



Ignasi Sole Pinas &lt;ignasiphd@gmail.com&gt;

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**Ph.D Question about bpm increase in Beethoven cello sonatas**

9 messages

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**Ignasi Sole Pinas** <ignasiphd@gmail.com>

Tue, Mar 22, 2022 at 11:27 PM

Bcc: martennoorduin@gmail.com, craigsapp@gmail.com, njc69@cam.ac.uk, daniel.leeche-wilkinson@kcl.ac.uk

Good evening,

Recently I came to the discovery of two patterns into analysing the bpm of 22 recordings of Beethoven Cello Sonatas. Through Jupyter Notebook and Matlab I have created two codes to create Histograms and Ridges, to compare side to side the recordings, and what I have found is the following:

1. That generally, after 1970, the general bpm increase in all sonatas
2. However in Op. 69 that is more unclear for there is no visible increase through the years.

I am going to be honest with you, I do not understand the WHY this is happening or the cause, so I come to you today in hopes that you can possibly provide me with some literature that discusses the increase of tempo in Beethoven after the 70s, or maybe some opinion on why this is happening.

Regarding the Op. 69, it could be that its lyricism makes the cellists hold back, because if its too fast they would not be able to sing.

Another itch in my head, is that none of the recordings comes even close to the tempos that Czerny and Moscholes provided for the sonatas, and I would like to ask you if you know why, or if there is any study that discusses why they thought this would be a good tempo and why it is obviously wrong to play that fast.

Please see attached the Ridge charts and Histograms in which you will be able to appreciate the shift of tempos through the years and also in each individual cellist

A copy of a first draft of the Chapter analysis on my thesis can be found here in more detail: [Average BPM analysis draft](#)

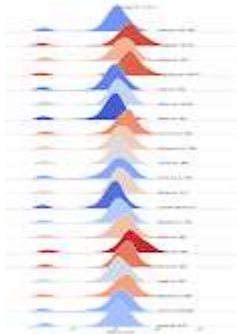
Thank you so much for your help!

All the best,

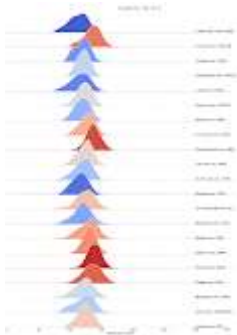
Ignasi

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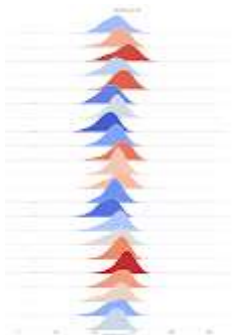
**10 attachments**



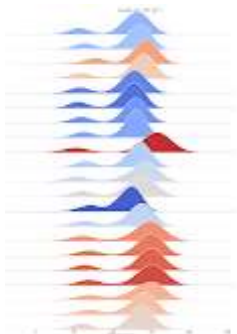
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**Sonata 5 Ridge.png**  
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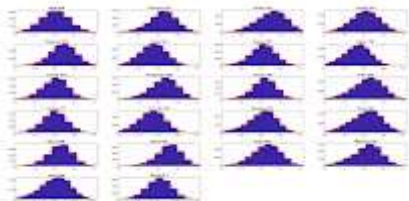
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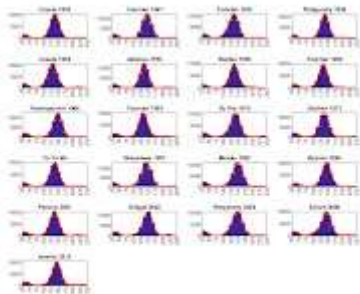
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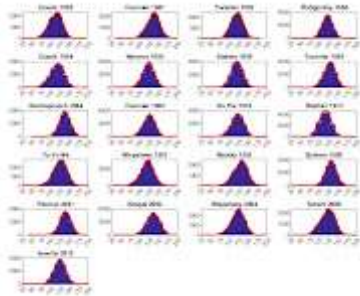
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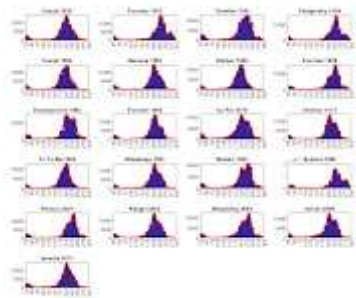
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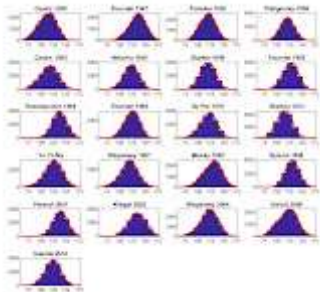
sonata 1.jpg  
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Sonata 4.jpg  
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Sonata 2.jpg  
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Sonata 5.jpg  
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Nicholas Cook <njc69@cam.ac.uk>  
To: Ignasi Sole Pinas <ignasiphd@gmail.com>

Wed, Mar 23, 2022 at 9:56 AM

Hi Ignasi, I don't regard myself as an expert on this stuff as I have been doing other things for some years now and the field has advanced since then. But in a way all this seems quite plausible: (i) there are general trends in normative performative style, such as the growth in symmetrical phrase arching I traced for Chopin performance in *Beyond the Score*; on the other hand (ii) individual pieces do have individual performance histories, as Jose Bowen showed in relation to Beethoven and other symphonies in 'The history of remembered innovation'; (iii) what you suggest as regards op 69 is perfectly plausible and perhaps you could trace that through a succession of recordings, but I'd also allow for contingencies--things that are extraneous to the music as written--such as the influence of some particularly charismatic recording, or even the impact of a dominant literary interpretation. As to Czerny's and Moscheles' tempos, I steered clear of the whole debate about Beethoven's and his successors' metronomes! Best wishes, Nick

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Nicholas Cook, FBA  
Emeritus Professor of Music, University of Cambridge

Marten Noorduin <martennoorduin@gmail.com>  
To: Ignasi Sole Pinas <ignasiphd@gmail.com>

Wed, Mar 23, 2022 at 12:41 PM

Hi Ignasi,

I've made some comments on the chapter for you to consider. They mostly concern the justification of your approach, as well as a few things to clear up some aspects of the writing.

My sense is that one of the primary reasons that the tempos are a little faster after 1970 is due to the rise of the HIP movement, and the renewed interest in historical instruments and performance practices. It's probably worth considering that this is what most musicians were responding to (and not Czerny's and Moscheles's editions, which few would have known).

If you don't know this already, btw, you could do a lot worse than having a look at the research that Heinz von Loesch did at the Staatliche Institut für Musikforschung in 2013, which you can perhaps take some inspiration from (and/or critically engage with) <https://www.simpk.de/forschung/themen/interpretationsforschung/tempo-measurements-in-piano-sonatas-by-ludwig-van-beethoven.html>

I hope that that is helpful!

Best,

Marten

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**Leech-Wilkinson, Daniel** <daniel.leech-wilkinson@kcl.ac.uk>

Wed, Mar 23, 2022 at 4:52 PM

To: Ignasi Sole Pinas <ignasiphd@gmail.com>

Dear Ignasi,

Many thanks for sharing your data, whose visual expression is so appealing. I'm afraid I no longer work in this area – I'm more concerned at the moment with sociological questions – but a first thought is that the HIP players may be faster (because HIP players imagine it's stylish to be), and others may be influenced by them. So there'll be a trend as HIP performances become more numerous and influential. If you'd like to consult an expert in Beethoven's metronome speeds then I'd recommend Marten Noorduyn: [marten.noorduyn@music.ox.ac.uk](mailto:marten.noorduyn@music.ox.ac.uk).

Sorry I can't be more help!

All best wishes,

Dan

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Daniel Leech-Wilkinson

Emeritus Professor of Music

King's College London

<https://challengingperformance.com/the-book/>

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/music-and-shape-9780199351411>

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**From:** Ignasi Sole Pinas <[ignasiphd@gmail.com](mailto:ignasiphd@gmail.com)>

**Date:** Tuesday, 22 March 2022 at 23:28

**Subject:** Ph.D Question about bpm increase in Beethoven cello sonatas

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**Ignasi Sole Pinas** <[ignasiphd@gmail.com](mailto:ignasiphd@gmail.com)>

To: Nicholas Cook <[njc69@cam.ac.uk](mailto:njc69@cam.ac.uk)>

Wed, Mar 23, 2022 at 8:57 PM

Dear Nick,

Thank you so much for this valuable information! I will definitely look into Jose Bowen and your book which I already have.

You are absolutely right. About metronomes, better to just mention what they did versus what the cellist did and stay clear of polemic.

Have a great half-term, all the best,

Ignasi

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**Ignasi Sole Pinas** <[ignasiphd@gmail.com](mailto:ignasiphd@gmail.com)>

To: Marten Noorduyn <[martennoorduyn@gmail.com](mailto:martennoorduyn@gmail.com)>

Wed, Mar 23, 2022 at 9:01 PM

Dear Marten,

I lack words to thank you for looking into my document and leaving such interesting and fair comments. As you mentioned and sadly Hicks is a victim, I struggle sometimes with my writing, but I am working hard to improve it.

Regarding the HIP, thanks to you and Cook now I have some idea on why the speed looks so fast after the 70s, and led me to a thesis made in Barcelona regarding Beethoven's metronome marks, and one of their findings in the 3rd symphony of Beethoven, that conductors that recorded using HIP were playing faster as shown in their paper that I attach.

I hope that you will find it interesting.

Thank you so much again for the information,

All the best,

Ignasi

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2829K

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**Marten Noorduin** <martennoorduin@gmail.com>

Wed, Mar 23, 2022 at 10:59 PM

To: Ignasi Sole Pinas <ignasiphd@gmail.com>

Dear Ignasi,

I'm glad that you found my comments helpful! Just a quick note on the paper: I know it well, and I have communicated with the authors, but beyond showing the timings I find the paper (between you and me, of course) really quite rubbish. There is absolutely no reason that the wisdom of crowds phenomenon as cited in footnote 21 applies here. Not only does this exclusively apply to independent (i.e. secret) observations, it only applies to situations where the random errors of a crowd will average each other out, which is clearly not the case, as most of the older recordings were surely known to the makers of newer recordings. Anyway, the only reason it got published is because the peer reviews (which you can read on the journal's website) were only concerned with the technical aspects of the paper. So much for interdisciplinarity.....

Oh and about the writing - I recognise much of my own former writing in it. Don't worry, just keep practising, and you will be just fine!

Best,

Marten

PS: Is Nicholas Cook also helping you? He's a good person to have on your team!

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**Ignasi Sole Pinas** <ignasiphd@gmail.com>

Fri, Mar 25, 2022 at 9:26 AM

To: Marten Noorduin <martennoorduin@gmail.com>

Dear Marten,

Thank you so much for this email, it is really true that the only value that holds is the technical aspect rather than if there is a contribution to musicology.

I will discuss with Jo the possibility of another reading group regarding HIP, and I hope that you will join us if it suits your availability.

All the best,

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**Ignasi Sole Pinas** <ignasiphd@gmail.com>

Sun, Apr 17, 2022 at 10:25 AM

To: "Leech-Wilkinson, Daniel" <daniel.leech-wilkinson@kcl.ac.uk>

Dear Da,

Thank you for your reply, I have been thinking about your response and the sociological aspect of HIP, and something just clicked on me right now.

What do you think about the release of Facebook and Youtube in 2004 and 2005? Do you think it influenced future musicians that got exposed to HIP recordings let's say such as Rostropovich and Richter in Usher Hall?

I have the suspicion that between 1930 and 2008, one had to become very well known and win many competitions for a label to sign you a recording contract, but in the apparition of social media and cheaper recording devices, not only young cellists had access to recording devices and websites where they could upload their content, but the fact that almost every "legendary" cellist was free to watch and listen in youtube, inherently affected and influenced individuals who might prefer Du Pre's Elgar, to play like her, and to play Dvorak like Rostropovich.

Would you be so kind as to send me your thoughts on this?

All the best,

I

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