



FOLLOWING THE CLUES

The recent discovery of another cadenza to the first movement of Beethoven's Violin Concerto, likely by Vieuxtemps, sheds an interesting light on the early performance history of the work, writes **Martin Wulfhorst**

Any long-established European music publishing house has a dingy basement where boxes of old prints and manuscripts have accumulated over the decades or centuries, and every manager of any of these companies hopes one day to make the front pages of the international newspapers with a headline announcing that an unknown masterpiece by a prominent composer has surfaced in a forgotten box of music.

Peter Pany, CEO of Doblinger Musikverlag, loves to spend his free time sorting through the boxes in the basement of the publisher's Viennese headquarters, separating anything of value from trash for the bin. This is what he was doing on a hot day in June 2019 when suddenly, amid worthless prints, an old, tattered, brownish handwritten sheet of music caught his eye. He immediately became alert, and his excitement grew even stronger when he noticed the inscription (in German): 'Cadenza to the first movement of Beethoven's Violin

Concerto'. Was this merely a nameless violinist's copy of a well-known cadenza already reprinted a dozen times, or had he perhaps come across a lost cadenza by a famous violinist of a past age? On a scale from one to ten where a ten marks the discovery of a cadenza Beethoven himself might have written for Franz Clement (the violinist who performed at the 1806 premiere of the concerto), the discovery of *any* previously unknown 19th-century Viennese cadenza would rate at about a five. If this seemed already a small sensation in itself, two other observations made by the author of this article (who was asked to provide help with identification) moved the discovery up a notch or two on the scale: as suggested by the rests, the cadenza



Beethoven in 1803

Example 1 (opposite) Opening of WoO 1, a manuscript cadenza to the first movement of Beethoven's Violin Concerto, composed probably between c.1834 and c.1842-3, discovered in the Doblinger Musikverlag archives, Vienna, and recently acquired by the Vienna Library (Wienbibliothek im Rathaus, Musiksammlung, MHc-18620). Likely by Vieuxtemps, as suggested by considerable congruence with his cadenza WoO 2. Rests in the fourth stave suggest other instruments accompany the violin.

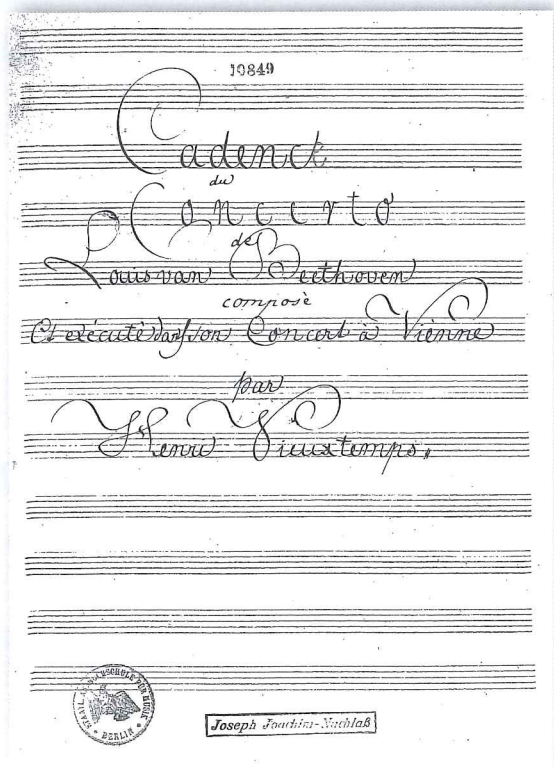
apparently requires an accompaniment; and a complex web of congruences links it to four others.

A close comparison with numerous published and unpublished cadenzas reveals, first, that the anonymous Doblinger cadenza – labelled here WoO 1 (**example 1**) – shares about two thirds of its material with the violin part of another previously overlooked 19th-century cadenza. This manuscript from the Joseph Joachim estate in Berlin (WoO 2), perhaps in Joachim's own hand, represents a later, reworked version of WoO 1 which features more detailed articulation and dynamics and includes a greater share of violinistic pyrotechnics. WoO 2 carries the title (in French) 'Cadenza to Louis van Beethoven's Concerto, composed and performed at his concert in Vienna by Henri Vieuxtemps' (**examples 2 and 3**). Most interestingly, the full score includes an accompaniment of strings and timpani (**example 4**, page 34), which may serve as one of the sources for reconstructing the missing orchestral parts of WoO 1.

Second, the idea of including an orchestral accompaniment featuring the opening timpani signal of the concerto was inspired by the cadenza that Beethoven himself composed for his op.61a piano transcription of the concerto (**examples 5**, page 34 and **6**, page 35).

Third, a chunk of material from the Doblinger and Berlin manuscripts WoO 1 and WoO 2 found its way into the well-known cadenza set WoO 3 that Vieuxtemps composed in 1846 in St Petersburg – according to pianist and musicologist Agnès Briolle Vieuxtemps, great-great-granddaughter of the composer – and that he published in 1854 (**example 7**, page 35).

Fourth, several sections from the Doblinger cadenza (WoO 1) resurface in a cadenza by Joseph Hellmesberger I (**example 8**, page 36), which also includes a (not very well-crafted) arrangement of the first half of Beethoven's piano transcription cadenza, set for violin and orchestral accompaniment. >



Example 2 Title page of WoO 2, a cadenza to the first movement of Beethoven's Violin Concerto, copied perhaps by Joachim, with an attribution to Vieuxtemps (University of the Arts, Berlin, University Library RH 0660). According to the inscription, Vieuxtemps performed it at a concert in Vienna (probably in 1842-3).

JOACHIM'S COPY IS TITLED
'CADENZA TO BEETHOVEN'S
CONCERTO, COMPOSED
AND PERFORMED AT HIS
CONCERT IN VIENNA BY
HENRI VIEUXTEMPS'



Example 3 In his WoO 2 cadenza, the opening of which is reproduced here, Vieuxtemps added several brilliant episodes (see staves 2-4) to the material of WoO 1

4a

4b

Allegro ma non troppo

Example 4 About halfway into WoO 2 (a), Vieuxtemps surprises us with the opening timpani motif of the concerto (b), which serves in the cadenza as the background for an expressive violin line set over a chordal string accompaniment

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Example 5 Excerpt (bars 1–8) from Beethoven's op.61a piano transcription of his Violin Concerto. In WoO 1 and WoO 2, Vieuxtemps used the first six measures starting with a B flat major chord (see example 1: middle of 2nd stave).

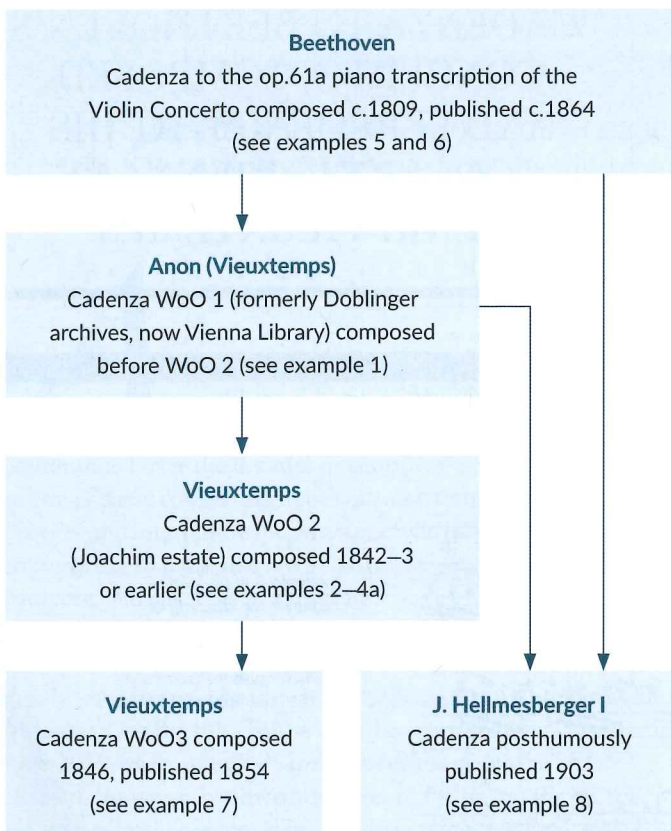


Diagram showing the relationship between the newly discovered cadenza WoO 1 to Beethoven's piano cadenza and three others

These links, as shown in the diagram (left), raise a number of questions. Did Vieuxtemps compose not only the cadenza from the Joachim estate (WoO 2) but also the anonymous Doblinger cadenza (WoO 1)? (For the purposes of this article, I will assume that this is the case.) What was the connection between Henry Vieuxtemps (1820–81) and Joseph Joachim (1831–1907), the two trailblazing 19th-century performers of the Beethoven Violin Concerto? How can we explain the overlap with Hellmesberger's cadenza: did Vieuxtemps copy from a member of the Hellmesberger family, or did one of the Hellmesbergers copy from Vieuxtemps? Finally, what kindled Vieuxtemps's interest in Beethoven's music in the first place? What led a young Belgian virtuoso – during an era when most violinists rejected Beethoven's concerto as unrewarding or even unplayable, if they knew the piece at all – not only to perform the work but also to compose cadenzas for it, specifically to write unique cadenzas that include an accompaniment of strings and timpani?

True, Vieuxtemps began his career as a prodigy, studying the popular flashy music of the Franco-Belgian violin school with his teacher and fellow countryman Charles-Auguste de Bériot (1802–70). Yet as revealed in his autobiographical letters of 1880 (Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels), at age twelve Beethoven's violin sonatas 'transported him into heaven', and at age thirteen the dungeon scene from *Fidelio* moved him deeply and robbed him of his sleep. A little later, while he was staying in Vienna for a few months (1833–4), he came into contact with many former

EXAMPLE 4 UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS, BERLIN



Example 6 Excerpt (bars 96–100) from Beethoven's op.61a piano transcription of his Violin Concerto. His unique inclusion of timpani in his first-movement cadenza apparently served as the inspiration for Vieuxtemps (see examples 4a and 9).

Example 7 Vieuxtemps's 1846 cadenza set, WoO 3, bars 26–34, includes seven bars (28–34) adapted from his WoO 2, which in turn are partly borrowed from WoO 1.

members of Beethoven's circle. It was apparently Beethoven's secretary and copyist Karl Holz (1798–1858), second violinist of Ignaz Schuppanzigh's famous quartet, who acquainted Vieuxtemps with the Violin Concerto (according to Andreas Moser's 1901 biography of Joachim). This led to a historic performance of the piece on 16 March 1834. Certainly, we need to correct the claim made by Vieuxtemps in his autobiographical letters that this was the first time since Beethoven's death that the piece had been played: there had been performances in Paris, Kassel, London, Vienna and Leipzig between 1828 and 1833. Still, the significance of Vieuxtemps's debut cannot be overrated.

Immediately, the Viennese musicians and critics recognised not only the 14-year-old boy's instrumental prowess but especially his ability to differentiate between diverse styles and his efforts to place the composer above the performer – in complete antithesis to the virtuoso culture of the day. The contemporary journals praised his capacity to penetrate 'into the spirit of the composition', 'his comprehension and his performance style adapted to the character of each piece – in short his musical genius' (*Allgemeiner musikalischer Anzeiger*, 1834, vol.6 no.13). With his Beethoven performances during the decades after his 1834 debut, Vieuxtemps ravished audiences in the musical centres from Vienna to London and from Paris to St Petersburg and Moscow. These concerts placed him at the helm of a uniquely Viennese performing tradition for the Violin Concerto (Franz Clement, 1780–1842 – Joseph Böhm, 1795–1876 – Jakob Dont, 1815–88 – Joseph Hellmesberger I, 1828–93) – a

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tradition preserved in his own edition of the work, published in 1869, and later continued and further developed by his students in Belgium and Russia. When Ysaÿe studied with Vieuxtemps, the young man's father described the playing of his teacher as follows: 'The bow seemed to go right round his body, it had no end' (see Ysaÿe, *Henri Vieuxtemps, mon maître*, 1968). Ysaÿe himself praised especially the Beethoven performances of his two teachers, Vieuxtemps and Wieniawski: 'They sang this work... they expressed themselves without restraint... all you heard was sound... everything else vanished before your eyes.' (Lev Ginsburg, *Ysaÿe*, 1980). >

Example 8 The cadenza by Joseph Hellmesberger I, published posthumously in 1903, is pieced together from some material from the Doblinger cadenza (WoO 1) and the first half of Beethoven's piano cadenza. Inexplicably, Hellmesberger's cadenza ends forte on a high D. Shown here are bars 1–12.

We can only speculate which cadenzas Vieuxtemps played over the years in his numerous performances of the concerto. During the late 1840s and 1850s he seems to have consistently performed the cadenzas of 1846 (WoO 3), given that none of the reviewers who praised his cadenzas mentioned an orchestral accompaniment – the striking feature of the earlier cadenzas WoO 1 and WoO 2.

It is tempting to assume that prior to 1846 Vieuxtemps always played one of these two cadenzas (WoO 1 and WoO 2). Yet only a single performance of WoO 2 is documented – the one referred to on the title page of the manuscript from the Joachim estate. Presumably this was one of the three performances that Vieuxtemps gave in 1842–3, while Joachim was studying in Vienna. The copy of this cadenza (WoO 2) is a testimony to the strong impression that Vieuxtemps's rendition of the piece seems to have left on him. It may have been the spark of this encounter that ultimately led to Joachim's spectacular debut with the Violin Concerto in London shortly thereafter in 1844 at age twelve and to his subsequent triumphant performances – in an astonishing parallel to the start of Vieuxtemps's own career. Joachim became an ardent admirer of the Belgian violinist, as confirmed by Ysaÿe, and later the two young musicians, only eleven years apart in age, played in quartets together in London.



Joachim in 1868

While it is certain that WoO 2 was composed indeed by Vieuxtemps and performed at least once, the anonymous Doblinger cadenza WoO 1 presents a more complicated picture. No performance is documented, and circumstantial evidence allows us only to hypothesise about the identity of the composer and date of composition. Although the handwriting is either that of Vieuxtemps (according to Agnès Briolle Vieuxtemps) or that of his father (according to Dr Thomas Aigner from Vienna City Library), one cannot entirely exclude the possibility that Vieuxtemps copied a cadenza (or a portion thereof) by a Viennese violinist not yet identified. In spite of the overlap with Hellmesberger's cadenza, the latter is an unlikely candidate, because he included merely a fragment of WoO 1, joining it rather amateurishly to material from Beethoven's piano cadenza and leaving out the beautifully soaring second half of the lyrical section of WoO 1. Also, Hellmesberger's father, Georg I (1800–73), the contender next in line, does not seem a plausible choice: why would Joachim, who studied with him, have wrongfully attributed to Vieuxtemps a cadenza for which the material originally came from a cadenza by his own teacher? Further, if Vieuxtemps, known for his modesty and honesty, had borrowed most of his material from another composer he would never have led Joachim to believe that he himself had written the cadenza. Therefore, the overlaps

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Violin solo (WoO 1)

Accompaniment
(reconstructed from WoO 2)

Strings *pp*

pp Timp.

Example 9

The most intriguing section of WoO 1 begins with the timpani signal and is ingeniously developed from the opening of the concerto: over a silky cushion of string chords, the violin spins a beautiful melody, the beginning of which is skilfully derived from the oboe motif (see example 4b). For the first published edition of WoO 1 the (apparently lost) accompanying orchestral parts had to be reconstructed, primarily on the basis of WoO 2.

NOT ONLY DO THESE CADENZAS REPRESENT A VIBRANT LEGACY OF THE EARLY PERFORMANCE HISTORY OF THE BEETHOVEN CONCERTO, BUT ALSO THEY ARE VALUABLE ADDITIONS TO THE VIOLIN REPERTOIRE

between WoO 1 and WoO 2 can be assumed to have resulted from revisions of his own cadenzas rather than from any borrowing from another composer. Consequently, the Doblinger manuscript (WoO 1) represents most likely a cadenza that Vieuxtemps composed at some point between 1834 and about 1842 or 1843.

It seems unlikely, though, that the 14-year-old Vieuxtemps composed the cadenza for his 1834 debut, especially as he reveals in his autobiographical letters that he had only a fortnight to learn the entire concerto. Perhaps the inspiration came during a later tour to Vienna in 1837, when he was again in contact with Holz (as evident from an entry in the journal kept by Vieuxtemps): the idea of including the timpani in the cadenza could only have stemmed from Beethoven's piano cadenza, and Holz, the composer's copyist, is in fact the most likely candidate among the musicians from Beethoven's former circle to have shown Vieuxtemps this cadenza, dated c.1809 and unpublished at the time.

This complex genesis lends a transitional quality to WoO 1 and WoO 2: they do not quite rise to the status of finished products. It was not until Vieuxtemps published his famous WoO 3 set that he fully completed this step. It is certainly no coincidence that the first cadenzas ever printed separately for any violin concerto were apparently the three cadenzas published 1853–4 by Vieuxtemps (WoO 3), Joachim and Ferdinand David for the Beethoven – the one concerto that because of its 'symphonic' character requires most strongly a truly 'composed' cadenza. In addition, the publication of these works signalled a paradigm shift whereby cadenzas had turned into compositions in their own right which publishers were willing to sell and violinists were willing to buy.

Lacking the definitive quality of WoO 3, then, WoO 1 and WoO 2 are still somewhat 'templates' or collections of material, to be reworked and adapted by the performer, perhaps for a semi-improvisational rendition. Nevertheless, because of their intrinsic,

beautiful aspects WoO 1 and WoO 2 are more than mere 'works in progress': not only do they represent a vibrant legacy of the early performance history of Beethoven's Violin Concerto, but also they are valuable additions to the violin repertoire. Perhaps Vieuxtemps's conception – relying on the inspiration of Beethoven's own piano cadenza while developing the idea of the timpani accompaniment in a creative and original manner – is more convincing than the approach of those violinists who have attempted a transcription of Beethoven's piano cadenzas, characterised by idiomatic piano figurations and polyphonic texture: different from Beethoven's approach in his cadenza, Vieuxtemps in WoO 1 and WoO 2 turned the timpani signal into the backdrop for a striking lyrical episode with a highly expressive chordal string accompaniment (example 4a, page 34 and example 9, above).

Apart from their musical beauty and originality, WoO 1 and WoO 2 are of special value to period-instrument performers concerned about chronological and stylistic suitability: they were composed merely a few decades after the concerto and represent the style of the Franco-Belgian violin school of the early 19th century, whose co-founders Giovanni Battista Viotti, Pierre Rode and Rodolphe Kreutzer deeply influenced Beethoven's violin compositions.

Given all these qualities, one can only hope that today's performers will consider Vieuxtemps's original, ingenious WoO 1 and WoO 2 cadenzas when they play Beethoven's Violin Concerto. ●

The first edition of Vieuxtemps's cadenzas WoO 1 and WoO 2 was published in November 2020 by Doblinger (Vienna, DM 1524). A recording of the cadenzas by Russian violinist Yury Revich is available at bit.ly/2E115ac. Revich plays the 'Princess Aurora' Stradivari violin (1709), generously on loan from the Goh Family Foundation.