

THE MUSIC OF BEETHOVEN THE HUMAN RELATIONS AND SOCIALISM

J POSADAS

There are three texts here by J Posadas, in the following order:
This is a draft copy

**Beethoven's music
and the harmony of human relations - 13. 8.1978**

Beethoven and Musical Instruments - 05.8.1979

The Ruins of Athens - 17.9.1979

Published in the Scientific, Cultural and Political Editions

BEETHOVEN'S MUSIC AND THE HARMONY OF HUMAN RELATIONS

J. POSADAS

13th August 1978

The music of Beethoven does not drive the individual back into self, or into the exclusive preoccupation for personal matters. Far from it, Beethoven raises the mind of the listener towards the harmony of human relations. He stimulates the development of thought because he suggests the harmony there is in thought and in the human relations. He insists on ever deepening his investigation of the human relations. It is music devoid of any sense of mystery or uncertainty. On the contrary, it affirms categorically, that human relations must, and will have, a harmonious dimension. J. S. Bach does this too, and like Beethoven, he sees the world in depth, but he evokes less completely than Beethoven the full breadth of the human relation. Beethoven's music does not make a political designation, but it is about human relations. It is full of social and human preoccupation under the form of harmony, and without a trace of any mysticism. The exaltation it produces swells the capacity to generate sentiments.

Human life and endeavour is the subject matter of Beethoven's music that never leaves this on one side. The global concept of his evocation leaves no scope for individual brooding. He never gives the sense of being crushed by the unknown, the heavens or the gods. He gives the distinct sense that he is not looking for protection, any kind of protection, be it from the Saints, the Virgin or anyone else. His music sweeps a flood of sentiments towards the problem of relations between the humans. His music is the language of life. It is true harmony directed at the human kind, to communicate what he felt society should be. He was able to formulate this in his music because he had already perceived the human craving for some objective, some aim. This is the function of the true artist; this is the function of the artist. Marx did it using the written form, and Beethoven earlier on with music. When listening to Beethoven, one is never taken outside reality. One does not feel like a supplicant addressing a prayer to god, far from it! He does not make one feel the need for the protection of god and his emissaries. To the reverse, the feeling that Beethoven's music inspires is one of earthly sentiments rooted in the human experience here on Earth and developed very much on this earth. His music dissipates the sentiment of self-interest by making the individual feeling integrated.

Whilst the French Revolution was happening, it found its most elevated echo in Beethoven who embraced its force and its significance. Due to the way it operates in the abstract sphere of the human relations, music cannot be a Revolution or a political text. Without giving it a political form, therefore, Beethoven grasped the full significance of the French Revolution. The political form of the impact of that Revolution was eventually going to be discovered, but much later. The same goes for Michael Angelo in the field of painting. His work was not going to have a great impact during his lifetime. It is only much later that this became possible. This is the function of the artist.

In his music, Beethoven shows objectivity not directed at a specific class or sector of society, but at the objectivity of the human relations. This objectivity will only be reached in Socialism. It is only in a socialist society that this can be fully understood, and what is more, developed. This is why each time revolution is on the march, Beethoven, Michael Angelo and Leonardo de Vinci are re-discovered.

THE ARTIST HAS TO LOVE HUMAN PROGRESS

In Bach and Beethoven's music, you find a similarity of harmony, but the harmony of Bach does not produce such a sense of social confidence as Beethoven. The music of Bach tends towards God, notwithstanding its very great harmony. As we are dealing with music – a creation abstracted from pure dialogue – the expansion of reasoning is made through some kind of generalisation. Beethoven does this superbly.

The artist has many individual problems. Being an artist means (among other things) to have the ability to rise above such problems through creation. The very fact of being an artist means that individual problems are transcended. It is the endowment of the artist. There are many people who have limited their creation because they retained some religious or individual interests. Art speaks of such things as human relations, looks at them and to them, detached from the yoke of dependency upon heaven. In this way, the artist feels raised above most individual problems, even though the individual life of the artist is riddled with them.

Individual or personal problems do not appear to have importance in the world of artistic creation. This does not mean an estrangement from life but simply the ability to create, regulating needs – like eating and sleeping – to a less prominent place, since they are often secondary to the activity of creation. In the artist, there is an abstraction of such needs and an ability to transcend one's own tragedy. It leads the artist into thinking harmoniously, trying to communicate to all universally and in the name of humanity.

Seeing and thinking in this objective way, liberates even more capacity to produce harmony. This is why the bourgeoisie gave practically no importance to Beethoven and used him for entertainment. Since he cannot be said to be religious, they considered Beethoven melodious. It was only with the advent of the Russian Revolution that the ability for cultural and objective understanding has been raised to the level of grasping Beethoven. At that moment, human relations were considerably raised and Beethoven began to be seen together with the problem of human relations. This made him the logical musician of Socialism. He could not fail to be the master of those to come after him.

BEETHOVEN ANTICIPATES A KIND OF HARMONY THAT GOES BEYOND CAPITALISM

Beethoven's passion is qualitatively superior to that of Bach, Handel, and a good many of the greatest musicians, whose endeavour remained tinted to one degree or the other by mystical beliefs. These other artists remained more influenced by the 'heavenly', the 'celestial'. Beethoven is completely at ease without this and indeed never had to break out from that mould, from God or religion. All his work speaks of his belief in human kind and not in God. Like Michael Angelo the painter, he speaks of no God. Michael Angelo was employed by a pope but he painted all the activities of the humans, regardless of any pope. The likes of him are 'artists'. Michael Angelo represented in the field of paintings and his artistic creation – like Beethoven in his – the greatest human relation which Marx, Engels and Lenin represented in the field of the creation of ideas. Music is abstract, and expression in that field is all the more complicated. Ideas formulate thought about measurable facts of life which are easily available for comparison and experiment. This cannot be done in music and a high degree of human understanding – understanding of society and social progress – is needed to understand someone like Beethoven.

The type of harmony produced by Beethoven is not to be found in capitalist society at all. It makes it hard for him to be understood – and even harder for him to be accepted. A society based on exploitation is absolutely unable to integrate such harmony and totally unprepared to see it or understand its origins. Beethoven radiates a harmony which is not in society, and which was certainly not around anywhere when he lived. But Beethoven preoccupies himself to spread in human kind the complete harmony he sensed society was capable of. The themes of Beethoven's Third, Fifth and Ninth symphonies, are pure Songs of human love. These three symphonies are syntheses on the subject of human relations.

SOCIALISM IS THE MOST ELEVATED FORM OF HARMONY

The comparisons of musical 'critics' lead them to say that one composer was 'better' than another etc... But music is relative to the role it plays in each epoch. This is all the more so if taken in the context of the epoch of the Egyptians and the Greeks. In this sense, music had a very high function amongst the Ancient Egyptians. The Ancient Greeks produced all kind of theatre, songs, and they created the 'Odeon'. Music was already seen by them as an instrument of human relation. Song-and-music was already, at the time of the Greeks, an instrument of humanity for communication and enlightenment. Music expands the mind and enlarges the feeling of being human. Life has demonstrated that such harmony cannot come from killings, antagonisms and contradictions as a norm of living. Music needs a society that has eliminated all this. Music assists the understanding that a superior society is necessary and perfectly possible. Socialism is the most elevated form of harmony. As profound as the music of Beethoven is, it is still only a very distant expression of the full harmony Socialism is going to mean. This is due particularly to the fact that the real advocate of harmony and dignified human relations is going to find its place in ideas, and not just in music. Music is an aspect of this, but it cannot be the most advanced one, all by itself. The most advanced is the idea. Music is the advocate of complete harmony in only one sphere of the human relations, and that sphere remains – in the last instance – closest to nature. The enormous distance between music and the sound of nature, is filled by human creation. Nature has its own sounds which are understood by us, humans, and interpreted musically through the development of our social and human life. At first, this creativity was without any pre-arranged order. But once humanity produced music – itself the result of the development intelligence – creation acquired 'order' in

becoming conscious. Nature creates the fauna and the flora; and the humans create the music, a sound that is said to induce growth in plants!

NATURE, THE UNIVERSE AND HUMAN RELATIONS ARE A UNITY

The music of Beethoven is the most complete; its harmony comes out of Beethoven complete ability to be objective - not limited to giving entertainment or pleasure to some. Music is not for just a few people, but for everyone. Beethoven has a complete passion – expressed in the Sixth Symphony for instance (Pastoral). In that Symphony, you feel that millions upon millions are involved and play instruments. His music is a creation of human relations, and not just a copy, or an imitation of nature's clamours. It is an elaborate product of human relations, which incorporate all the sounds of the universe, the movements of this earth and the planets, the winds and interplanetary events. But boisterousness in Beethoven is less that of nature than of human relations. He created under the inspiration of the human relation, and this allowed him to communicate with nature – not merely through sounds but through the complex fabric of humanity's quest for a relationship with nature. Music tends irrevocably to unify the quest of human beings with nature and the universe. It heeds the call of something, somewhere, outside this earth and in human origins. It is not a question of music imitating nature or feeling an affinity. It is a question of seeking to produce and organise a superior creation, mainly composed of sentiments, the origins of which are to be found in the distant past of the creation of the human kind: humanity created by nature, nature by the universe, and the universe by whom?

Music will remain an important medium for education, as long as humanity needs to foster the feeling of confidence, in the stage of the construction of Socialism. In this process, the music of Beethoven will be increasingly acknowledged because no other creation has been able to respond better – not 'coincide' but 'respond' – to the need for human harmony. No music has the ability to emanate – as Beethoven's does – the capacity for harmony in every direction. In Bach, there is a concentration of all the elements of what constitutes the grandiose harmony of music, but there is still in him an element of dependency on the blessings of Heaven. This denotes the insecurity of human relations, such as it was in his time. Beethoven for his part expresses a positive sense of human confidence and belief in human relations. The Ninth Symphony

with its choir sings a song of friendship and fraternity; it is a feat in which a harmonious mode of expression is related directly to fraternal human relations.

In Beethoven's grasp, there is a unity between nature, the universe and the human relations. A harmonious unity based on the interpretation of nature, the universe, love and discernment. This is why such a harmony can induce and develop thought capacity. The sentiments that Beethoven concerns himself with are not limited to the humans and the human relations. They seek a unity with nature. Beethoven evoked religious themes but without submitting to Church, Pope or Christ. He did not plan it consciously, but his work is a passionate cry for harmony in the human relations, and between the humans and nature.

On the sleeve of a record, the Fifth Symphony of Beethoven is presented with the reflection of the moon and Beethoven's face. This image of the moon, the face of Beethoven, and then the Fifth Symphony show him united to the moon and through the moon, he is related to the cosmos.

The people who are called 'critics', who say that Beethoven's music is 'good and agreeable' are talking about anything but Beethoven's music. His music is none of this. It is the harmony of human relations, of these with nature and the universe, expressed in music. It is a harmony perceived in all the incipient harmony of human relations and the universe, to which he was utterly attentive. He was supremely apt to perceive these, even when only incipient. The clarity of enunciation he has is the clarity of thought and purity of intention; his music does not lead to doubts or contradictory conclusions regarding human relations. On the contrary, his music stimulates clear thinking and consciousness. Surely, this is one of the roles of music as an art. The critics who talk about the 'pleasantness' of Beethoven say this as a balm to entertain themselves and others. They see only a musical composition in a technical sense, but not the human love that inspires all Beethoven's music.

J. POSADAS

13th August 1978

Beethoven and the Creation of Musical Instruments

J POSADAS

5th August 1979

The creation of new musical instruments was a necessity for communication in Beethoven. His genius needed new musical instruments because the existing ones limited his capacity for creation. He made new ones. We are told that he invented parts of the piano. Later, historians had to admit that the old instruments 'limited his capacity'. But nobody explained the social character of the link between the creation of new instruments and the composer. The musical instrument is a medium for communication. It is a little like the megaphone for the orator. But the musical instrument is for creation and not simply amplification. Musical instruments are the result of technical limitations which in turn represent limitations in human relations. As human relations elevate, so musical instruments (whatever they are) are invented. In the progress from the Stone Age to the Bronze or Iron Ages, the musical instruments became progressively more complete. The historians have been preoccupied to find out when the human invented iron vessels. In fact, very beautiful iron vases were produced in Spain. But they were objects destined to being 'used' and in that sense they were inferior to musical instruments. Little has been investigated so far about musical instruments.

Historians have studied how the humans lived here, or there, or invented fire. But music is one of the most difficult creations to explain because it is one of the highest expressions of the social relations. It requires an intense mental life to create music, not an intellectual or philosophical one - a mental life, and this is a social phenomenon. The philosophers handle ideas because they have a life of 'ideas'. But the musicians do not work from ideas so much as from their capacity to interpret: interpret sentiments, consciousness, intelligence. As the communication of such things is not possible, the need for an instrument arises. This is how the musical instruments came about.

Music is considered to be a superior activity of life, but capitalism makes a mysticism of music, and of life as well, in order to justify capitalist power. Capitalism does not do this with a premeditated intention; its whole conception and preoccupation leads it into doing this. This is the 'mystery' of capitalism.

It is very different in the field of philosophy where you do not have to create new instruments - but extend knowledge and experience. In the field of music, the instrument is compulsory. In the history of humanity, the flute has played a very important role. It was one of the first instruments that concentrate a series

of qualities, aptitudes that do not exist in other instruments, or only in instruments discovered much later. The flute is one of the most venerable instruments going back to time immemorial. It may be that the stringed instruments are simpler, but the flute appeared at the time of 'composition' going back to primordial times when composition was already vital to humans. The flute is millions of years old and continues to be used. The piano, which can be compared to the flute, has a comparable history.

In many countries today, they know how to charm animals with sounds comparable to the flute. Flutes which imitate a series of birds' songs for instance. There are stories about this from the time of Martin Fierro in Argentina.

The preoccupation, sentiments and creative capacity of Beethoven have the same quality as that of Marx. It isn't by accident that he is the greatest musician of history and a republican at the same time, with the audacity – not common amongst musicians – to show disrespect for an Emperor. This was audacity if you consider that capitalism had another hundred and fifty years of life ahead of it and appeared to be absolutely solid.

It is a process that goes in the direction of highlighting that progress is decided by an objective and intelligent human necessity. No power has ever been able to constitute itself and to advance on the basis of being backward in comparison with discoveries already made. This is true even in stages of retrogression – like the middle ages or the period of Stalin. The capitalist system cannot progress because it develops amid the most deadly and profound contradictions. In order to advance, it had to use the most sophisticated technology, and in so doing, capitalism needed to kill the 'surplus' of people whom it excluded by using technology. Today, a handful of people suffice to produce what millions were engaged in producing before. In capitalism, those who are thrown out of work are a 'surplus'. Besides, one capitalist develops at the expense of another through competition, and then, competition leads to the creation of organisms for the destruction of the competitors. This means that it is totally absurd to imagine that a small number of people will ever be able to rule the whole world!

But on the other hand, any real conquest and progress of intelligence, sentiments and harmony are achieved on the basis of 'human' and intelligent relationships amongst the members of the human kind. This is true from the most distant times of human development, up until the present day.

The 'Ruins of Athens'

By Beethoven

J POSADAS

17th September 1979

The revolutionaries of the future, their new generations, will want to put Athens at the centre of their preoccupations. This is not a wish of ours'. It is a necessity of history.

In the same way as the need to know Lenin arises, so does the need to know Ancient Greece. In listening to this music of Beethoven (The Ruins of Athens), we are synchronised with the past whilst living fully in the present and also, organising the socialist future. Even though the conditions for Socialism are not all present, we organise and live the future now.

The Choir of Beethoven is included in quite a few of his works. It is intended to unify music and the voice; this means to unify music and the human being. Songs are the most communicative forms of harmonious expression after the spoken word, and these are followed by the gaze of the eyes. This is why, in any song well sung, the eyes of the singer beam with intelligence and human love. In Beethoven you can see, in a sense, a gaze that wonders at history and seeks to respond to the necessity of history, in which sentiments, consciousness and human relations are raised to new levels. The new levels reached are based on science, art, literature, life, knowledge – economic included – and human love. The new order unites and centralises all these dimensions in a whole. Beethoven wasn't aware of being involved in doing this but he did it nonetheless.

Music accompanies human activity; without spending much time listening to music, we find that the highest form of meditation takes place when listening to music. This is so because music does not require any additional effort. This applies more to the process of meditation – unifying the history of Athens with Beethoven – than to actual thought directed towards the elaboration of theoretical principles or the bases for interpretation to reach programmatic conclusions. In the latter instances, one has to listen, but in the former activity (unifying Beethoven with Athens) one can speak at the same time as music is played. The combination of such music with the history of Athens generates thoughts and many ideas. Music accompanies them naturally. It does not force them but accompanies their creation. In other words, the ideas are created with the assistance of music.

It would be very moving to be able to dance 'The Ruins of Athens'. Such a dance would be directed by the perspective of social transformations where Athens is assimilated as part of the process of history that leads to Socialism. Such a dance would celebrate this process leading to Socialism, as a necessity of life, made tangible in social relations.

The strewn stones of the Acropolis form part of 'The Ruins of Athens' which the present-day and quite 'ruined' Athenians (capitalists) have abandoned. It shows the lack of preoccupation and interest of the bourgeoisie which pay no heed to the process of history. The bourgeoisie has given up leading and does not know what tomorrow will bring. It doesn't have any future, and in not having a future, it has no interest in the present, except living for itself and exploiting the other people. The bourgeoisie is unable to provide either ideas or contributions for the unification of the present with the future, or with the past. It cannot unify the past, the present and the future for the development of ideas in cultural, scientific or economic fields. It is true that there was an economic progress in the first stages of bourgeois development but this did not lead to cultural, artistic or scientific progress. Hence, it quickly ceased to be any progress at all. Any economic progress has to be an expression of social development in the cultural and scientific spheres and above all in the realm of ideas and political struggle. When this happens, the political struggle centralises everything that is presently called 'science', 'culture', and 'art'. In turn, a flourishing political life becomes the instrument to apply science, culture and art.

Beethoven was not consciously contributing to all this, as this was not his specific aim. Nonetheless, he contributed to the ideas necessary for the progress of humanity, and conscious ideas at that. This is the highest form of humanism. Humanism at the time of Marx reached a very high level indeed, but through Marxism, humanism was superseded because it was more limited. Marxism means a process of social transformation where the individual social being becomes able to determine all future actions, ideas and relations with others, according to the fundamental necessity of the 'return of man to himself'. This 'return' is the point of departure to the time when humankind becomes able to investigate where it comes from, and where it is going to.

Beethoven's choral Fantasia, 'The Ruins of Athens' gives a complete sensation of majesty which is the mark of the profound respect Beethoven felt for his theme. He explores this subject fully with an overwhelming sense of resolution, full of respect for the significance of Athens. There is a part of the work which

suggests the 'Caryatides'; the Caryatides seem to walk and the work is pure joy. So much so that those who present Beethoven's face as sullen and gloomy are surely mistaken. Beethoven is infinite joy and he could not have produced this work, if he had been animated by other feelings but infinite joy. It is the joy of being able to apprehend, interpret and communicate. He communicates with the future like any true artist does, and this is the source of boundless joy. The forms of musical expressions – that vary between artists – reflect how far an artist has penetrated into the past. To penetrate into the past, hundreds of years, like Beethoven does with the 'Ruins of Athens', does not mean being lost in the past, but being animated by the want to communicate with the future. This music stimulates thought and ideas. There are parts of it that suggests a dialogue between say Athena and Socrates. The Catholic religion sought to crush all this after the Greeks.

'The Ruins of Athens' is a very little-known work. This is because the commercial managers broadcast what they think makes profit. 'The Ruins of Athens' is the sort of work that aims at the organisation of thought; this is a positive deterrent to commercial interest! It is however, a dance to humanity, and there is no doubt that humanity will make a dance of it, somehow, in the future. It is a complete creation of joy by one who knows how to avoid being overwhelmed by the tragedy of the moment, and who knows how to trust that 'we will resolve everything'.

Such a work evokes a person dancing without being detained by or submitted to the problems of an immediate order. Such is the vision of the artist. Some critics take Beethoven at the most simple and superficial level. They treat his music as trivial because they do not know how to inspire the public with love for Beethoven. In the German Workers State (G.D.R.) on the other hand, they regularly commemorate the anniversary of the Workers State by playing the Ninth Symphony. They have been able to organise a public that understands and needs Beethoven!

It is essential to organise a dance based on Beethoven's 'Ruins of Athens' and dance it together with the theme of the song in the final choir song. The choir song of 'The Ruins of Athens' – as in the Ninth Symphony – shows how musical instruments are insufficient to express all that a human being like Beethoven is able to feel. This is why he incorporated the human voice. To what he achieved, the voices have been added of those who refer to the human problems in song.