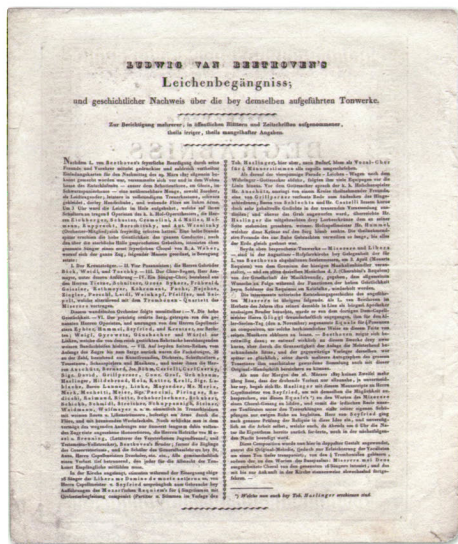


WILLIAM MEREDITH

The October 2012 catalog of the respected antiquarian dealer Thomas Kotte in Roßhaupten, Germany, contains a "ringlet of Beethoven's hair, surreptitiously clipped at the composer's deathbed." The ringlet was cut by the singer Ludwig Cramolini (1806-84) for himself as well as the singer Nanette Schechner. Cramolini left his own colorful account of the ringlet's acquisition, in which he tries to justify his theft and accuses Anton Schindler of lunacy for taking offense:

Unfortunately, our fears came true, for on Monday, the 26th of March, at 5 p.m., the greatest musical genius of our and of all time passed away, to live on forever in his works for those who treasure greatness and nobility. On the 27th, after the rehearsal for A[dolf] Müller's operetta *Die erste Zusammenkunft*, I drove to Beethoven's apartment, a small pair of scissors in my pocket. There I found Schindler, who had already fended off a great number of people curious to see Beethoven, but me he let pass. And so I stood before the covered corpse, which rested on long wooden boards upon chairs, as was customary in those days. In the presence of an old woman (Beethoven's housekeeper, I believe), I lifted the shroud, quickly clipped off a ringlet of hair and wanted to depart immediately, when Schindler entered. I embraced him, wept, and admitted that I had cut some hair from Beethoven's head as an eternal memento for myself and Nanette Schechner (singer at the Vienna Opera). Schindler behaved like a lunatic, demanded that I return the hair, said it was an insult, and all this before the body of the great Beethoven, which angered me so that I asked him to follow me into the antechamber, so that I might answer him outside the presence of the divine master; for here, I thought, it was a crime. I waited for Schindler quite a while—in vain. He failed to come, and thus I returned home and later gave Nanette Schechner some of the hair, for which she was exceedingly grateful. I still have my share of the booty, as Schindler called it. I avoided him for a long time, until he approached me on some occasion and apologized for having been so rough with me: but he had been terribly excited by Beethoven's death and had been approached by so many who wanted locks of hair. I was glad to forgive him, and later we were as ever. I appreciate Schindler's great merits as concerns Beethoven. He was the only one who would stand the moods and temper of the great man. But he also was ludicrously proud of the friendship with Beethoven; he even had visiting cards printed saying, "Ami de Beethoven" [Friend of Beethoven], which made him utterly ridiculous. I fully forgive this weakness of his, for well can I imagine how one might develop it, living, as he did, daily, and finally hourly, in proximity with such a great man. That same afternoon, although I had to sing in the *Weisse Frau* in the evening,<sup>1</sup> I hurried to Anschütz and asked him to speak at Beethoven's grave. Anschütz liked the idea.



Seyfried's report on the funeral services in the first edition of *Beethoven's Begräbniss* (from the collection of the Ira F. Brilliant Center for Beethoven Studies)

The ringlet comes in a folded envelope with the word "Beethoven" penciled on the outside two times. On the inside of the envelope is a penciled draft of a preliminary order for Beethoven's funeral procession, written, Kotte suggests, by either Anton Schindler or Stephan von Bruening. In translation the note reads: "1. Leader with staff / 2. 8 children 2 girls with candles 2 grls w/ flower baskets wherein flwrs & fruit / 2 boys w/ candles 2 children with pitchforks, scythes, flowers / [...] Soprano, Alto & Basso [...]" Kotte notes, "This early document of Beethoven's funeral procession was hitherto entirely unknown. The funeral at the Wähning cemetery took place on March 29<sup>th</sup>; some 20,000 persons are said to have attended the procession. The eulogy, by Franz Grillparzer, was indeed spoken by the actor Heinrich Anschütz. A watercolour by Franz Xaver Stöber (Bonn, Beethovenhaus [B 209]), shows the procession with a 'leader with a staff' at the beginning, as described. He is followed by trombonists and singers, then by the children, and then by the catafalque." (The ringlet, note, and envelope are for sale at 35,000 euros, approximately \$45,600 U.S.).

## Funeral

And Historical Information about the Musical Works Performed in It

To Correct Several Partially Incorrect and Partially Faulty Accounts Given in Published Leaves and Newspapers<sup>3</sup>

After L. van Beethoven's solemn burial on the afternoon of March 29, 1827, had been publicly announced by his friends and admirers through the means of a printed invitation card that was widely distributed, an infinite multitude—outside of the Schottenthor, on the *glacis*, in the Schwarzschaner House<sup>4</sup>—gathered in front of and in the apartment of the dead, among them spectators, and mourners;<sup>5</sup> the latter in full mourning clothes, dressed in black, with gloves, and mourning bands on the left arm. Around 3:00 p.m. the corpse was placed on a bier in the courtyard, which eight opera singers of the Imperial Court Opera Theater, including Masters Eichberger, Schuster, Cramolini, Ad. Müller, Hofmann, Rupprecht, Borschitzky, and Ant. Wranitzky (orchestra member), volunteered to carry on their shoulders. A half hour later the high clergy of the entire funeral cortege appeared;<sup>6</sup> after spoken prayers over the mortal frame, the above-mentioned singers intoned a serious and solemn chorale by [Bernard] A[nselm] Weber [from his opera *Wilhelm Tell*],<sup>7</sup> whereupon the entire procession, according to the following order, was set in motion.

I. The carrier of the cross.—II. Four trombonists: the [two] brothers Böck, Weidl, and Tuschky. III. The choir director, Mr. Assmayr, under whose direction—IV. A choir of singers, consisting of Masters Tietze, Schmitzer, Gross Sykora, Frühwald, Geissler, Rathmeyer, Kokremont, Fuchs, Nejbese, Ziegler, Perschl, Leidl, Weinkopf, Pfeiffer, and Seipelt, performed the *Miserere* in alternation with the trombone quartet.

The walking orchestra followed immediately:—V. the high clergy.—VI. The magnificent ornate coffin, carried by the [above-]named singers, and surrounded by Kapellmeister Eybler, Hummel, Seyfried, and Kreutzer on the right side; Weigl, Gyrowetz, Gänsbacher, and Würfel on the left, who held the white ribbons hanging from the richly embroidered pall. VII. On both sides, from the beginning of the procession back to the coffin, were rows of torch carriers, thirty-six in number, consisting of lovers of the arts, poets, writers, composers, actors and musicians; among them Mr. Anschütz, Bernard, Jos. Böhm, Castelli, Carl Czerny, Sigr. David, Grillparzer, Conr. Graf, Grünbaum, Haslinger, Hildebrand, Holz, Katter, Krall, Sigr. Lablache, Baron Lannoy, Linke, Mayseder, Mr. Meric, Merk, Mechetti, Meier, Sigr. Paccini, Piringner, Radicchi, Raimund, Riotte, Schoberlechner, Schubert, Schickh, Schmid, Streicher, Schuppanzigh, Steiner, Weidmann, Wolfmayer, and others, all of them in their mourning clothes with white roses and lily bouquets fastened to their [left] arms with the mourning bands, and with burning wax torches. In the rocking pressing-on of the extraordinarily slowly moving procession, one was also able to catch sight of many important notables, the councillors von Mosel and Breuning (the latter the friend of the deceased since their youth and executor of the will), Beethoven's brother [Johann]; further, the youth of the conservatory, and the students of the general bass teacher at St. Anna, Mr. Kapellmeister Drechsler, etc., etc., everyone together deeply lamenting a loss that every person susceptible to the omnipotence of music must feel.

Arriving at the church, the sixteen singers mentioned above intoned the *Libera me Domine de morte aeterna* during the consecration, which Kapellmeister v. Seyfried had originally composed for use with a performance of Mozart's Requiem for four voices with orchestral accompaniment (score and parts in the press of Tob. Haslinger); here, however, according

to the needs of the situation, it was arranged for a vocal choir of four men's voices alone.

Afterwards, as the four-horse parade-herse led the way to the Währing cemetery, many horse-drawn carriages followed behind it. In front of the cemetery, the Royal Imperial Actor Mr. Anschütz, surrounded by a circle of sympathetic friends, read a speech by Grillparzer in memory of the departed; Bruno von Schlechta and Mr. Castelli had poems, short but full of substance, distributed to the mourning assembly;<sup>8</sup> and before the grave was filled in, Mr. Haslinger handed three laurel wreaths he had brought to Weimar Kapellmeister Mr. Hummel, who was standing next to him, and Hummel placed the wreaths on top of the coffin.<sup>9</sup> The sympathetic friends of the one who had been brought to rest remained until the grave was full of dirt.

The two pieces of music discussed above—*Miserere* and *Libera*—were also performed on April 3 in the Augustiner-Hofpfarrkirche on the occasion of L. van Beethoven's requiem mass arranged by committee of local music publishers. They were repeated, by popular request, on the 26<sup>th</sup> of that month in a performance organized by the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde during the functions of the high clergy at the catacomb at the end of the requiem (by Cherubini).

The interesting notorious compositional history of the *Miserere* referred to is as follows. When L. van Beethoven visited his citizen pharmacist brother in Linz, where he was living, in the fall of 1812,<sup>10</sup> he was asked by the cathedral-Kapellmeister Mr. Glöggel there if he would be so kind as to compose the so-called *Equale* for four trombones for All Souls' Day (November 2),<sup>11</sup> in order to have his musicians finish the festival in a customary way—Beethoven showed himself willing to do so; he sketched for this goal three to be sure short movements, which, however, showed the master's hand in the splendor of the conception, and their present publisher was later so lucky as to enrich his collection of several autographs of the great composer, which is invaluable to him, with this original manuscript.

When on the morning of March 26, 1827, there could be no more doubt that the threatening loss was now all too near, in fact was inevitable, Mr. Haslinger visited Kapellmeister von Seyfried with this manuscript in order to speak with him about the possibility of creating a choral song from these *Equales*\* to the words of the *Miserere*, and thereby to accompany the earthly remains of our tone-prince to eternal rest with the mournful sounds of one of his own creations. After careful examination of this relic [the manuscript], Mr. von Seyfried agreed with this idea, and immediately set to work, which, since nature demanded its property back already by 6 p.m. that day [i.e., the approximate time of Beethoven's death], was completed the following night.

This composition was now adapted here in double form, first the original melody (however transposed down a tone for the relief of the vocalists), played by four trombones, and then as a chorale set to the words of the penitential psalm: *Miserere mei Deus* intoned by the 16 named singers, and that continued stanza-wise alternately until the arrival at the church.

\*Which has also now appeared in print by Tob. Haslinger

(Translation by William Meredith and Uwe Wrede)



## Notes

- 1 *Weißer Frau* is the German title of the opera *La dame blanche* by François-Adrien Boieldieu (1775-1834), which was premiered in 1825. The opera, which is based on episodes from two novels by Walter Scott, is considered his most important work.
- 2 For a discussion of the discrepancies about the number of rooms Beethoven rented, as well as drawings of the apartment, see Walther Brauneis' essay "Beethoven's letzte Wohnstätte im 'Schwarzspanierhaus,'" in *Drei Begräbnisse und ein Todesfall*, ed. Beethoven-Haus Bonn and Museum für Sepulkralkultur, Kassel (Bonn: Verlag Beethoven-Haus, 2002), 9-13. This richly detailed monograph is available for sale through the Beethoven-Haus website.
- 3 A transcription of the original German text is given in *Drei Begräbnisse*, 118-20. No author is given for this report in the first edition, but the text is, according to Michael Ladenburger, by Ignaz Ritter von Seyfried (p. 69). Seyfried was correcting accounts in the Viennese *Allgemeinen Theaterzeitung und Unterhaltungsblatt für Freunde der Kunst, Literatur, und des geselligen Lebens* (Beilage of April 12, 1827); the *Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater, und Mode*; and *Die Sammler*. See Ladenburger's essay on "Musik zu Beethoven's Begräbnis. Music zu seinem Gedenken." *Drei Begräbnisse*, 69-71. This valuable short essay contains many additional details of the events of the day.
- 4 Seyfried's unusual formulation here describes the fact that the "infinite multitude" stretched from outside the Schottentor across the *glacis* to the Schwarzspanierhaus. The *glacis* was the wide open ground in between the inner city and what was then the suburbs.
- 5 The estimate of the number of people in attendance ranges from 10,000-20,000.
- 6 According to the account of the funeral proceedings in the Archives of the Vienna Supreme Court, "Nine priests from the Schottenstifte blessed the dead." See *Thayer's Life of Beethoven*, ed. Eliot Forbes, rev. ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 1053. The language of that report is similar in many aspects to Haslinger's report here.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 According to the same account in the Archives of the Vienna Supreme Court, poems by Castelli and Seidl were distributed as keepsakes around 3:00 p.m.; at the cemetery Schlechta's poem was distributed. See *Thayer's Life of Beethoven*, 1053, 1055. Photographs of the 1827 single-sheet printings of the poems by Castelli and Schlechta can be seen in *Drei Begräbnisse*, 96.
- 9 Two leaves from one of the wreaths were included by Betty Hummel in her famed collection of memorabilia discussed and illustrated in this issue.
- 10 Glöggel's *Linzer Musik-Zeitung* reported that Beethoven arrived on October 5 and was to stay for a few days. See *Thayer's Life of Beethoven*, 540. About the *Equale*, see 541.
- 11 *Equale* are short mourning pieces for use in burial services or on All Souls Day.



Nineteenth-century photograph of the Rotes Haus (left), Schwarzspanierkirche (middle), and Schwarzspanierhaus (right) taken from the Alservorstadt *glacis* (from Bertha Koch's *Beethovenstätten in Wien und Umgebung*, 1912)

Stöber's famous watercolor may be seen on the Digital Archives of the Beethoven-Haus, Bonn. Unfortunately, the people in the procession are difficult to see clearly because of the low resolution of the web image. Sieghard Brandenburg's comments on the famous watercolor explain part of the history of the day: "The sources report unanimously that on account of the surging crowd it was difficult to order the procession and for Beethoven's relatives and close friends to take their places. When the procession passed by the 'Rotes Haus,' in which Stephan von Breuning lived with his family, a group of trombonists in the procession played an arrangement of the funeral march from Beethoven's Piano Sonata in A-flat Major, Opus 26. Franz Stöber's watercolor captures this moment: in the background of the picture the façade of the Schwarzspanierhaus can be seen, and on the right next to it the row of houses with the former prelate building of the monastery, in which Beethoven had lived. In almost all of the windows people can be seen, except on the top floor, where there are several empty windows. These represent the rooms Beethoven had occupied." See the photograph; Beethoven's apartment was on the top floor (American third floor, Viennese second floor, no. 20), below the roof immediately to the right of the Schwarzspanierkirche in the middle of the photograph.<sup>2</sup>

When the procession passed by the Rotes Haus, a trombone quartet performed an arrangement of the "Funeral March on the Death of a Hero" from the Fortepiano Sonata, Opus 26. An arrangement of this same movement for four singers and fort-piano by Seyfried was published by Beethoven's friend Tobias Haslinger in 1827. The text is a poem by Alois Jeitteles, the poet and doctor who was the author of the poem cycle *An die ferne Geliebte*, which Beethoven set to music in 1816. In June 2011 the American Beethoven Society was able to acquire a copy of that rare first edition for the Beethoven Center from the important Viennese antiquarian dealer Ingo Nebel. The second page of the edition contains a report on the funeral procession, which is given here in translation.



Watercolor of Tobias Haslinger (1787-1842) by Joseph Kriehuber, 1832 (from the collection of the Historisches Museum of the City of Vienna)