

How Fast Should Beethoven's 'Ninth Symphony' Be Performed?

今回は、ベートーベンの代表作「交響曲第九番」の演奏速度をめぐる論争を紹介する記事です。約200年前の初演以来、演奏時間は指揮者によって大きく異なり、速さを重視すべきか表現を優先すべきか議論が続いています。記事に出てくる「compose」は「作曲する」という意味で、compose music（音楽を作曲する）のように使われます。聴力を失いながらもこの大作を作曲したベートーベンの考えと、演奏者が自由に表現すること、あなたならどちらをより大切にしたいと思いますか？講師と話してみましょう。



1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

Ludwig van Beethoven has long been considered one of the greatest composers of classical music. Critics say that his final complete musical work, the Ninth Symphony, is possibly his best.

The symphony was first performed on May 7, 1824, in Vienna, Austria. Beethoven already had lost his hearing when he was **composing** the Ninth. He never fully heard the performance himself. And nearly 200 years after the first performance, there is still disagreement over how fast the work should be performed.

Benjamin Zander is the music director of the Boston Philharmonic, a classical music performance group he founded in 1979. The nearly 84-year-old conductor is leading the Boston Philharmonic in a performance on Friday night at Boston's Symphony Hall. Then, on Sunday afternoon, he will do the same at New York's Carnegie Hall.

Zander believes that Beethoven's Ninth Symphony should sound far different than the way it is usually performed. He plans to finish the symphony in less than one hour during the performances in Boston and New York.

"There's so much information from Beethoven and so little information about how to [interpret](#) it," Zander told the Associated Press.

Zander said he [sought](#) advice from violinist and scholar Rudolph Kolisch. In the 1993 issue of The Musical Quarterly, Kolisch discussed how Beethoven marked his work using a metronome, a device that produces a steady beat to help musicians with the speed, or tempo, of musical work.

Beethoven wrote in an 1817 letter that he wanted to drop musical [terms](#) like "allegro" for fast, "andante" for slow, or "presto" for extremely fast. He added, the "metronome gives us the best opportunity to do so."

In 1992, Zander's recording with the Boston Philharmonic for the music company Pickwick International came in at 57 minutes, 51 seconds. His 2018 recording of the same music was 58 minutes, 39 seconds long.

"For the recording, I really set out to be a devoted servant," Zander said. He said he had a little statue of Beethoven and looked at it from time to time to see if it was smiling.

Some of the world's most famous conductors, however, took more time with Beethoven's Ninth in their performances.

Arturo Toscanini took 65 minutes for RCA Victor with the NBC Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall in 1952; Wilhelm Furtwängler needed 74 minutes at the Bayreuth Festival in 1951; and Leonard Bernstein stretched the music for 78 minutes during his 1989 performance with members of six orchestras to mark the fall of the Berlin Wall.

After Zander's performance at Carnegie Hall on October 10, 1983, Andrew Porter wrote in the New Yorker, "If Mr. Zander is right, we have been hearing the music of the greatest composer only in misrepresentation."

Many conductors noted Beethoven's loss of hearing as a reason to [ignore](#) his metronome markings.

James Conlon is the music director of the Los Angeles Opera and main conductor of Italy's Orchestra RAI. He said, "There are powerful arguments on both sides. I am not against performing Beethoven at the speeds suggested by the metronome." He added that if the resulting performance lacks expression, emotion, and dynamics, then it should not be followed.

Andrew Price regularly plays oboe with several orchestras in Boston. He said, "The hardest thing is just to keep an open mind about it...All the stuff I learned as a 20-year-old student, I had to go back and relearn it all, just to have a completely different approach."

Hai Do adapted this report for VOA Learning English from Associated Press and other reporting

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2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. compose (v.) to write (music or literature)

Chuck Berry composed “Johnny B. Goode” when he was thirty-two years old.

2. interpret (v.) to understand something by looking at and thinking carefully about it

One way to interpret a story is to think about the time and society that it was written in.

3. seek (v.) to ask for or look for (help)

In university, I sometimes sought the help of my advisor when choosing my classes.

4. term (n.) a special word or phrase from a particular subject

The word “undefined” is a math term that means “impossible” or “meaningless.”

5. ignore (v.) to pay no attention to something or someone

We tried to ignore the noise from the construction while we were working.

3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. What is the disagreement over Beethoven’s ninth symphony?
2. What was Beethoven’s opinion about the metronome and terms for tempo?
3. Why do some conductors ignore Beethoven’s opinion on the metronome?
4. How do you think Beethoven’s ninth symphony should be performed?
5. How important is it to respect the original intent (wishes) of the composer of a piece of music?