

James F. Green (Alexandria, VA)

## The New Hess Catalog of Beethoven's Works

The history of Willy Hess's ground-breaking catalog, *Verzeichnis der nicht in der Gesamtausgabe veröffentlichten Werke Ludwig van Beethovens*, is a long and curious one. It now spans some 72 years and five editions in three languages. While still a student, Hess began to discover unknown and unpublished works by Beethoven that were not included in Breitkopf & Härtel's monumental complete edition of Beethoven's works known as the »Gesamtausgabe«. This edition was published in 25 volumes between 1865–1888. They not only published the works, but also numbered them from 1 to 311. As Hess collected the missing works, some of which were not actually completed, he began to form a list, or catalog, of what he found. This list, prepared in the late 1920s, became the first Hess catalog. It was published as an article, which appeared under the title »Beethovens Werke und ihre Gesamtausgabe« in the fifth volume of the *Schweizerisches Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft* in 1931. By the late 1930s Hess had uncovered enough additional works to warrant the production of a revised and expanded catalog. This was published in the seventh volume of the *Neues Beethoven Jahrbuch* in 1937, and by 1939 enough additional items were found to require an addendum to it, which appeared in volume nine of the same series. The third edition, which combined both the 1937 edition and its 1939 supplement, appeared in Italian under the title »Le opere di Beethoven e la loro edizione completa« in *Annuario dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia*, printed in Rome in 1953. This Italian translation was done by one of Hess's life long friends, Professor Giovanni Biamonti of Rome. Almost immediately after its printing in the *Annuario* it was also printed as a small separate book by the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome. This little book was the first appearance of the Hess Catalog as a separate edition; all the previous printings had been as articles in journals.

A fourth edition should have appeared in 1956 in Max Hinrichsen's *Music Book* in London; however, the publication of this London edition was so delayed that Hess decided to reorganize the entire material from scratch, together with the countless addenda and corrections prepared for the London edition since 1955, and to publish this expanded material as an independent work in book form. Hess decided to make changes in the format; most notably, the »Doubtful and Falsely Attributed Works« were removed from the main catalog and summarized in an addendum. The fourth edition proposed for Hinrichsen became the Hess edition of 1957, which was published by Breitkopf & Härtel in Wiesbaden and runs 107 pages. It was this fourth edition in German, which formed the basis for the newest edition. The present expanded and corrected translation is effectively the fifth edition of the Hess catalog and is the subject of this discussion. It was begun in 1997, the year of Willy Hess's death, and published in 2003 by Vance Brook Publishing, West Newbury, Vermont under the title *The New Hess Catalog of Beethoven's Works*. It is 310 pages long, nearly three times the size of the original.

The history of Willy Hess, who was born in 1906 and died in 1997, is no less interesting than the history of his catalog. Hess, a small gentleman who wore glasses, was unquestionably one of the most productive and famous Beethoven scholars of the 20th century. Discarded versions of works later published, fragments, lost and unfinished works magically attracted him throughout his life. Most of his essays – there are well over 400 of them – and several books, including six on Beethoven and an autobiography, concern themselves with the questions of ordinary people rather than with strictly academic problems. He never cared for sophisticated discourses or philological details; he was mainly looking for practical results. Besides his essays on the various versions of *Fidelio*, the Beethoven ›Verzeichnis‹ is his most important publication. Between 1926 and 1930 he had studied piano and musicology at the Conservatory and University of Zurich and later he had additional studies in Berlin. Afterwards, he worked as music teacher, composer, music critic and musicologist; however, between 1942 and 1971 he earned his living playing bassoon in the orchestra of his hometown of Winterthur, Switzerland. He oversaw the publication of a 14-volume supplement to the old Beethoven ›Gesamtausgabe‹ and his research and writings cast a long shadow over the academic world. With his first list, Hess showed in simple words how much there was still to be discovered about Beethoven and thus stirred the curiosity of many a music lover who hadn't been previously interested in musicology.

## The Importance of Having Updated Catalogs

Since all catalogs are reference works, and are rarely read from cover to cover like fiction, a biography, or an analytical study, it becomes essential that all catalogs undergo periodic revision. Scholars and researchers rely on them for the accuracy of the information that they contain. It has now been almost half a century since the last edition of the Hess catalog and it was time to bring it up to date. To distill 48 years of scholarship, to correct old mistakes, and to challenge new scholarship to find answers to still unresolved questions has been an arduous undertaking. While this edition may have its own shortcomings it is still a step forward on a long journey toward fully understanding Beethoven's creative output.

## How the Hess Catalog Differs from Kinsky/Halm

According to his introduction, Hess's intention for the catalog was modest: he wanted to collect the material that seemed necessary for an addendum to the old ›Gesamtausgabe‹. He certainly didn't want to rival the catalog of Beethoven's works by Georg Kinsky and Hans Halm published in 1955. Despite this, some duplications between the two publications were inevitable. The large Kinsky/Halm catalog intends to be a catalog of all ›finished‹ works by Beethoven and thus mainly deals with the works included in the old ›Gesamtausgabe‹. Hess, of course, omits those works. The section marked »Werke ohne Opuszahl« or »WoO«, on the other hand, lists numerous works that hardly differ in the compositional state from those listed by Hess. They're neither considered to be ›finished‹ nor are they in the old ›Gesamtausgabe‹; however, Kinsky/Halm was much more moderate in listing these unfinished works than Hess was. In some other cases, the basis for the inclu-

sion into the Hess catalog was only an assumption or verbal communication from a colleague, which could not be verified. Hess collected every bit of information about lost or unknown compositions and versions that he could find in the literature. In this respect, he strove for completeness in his catalog.

## How the Catalogs Work Together

Like the Hess catalog, the Kinsky/Halm catalog, published nearly 50 years ago, is presently undergoing revision. It benefited tremendously by the publication of Kurt Dorfmueller's 1978 work, *Beiträge zur Beethoven-Bibliographie*, which contains corrections to both Kinsky/Halm and Hess. Together these books form a kind of ›trinity‹ of catalogs for Beethoven's works; all three are necessary for a complete, or nearly complete, view of Beethoven's creative output.

Willy Hess was firmly convinced that the canon of works represented by the old ›Gesamtausgabe‹ did not present the whole of Beethoven's *œuvre*. According to him, the picture of Beethoven the composer is only completed by all the small, supposedly unimportant, byproducts of his genius, the discarded versions, unfinished projects, studies and musical jokes that have been made available through biographical works and examination of the manuscripts since the appearance of the old ›Gesamtausgabe‹. This view of Hess's would eventually dominate Beethoven research; hardly a modern edition of Beethoven's works exists that does not list – if not print – early versions, as well as the so-called ›final versions‹.

## So What's New in the *New Hess Catalog*:

### 1. Bibliographic Information

The *New Hess Catalog* is far more than a mere translation of Hess's 1957 work. It is a systematic re-examination of all 401 entries in the German edition. When Hess cited references he frequently assumed that he was writing only for experienced scholars and cites works or sources by familiar or shortened names, frequently omitting the publisher, dates or places of publication and page numbers. Wherever possible, those references have been completed and the bibliographic information has been reordered into a consistent form. Mistakes in references have been corrected.

### 2. Locations and Dispersed Collections

Four major collections have changed locations since Hess first prepared his 1957 edition of the catalog. The Paris Conservatory has transferred all its important musical holdings to the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, and likewise the British Museum has transferred its holdings to the British Library in London. The Deutsche Staatsbibliothek in Berlin (successor to the Preußische Staatsbibliothek), which was divided at the end of World War II into the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek and the Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, is now reunited under the name Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz. Part of its original collection was removed from Berlin during the war and is now in the Biblioteka Jagiellonska in Cracow, Poland. To add to the confusion, after World War II an-

other name was used to designate the still dispersed Berlin collection, Öffentliche Wissenschaftliche Bibliothek. This confusing term survives in the Kinsky/Halm catalog of 1955. Lastly, the personal collection of H. C. Bodmer of Zurich was donated to the Beethoven-Archiv in Bonn in 1956 just prior to the publication of the Hess catalog. Occasionally, Hess failed to change all these references to their correct locations.

### 3. Internet References

An effort has been made to use the Internet for bibliographic references. This source for information is relatively new and has not yet made a major impact on how bibliographic references are listed. The *New Hess Catalog* recognizes that this growing technology will, over time, have a great impact on how information is gathered, stored and retrieved. References to sources of information from the Internet have been used in the *New Hess Catalog*.

### 4. Text Sources for the *a cappella* Songs and Contrapuntal Studies

Information has been added to the entries concerning the *a cappella* songs, Hess entries 208–232. When Beethoven set about his studies with Salieri, he was assigned a text and asked to write an unaccompanied vocal work on that text. The sources for the texts (mostly from Pietro Metastasio) that Salieri assigned to Beethoven are now listed with their respective results as well as all the surviving autograph sources.

For the contrapuntal studies with Johann Georg Albrechtsberger, Beethoven was assigned themes created and numbered by Albrechtsberger. These numbered sources and key signatures, which had been omitted from the 1957 edition of Hess, have been added to the *New Hess Catalog*.

### 5. First Edition of Hess 96

When Hess prepared his 1957 edition of the Catalog, he made a survey of the works that were published and those still unpublished. At that time, about 70% of the works listed were not yet published. Between 1959 and 1971 Hess oversaw the publication of a 14-volume supplement to the old ›Gesamtausgabe‹ in which most of these works were printed. One surprising omission from those supplements was Beethoven's own piano transcription of the beginning of the Seventh Symphony, Hess 96. The publication of the *New Hess Catalog* afforded an opportunity to correct that oversight and this new edition contains the first edition of that transcription.

### 6. Lost Autographs

The *New Hess Catalog* presents updated and corrected information on new locations of some of Beethoven's autographs and regretfully the loss of a few. The *Bagatelle* in G minor, Hess 56 (WoO 61a), was accidentally destroyed when it was sent to a book binder to have, ironically, a protective cover made for it. Also not widely known is the loss of the autograph of the piano version of the *Ritterballett*, Hess 89, in an accidental fire in a storage room of the Beethoven-Haus in 1960. Other losses and disappearances are also reported.

### 7. Discoveries

One of the most significant contributions of the *New Hess Catalog* is the correction of faulty information and the untangling of ›mis-identifications‹. Hess cited the existence of two lost Piano Trios (entries 49 and 50), based on information contained in statements by Wilhelm von Lenz, W. W. Cobbett and Ferdinand Ries. It turns out that these are actually WoO 38 and WoO 39 and were published in the old ›Gesamtausgabe‹. They were not lost works as Hess supposed. In 1822, Beethoven wrote the title of a song, *Odorato – o Nice*, on a list along with other works. Hess entered this presumably lost song as 138 in the Catalog. It turns out that the song is not lost at all, but was published with a different title and is known today as ›No, non turbarti‹, WoO 92a, which Hess had already listed in the Catalog as 119. Hess listed three works as entries 310–312 based on information he received from Fritz Kaiser. Years later Hess discovered that entry 311, the song *Grasmücke*, is actually musically identical to *Blümchen Wunderhold*, Op. 52, No. 8 with only the words changed. For decades, however, the identity of the other two remained a mystery. Hess 310, given as a Prelude in C major for Organ, has been identified as a slight adaption of the last nine bars of the first of the preludes published in 1803 as Two Preludes for Organ, Op. 39. The entry 312, which is listed as a four-part canon with a text titled *Singen ist des Lebens Freude* is actually the instrumental canon, WoO 160, No. 2 with a text added by J. H. Fischer and published in 1844 in a collection of songs called *Der Liederbote*. This canon is reprinted in the *New Hess Catalog* for the first time in nearly 160 years. These are but a few examples of the numerous corrections to be found in the *New Hess Catalog*.

### 8. Four New Appendices

Hess not only cataloged works of doubtful authenticity, but several works that may never have existed at all, and some works that did exist, but are now considered lost. For this new edition I have created an Appendix A, which lists lost works, and an Appendix B, which lists works that may never have been written. There is also an Appendix C, which lists works that were once thought to be by Beethoven, but are now known to be by other composers or arrangers. References to these particular entries have been shortened and presented again under the appropriate Appendix. Appendix D presents special information on the Hess entries that relate to the folksong arrangements. It cross-references them to two specialized lists prepared by Barry Cooper and Petra Weber-Bockholdt. These four special Appendices should greatly help readers and researchers in identifying those lost, discredited and non-existent works.

### 9. Expanded Concordance

The original concordance, which cross-referenced the fourth edition of the Hess Catalog from 1957 with Hess's own second and third editions and that of the Kinsky/Halm catalog, has been expanded to include six more catalog systems by important 19th- and 20th-century scholars. The concordance now includes cross-references to the catalogs of Antonio Bruers, Gustav Nottebohm, Sir George Grove, Alexander Wheelock Thayer,

Adolf Bernhard Marx and Giovanni Biamonti. This should greatly ease identification of the listed works and lessen confusion or ›mis-identification‹.

## Conclusions and Comments

The stylistic approach that has been adopted for this edition of Hess's catalog requires some comment. Hess used a very relaxed casual style full of colloquial expressions alternating with a much more formal and sometimes stilted style. In these cases a literal translation simply did not carry the clarity necessary for understanding what Hess was trying to say and it was necessary to present an interpretive translation of certain passages. For most of the text, Hess used the first person singular to describe information he had received or found, but he also frequently referred to himself in the third person, especially when referencing one of his own publications. At times this even occurred in the same entry. Wherever possible, Hess's original style has been retained; however, every effort has been made to smooth out the problems and bring clarity to the text.

As with the production of any large reference work, full credit for its production cannot be taken by the editor or translator alone. Thanks must be given to the individuals and their respective libraries, archives and institutions who have aided my searches and patiently answered my questions. Hess made sure to point out in the foreword to the 1957 edition that no one was more aware of the flawed coverage of his catalog than he, and invited the reader to add bits and pieces of information whenever new discoveries come to light. For this fifth edition, I encourage readers to do the same.

Two last comments should be made about this new edition of the Hess Catalog. The painting, *Beethoven and Nature*, used for the cover and the frontispiece is by the renowned painter, Newell Convers Wyeth (1882–1945), who was patriarch of a dynasty of American painters. It was done in 1919 on a commission from the piano manufacturers, Steinway & Sons and was used by them in their advertising in the 1920s. The original painting hangs in their New York showroom. This is the first time this image has ever appeared in a book about Beethoven. And lastly, this new edition has been dedicated to Ira F. Brilliant, founder of the Center for Beethoven Studies in San Jose, California, that bears his name. There are few individuals in our time, or any other time, who have done so much to make information about Beethoven's life and works available to the scholar and interested enthusiast. The creation of the Ira F. Brilliant Center for Beethoven Studies will help ensure that future generations will continue to marvel at, and be inspired by, the genius that is Beethoven.

It is my hope that this catalog will be easily comprehensible and its information available to every reader, not just the specialist. As Sieghard Brandenburg, who graciously provided a new introduction, points out: ›This is still a fascinating work. Hopefully this considerably improved English version will find many readers.«