



Beethoven's Folksong Settings: Chronology, Sources, Style (Oxford Monographs on Music)

Barry Cooper

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Beethoven composed far more folksong settings than any other type of composition. Yet Beethoven's settings, commissioned by George Thomson of Edinburgh, have been neglected by performers and scholars alike, and nearly all accounts of them are both superficial and startlingly inaccurate. This book is based on a very elaborate study of a wide range of sources, and dispels the many myths that have been circulating about this music. Every one of the 179 settings is dated to within a few weeks and an account is given of the sources of the melodies and texts, the difficulties of sending the music across Europe during the Napoleonic Wars (smugglers were even called upon to assist!), the fees Beethoven received, and when and how the texts were added. By comparing Beethoven's settings with those of his predecessors Pleyel, Haydn and Kozeluch, the author demonstrates that Beethoven comprehensively transcended the bounds of convention, producing settings of extraordinary quality and originality.

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