call and features in other Christmas *Pastorellas*:

Illus. 20. Extract from an anonymous Polish *Pastorella*, (F.L.), 1699 PL-Wtm 17.ii, bars 30-37.³²

Leopold Mozart's *Sinfonia Pastorella*, mentioned earlier, is in three movements; each is based on one of the three *Pastorella* carols described above. The third movement derives its thematic material from 'Joseph will stand by': the melody, played on the alphorn, is supported by strings which create the effect of a bagpipe's drone.



Illus. 21. Leopold Mozart, *Sinfonia Pastorella*, third movement (*Presto*), bars 8-12. The melody of 'Joseph will stand by' forms the opening phrase for the alphorn (*corno pastoricio*), stave 1. The accompaniment is provided by two violin parts, viola and basso.

The final movement of Beethoven's 'Pastoral' Symphony, *Hirtengesang. Frohe und dankbare Gefühle nach dem Sturm* (Herdsman's song. Joyful and thankful feelings after the storm), follows *attacca* from the previous movement. The melody of 'Joseph will stand by' is presented on the clarinet and answered by peaceful horn calls. This creates a tranquil epilogue, evocative, perhaps, of a herdsman as he plays to reassure those in the village below that all is well after a storm in the mountains. Once again, Beethoven has reversed the mood of this *Pastorella* theme. Instead of energetic joy, it now conveys a mood of peaceful reflection.

Hirtengesang. 145
Frohe und dankbare Gefühle nach dem Sturm.
Allegretto $\text{♩} = 60$

Illus. 22. Beethoven, 'Pastoral' Symphony, final movement, bars 1-9.



Illus. 23. Shepherds and angels perform music at the birth of Christ: ceiling painting in the former Benedictine monastery church, Michelfeld, Bavaria, 1717. Photo: Frances Jones.

Summer music or winter music?

A number of elements within the ‘Pastoral’ Symphony can lead the listener to view it as summer music. The singing birds heard in the slow movement do not come out in winter, and violent thunderstorms, such as also occur in the ‘Summer’ concerto of Vivaldi, are associated with summer heat. However, it has been seen that a significant amount of the thematic material found in this symphony is derived from shepherds’ carols sung at the Christmas crib. In the previous century, Italian composers used musical motifs associated with *Il pastor fido*, the faithful shepherd, both for devotional Christmas music and for the summer frolics of Arcadian nymphs and shepherds dancing in a mythical landscape. In the same way, Beethoven here uses musical motifs that recall both shepherds in their fields in the summer and also the shepherds who visit the Christ child in the winter.³³ Indeed, within the carol tradition, birds also worship at the Christmas crib. A Czech carol opens *Žežulka z lesa vylítla, kuku*, or ‘From out of a wood did a cuckoo fly, cuckoo! He came to the manger with joyful cry, cuckoo!’³⁴ Successive verses describe the arrival of a pigeon and a turtledove.

Beethoven’s ‘Pastoral’ Symphony was premièred in the week before Christmas, on 22 December 1808. The composer’s secretary, Anton Schindler, related that this was the only time that Beethoven was able to hire the Theater an der Wien for its première; it was presented alongside the fifth symphony and the fourth piano concerto.³⁵ It therefore may not be significant that the ‘Pastoral’ Symphony with its Christmas motifs was performed so close to the feast of the Nativity; nevertheless the work’s original title, *Sinfonia Pastorella*, invited Beethoven’s nineteenth-century Viennese audience into what they may have recognised as a winter sound world.

Conclusion

In the 'Pastoral' Symphony, Beethoven created a work in which lifegiving and destructive elements are juxtaposed: the simplicity of peasant merrymaking and the tranquillity of familiar Christmas carols form part of a narrative that later reveals a darker interpretation of the same material. Beethoven's use of *Pastorella* motifs within a more generalised picture of rural life may also reflect a relationship between his faith and his natural surroundings. No composer before him had so united the world of the Church with the world of nature. Whereas Haydn, in his oratorios *Die Schöpfung* (*The Creation*) and *Die Jahreszeiten* (*The Seasons*), had within the previous ten years given a Viennese audience two substantial works that in turn celebrated Christian belief and the natural world, Beethoven here combines the two themes in a single work. Perhaps this symphony can also be seen as a political statement in those turbulent times, since the *Pastorella* was a significant part of the heritage of the rural population. Beethoven gives this rustic tradition formal status within that most respected and bourgeois genre, the symphony. The reworking of *Pastorella* motifs into a symphonic masterpiece is likely to have been understood by his contemporary audience, although the source of Beethoven's material is generally no longer recognised by modern listeners, unfamiliar with the rituals of the Catholic Church at Christmastide in central Europe from the fourteenth to the nineteenth century.

Notes

- ¹ See, for example, Haydn's three symphonies that evoke morning, midday and evening, composed in 1761, No. 6 in D, *Le matin*, No. 7 in C, *Le midi*, and No. 8 in G, *Le soir*.
- ² See Karl Ditters von Dittersdorf (1739-99), *Sinfonien nach Ovids Metamorphosen* (Vienna, 1785), six symphonies based on themes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.
- ³ Beethoven's principal theme for the first movement, for example, was identified as a Croatian folk song popular on the Austro-Hungarian border where Beethoven often went walking. Béla Bartók notates the song in his essay (1921) *The Relationship of Folk Song to the Development of the Art Music of our Time*, in *Béla Bartók Essays*, ed. Benjamin Suchoff (London: Faber, 1992), pp. 327-8. The parallel between the horn calls that open the final movement of Beethoven's 'Pastoral' symphony and the pastoral horn tradition is discussed in Frances Jones, 'The Alphorn in Western Art Music', PhD diss., University of Hull, 2015, pp. 245-6.
- ⁴ For a more detailed analysis of the *Pastorella* see Frances Jones, 'Leopold Mozart's Alphorn Sinfonia and the *Pastorella*' in *The Consort* (2009), Vol. 65, pp. 78-94, and Frances Jones, 'The Alphorn in Western Art Music', chs. 2 and 3.
- ⁵ In this article, I include information also found in 'Leopold Mozart's Alphorn Sinfonia and the *Pastorella*' that appeared in a previous issue of this journal, Vol. 65 (2009), in order to facilitate comparison between motifs found in Beethoven's 'Pastoral' Symphony and those found in earlier works.
- ⁶ David Wyn Jones, *Beethoven: The Pastoral Symphony* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 17, 31-2.
- ⁷ *Beethoven as I knew him: A Biography by Anton Felix Schindler*, ed. Donald MacArdle, transl. Constance Jolly (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1966), p. 145.
- ⁸ Richard Will, *The Characteristic Symphony in the Age of Haydn and Beethoven* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 156.
- ⁹ These titles resemble those of the movements of a symphony written 24 years earlier by Justin Heinrich Knecht (1752-1817), entitled *Le Portrait Musical de la Nature, ou Grande Symphonie (Pastoralsymphonie)*, 'The Musical Portrait of Nature, or Grand Symphony (Pastoral Symphony)'. The five movements form a continuous composition, and each movement is preceded by a substantial description of the events depicted. Knecht's titles are as follows: 1. *Une belle contrée ou le soleil luit...* : 'Beautiful countryside where the sun shines, with gentle breezes wafting, the little brook tumbling through the valley, the birds twittering as the wild stream falls murmuring from on high; the sheep leap and the shepherdess calls with her sweet voice.' 2. *Le ciel commence à devenir soudain sombre...* : 'The sky in May suddenly darkens; all nature draws a heavy and fearful breath, black clouds arise, the winds begin to howl, the thunder rolls in from the distance, and the thunderstorm slowly draws

closer.’ 3. *L’orage accompagne des vents...* : ‘The thunderstorm accompanied by roaring wind breaks forth very violently, with driving rain; the treetops sway, and the waters of the wild stream swell mightily.’ 4. *L’orage s’apaise peu à peu...* : ‘The thunderstorm gradually abates, the clouds dissipate, and the sky becomes clear.’ 5. *La nature transportée de la joie...* : ‘Nature, transported by joy, raises her voice to the heavens to thank the Creator most fervently through sweet and pleasant song.’ Although the design of Knecht’s *Grande Symphonie* resembles that used by Beethoven here, its musical style and orchestral word-painting is typical of an earlier era.

- ¹⁰ These three melodies are often referred to as Austro-Bohemian tunes associated with Christmas in, for example, Peter Holman, *Life after Death: The Viola da Gamba in Britain from Purcell to Dolmetsch* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2010), p. 25; Stephen Zohn, *Music for a Mixed Taste: Style, Genre and Meaning in Telemann’s Instrumental Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 97; Robert Rawson, ‘Gottfried Finger’s Christmas Pastorellas’, *Early Music*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (2005), pp. 594-601; Mark Germer, ‘The Austro-Bohemian Pastorella and Pastoral Mass to c. 1780’. PhD diss., New York, 1989, pp. 137-55; Charles Brewer, *The Instrumental Music of Schmelzer, Biber, Muffat and their Contemporaries* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 96-105.
- ¹¹ Themes derived from *pastorella* material found in works by these composers are discussed in the works listed in note 10 above.
- ¹² Rawson, ‘Gottfried Finger’s Christmas Pastorellas’, p. 601.
- ¹³ *Der Morgen und der Abend der Innwohnern der hochfürstl. Residenz-Stadt Salzburg melodisch und harmonisch angekündigt. Oder: Zwölf Musikstücke für das Clavier, davon eine täglich in der Vestung Hohensalzburg auf dem sogenannten Hornwerke Morgens und Abends gespielt wird* (Augsburg: Lotter, 1759).
- ¹⁴ Geoffrey Chew, in ‘The Christmas Pastorella in Austria, Bohemia and Moravia’ (PhD diss., University of Manchester, 1968), deals extensively with this topic, pp. 53-74.
- ¹⁵ For an analysis of Leopold Mozart’s *Sinfonia Pastorella* see Frances Jones, ‘Leopold Mozart’s Alhorn Sinfonia and the Pastorella’ in *The Consort* (2009), Vol. 65, pp. 78-94, and Frances Jones, ‘The Alhorn in Western Art Music’, ch. 3.
- ¹⁶ *Neue Mozart Ausgabe* Series IV, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Basel: Bärenreiter, 1970), p. 52. In this and subsequent quotations of music containing a *Pastorella* phrase, a box has been superimposed to highlight the motif under discussion.
- ¹⁷ Hector Berlioz describes this custom in his *Mémoires*, trans. David Cairns (London: Golancz, 1969), pp. 186-7.
- ¹⁸ Arcangelo Corelli, *12 Concerti Grossi Op. 6* (Leipzig: Peters, 1937), p. 141.
- ¹⁹ Antonio Vivaldi, *Le quattro stagioni: da Il cimento dell’armonia e dell’inventione*, Op. 8, ed. Paul Everett and Michael Talbot (Milan: Ricordi, 2010), p. 14.
- ²⁰ J. S. Bach, *Pastorale* in F major, BWV 590, *Bach-Gesellschaft Ausgabe* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1891), Vol. 38, p. 135.
- ²¹ J. S. Bach, *Weihnachts-Oratorium* (London: Eulenburg, 1961), pp. 54-5.
- ²² George Grove, ed. *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1890), Vol. 2, p. 670.
- ²³ *Eine Symphonie zur Einleitung der folgenden Verkündigung des Engels, überschrieben ‘Pifa’, das ist Pifferari, als Nachahmung der Musik, mit welcher Kalabrische Hirten zur Weihnachtszeit in Rom die Geburt des Heilands feiern*. George Frideric Handel, *Messiah*, ed. Chrysander (Hamburg: Strumper, 1892), p. 10.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 69.
- ²⁵ Ludwig van Beethoven, *Symphony No. 6* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, c. 1826).
- ²⁶ Robert Rawson, ‘Gottfried Finger’s Christmas Pastorellas’, *Early Music*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (2005), pp. 595, 602: a) Transcription of Kyselkova’s 1909 phonograph recording from the Topol’čany region of Slovakia; b) Linek, *Missa Pastoralis*, CZ-Pnm18 f.61; c) Finger, *Pastorelle*, Durham Cathedral Library MS M197; d) Anon (F.L.), *Pastorella*, Lowicz, 1699, PL-Wtfc 17.ii.
- ²⁷ Antonio Vivaldi, Concerto in D, *La pastorella* F12, No. 29, ed. Malipiero (Milan: Ricordi, 1953), p. 1.
- ²⁸ Guarini’s text derives from the sixteenth-century Italian revival of interest in classical pastoral literature, in which authors such as Virgil and Theocritus wrote pastoral idylls involving nymphs and shepherds. The shepherd came to symbolise innocent goodness. The publication in Naples in 1504 of *Arcadia* by Jacopo Sannazaro, a pastoral romance in the classical style, began a widespread interest in this mythology. Guarini’s drama *Il pastor fido*, a pastoral tragicomedy, was published in Ferrara in 1590. It was a source of inspiration for many composers including Handel, Monteverdi and Schütz. Information from ‘Guarini’, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, online (accessed 15 December 2015), and Raymond Monelle *The Musical Topic: Hunt, Military and Pastoral* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), pp. 185-9.
- ²⁹ Paul Everett, *Vivaldi: The Four Seasons and Other Concertos Op. 8* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 4.
- ³⁰ Vivaldi (Chédeville), Six Sonatas, *Il pastor fido*, Op. 13, ed. Jean-Pierre Rampal (New York: International Music

Company, 1965), Vol. 1, Nos. 4 and 7, Vol. 2, No. 14.

³¹ Illuss. 16-18 are taken from Ludwig van Beethoven, *Symphony No. 6* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, c. 1826).

³² Rawson, 'Gottfried Finger's Christmas Pastorellas', p. 599.

³³ I am grateful to Professor Michael Talbot for his observations concerning this paradox.

³⁴ Transcribed by Ms. Jakubičková, entitled 'The Birds'; transl. in *The Oxford Book of Carols*, ed. Percy Dearmer, Ralph Vaughan Williams and Martin Shaw (London: Oxford University Press, 1928), no. 103, pp. 212-3, sung by a Czech peasant girl on the Bohemian / Moravian border at Christmas in 1921. The Czech text and melody can be seen at www.taborradost.cz/res/archive/242/026559.pdf, accessed 19 January 2016.

³⁵ *Beethoven as I knew him*, p. 142.

DR. FRANCES JONES gained a music degree from the University of Reading, and studied oboe with Sydney Sutcliffe at the Royal College of Music. For the last 25 years she has been teaching, performing and giving lecture recitals on a number of wind instruments as a soloist, in ensembles and orchestras across Europe. Frances has had numerous arrangements published by Phylloscopus, written for the ensembles with which she works. She is Britain's leading authority on the Swiss alphorn, upon which she performs and teaches regularly in Britain, France, Austria and Switzerland and further afield. In 2015 she gained her PhD on the subject of 'The Alphorn in Western Art Music: a Cultural and Historical Study' at the University of Hull. For further information visit her website: www.AmazingAlphorn.com.

© Copyright: Frances Jones, 2016. Permission to reproduce any of the above content may be sought by contacting frances@AmazingAlphorn.com.