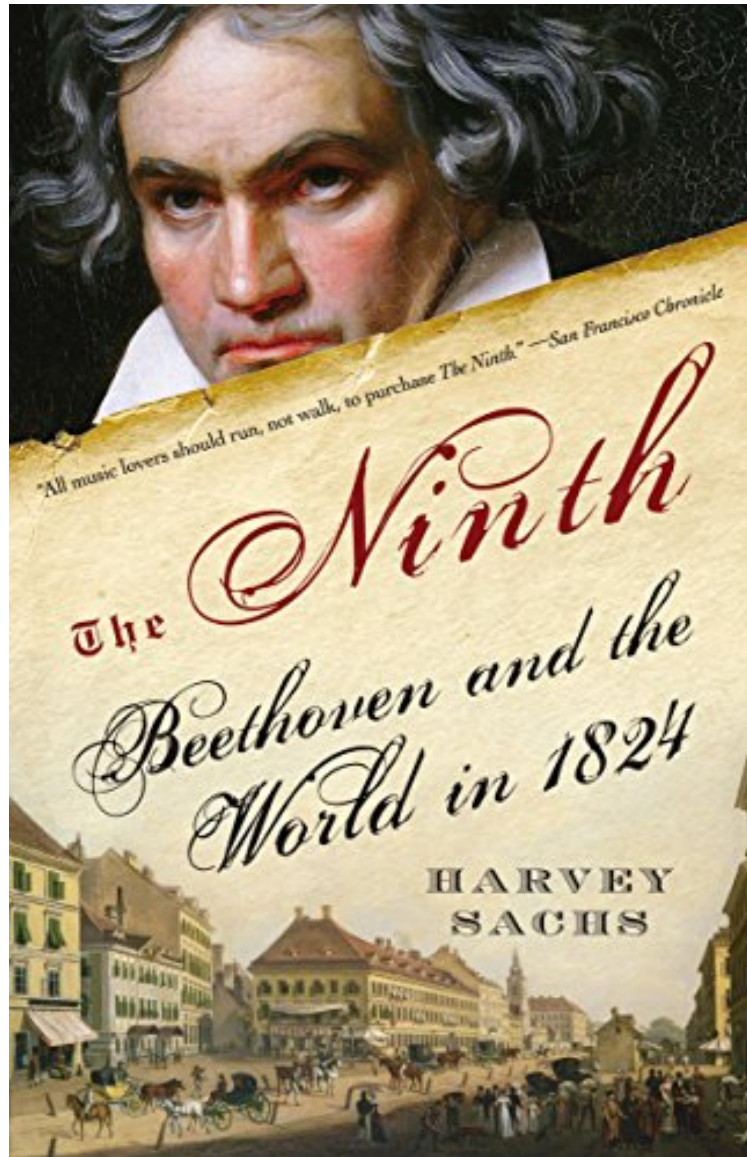


## The Ninth: Beethoven and the World in 1824

Harvey Sachs

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**Harvey Sachs : The Ninth: Beethoven and the World in 1824** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Ninth: Beethoven and the World in 1824:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A lovingly written paean to the Beethoven Choral from Harvey Sachs By Yi-Peng Since Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was first presented, there have been many books and papers about this composition. This Sachs book may not be the last word on the subject, but it is still an accessible, lovingly written paean to the symphony and its zeitgeist. Sachs writes in a lively, engaging style. Sometimes his sentences may be long, but the train of thought is still easy to follow. The prose does not become stuffy and off-putting to readers

who are just coming to this music. Sachs lays out the book in four clear parts. He begins by giving us the background of the symphony and Beethoven's own life story. He then devotes the second chapter to showing how the yearning for freedom was a key theme for artists in 1824. The likes of Pushkin, Delacroix, Heine and Lord Byron were all howling in despair at the post-Napoleonic repression that was holding sway. Though this chapter may not be connected to the Beethoven focus, it still shows us that artists were exploring the themes that Beethoven was exploring. The third chapter is given over to a blow-by-blow account of the symphony, and Sachs ends with an exploration of the influence of the music. Although I enjoyed this Sachs paean to the Choral Symphony, it would be good if he could have shortened some points and made them more concise. Also, there may be a small point that may be missing from the programme notes in the third chapter. It would be good if this book could say something about how the three instrumental movements contain hints of the Joy theme before it is presented formally in the finale. If the third chapter mentions this fact, it would allow prospective readers to know that the symphony is a tight-knit entity, and not four separate movements thrown together. Still, this is an enjoyable book about this all-important symphony. It can be read by both neophytes and experienced listeners. I fancy that it would be wonderful to add a CD recording as a companion purchase to this book. I daresay I could bundle this book with the Karajan or Gardiner cycles when gifting this book to any budding music lovers.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Harvey Sachs Enjoyable Book provides Historical context for Beethoven's Monumental Work of Artistry Expression! By Book Music thief, from HI Beethoven = a name that signifies the very best most accomplished Music compositions of the past 300+ years (and perhaps All Time) => his Ninth Symphony representing the Best of the best! But as is documented in Harvey Sachs highly enjoyable informative book = "The Ninth: Beethoven and the World of 1824" this milestone Symphonic Work, and of course Beethoven himself, did not exist in a historical vacuum - Ludwig Van Beethoven was profoundly impacted by the burgeoning philosophies of his Time and really became an integral part of the artistic milieu of free-thinking expressive 'Romanticism' pervading the Literary works of Byron, Heine, Pushkin, Stendhal, Delacroix, and other writers and philosophers like Goethe of course (although Sachs should have included substantially more discussion on Friedrich Schiller who wrote the words to 'Ode to Joy' after all = and Beethoven obviously received direct inspiration from Schiller's literary works!) - perhaps a longer book was needed. Harvey Sachs' book is certainly not the first (and not the most thorough) in terms of covering this philosophically artistic ground - but this relatively brief book (just over 200 pages) reflects a very good overview, introduction - and Harvey Sachs is a very good writer, who obviously possesses a deep connection to and has found authentic inspirations from the Works of Beethoven and the Ninth in particular! And Sachs does an effective job of conveying his enthusiasm for the Ninth - and also his understanding of its context relevance to history! People will probably be writing countless books for Centuries to come on the veritable eternal well-spring of inspiration that Beethoven's Ninth continues to bring the human World. There is much about this great Work that is truly indescribable (and only completely conveyed thru the Music itself), that seems to contain within it, the following ==> Hope for a better more humane future + free-will free-expression + indomitable spirit resilience to persevere even thru the dark times + pure celebration/ rejoicing for just being alive! I really don't know of any other single Work of Music that inherently contains all these ideas (and even more) - you can perhaps find some of these similar sentiments in certain Great Films or Theater pieces (though very rarely) - but not within any other single Symphony (or single purely musical piece + Schiller's 'Ode to Joy' of course!) Thanks to Harvey Sachs for writing this Book = it is a good launching-off point for further exploration - but be certain to also have a good Listen to the Ninth by anyone of the following eminent conductors: George Szell, Georg Solti, Herbert von Karajan, Bernard Haitink, Eugene Ormandy, Leonard Bernstein, Karl Bohm ==> and rejoice! post-note: I am sure that Beethoven and the Ninth in particular will continue to be relevant and inspirational for as long as any human beings exist, that still carry dreams of ==> a better more humane World for All - but with full preservation of our individual unique identities, and our creative free-will (ie. that which makes us fully human)! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Comments from a Friend By Charles T. Bauer I have to admit that over the years I've developed my own relationship with the 9th, and with late Beethoven in general, and my own experience of the 9th is completely different from the experience of the piece he describes in the book. It's probably a good picture of the author's own experience of the piece, but to me it's totally devoid of subtlety, to a point way past the point of banality. For one thing, I experience the whole interplay of light and darkness in the piece is very dynamic, ongoing, and subtle in the piece, and although there are moments when one end of the spectrum gets strong emphasis, it's more like a yin/yang thing - there's never total yin or yang - within the confines of the form when yang or yin reaches a maximum point, it transforms into its opposite, and you never have one without the other. How Beethoven manages to do this is quite amazing, and, to me, that's what gives the piece life - that is it's life - in fact, that's life! Also, although the author spends a good deal of time describing the historic context from which the piece arose, he poo-poops the whole idea of the historically accurate performance, especially, or at least specifically, attempts like those of Roger Norrington to use Beethoven's specified tempos in performance, or to try to figure out what Beethoven's own expectations for the performance of his piece were and to honor them, as far as it's possible to do so, and, to me, that's a big mistake. I mean, just because Georg Solti didn't have the courage to use Beethoven's specified tempo for the first movement of the 9th, is that really a good reason not to use it? Anyway, after reading Sachs' description of the piece, I began to

wonder exactly what piece of music he was talking about. I wound up listening to each movement several times after reading Sachs' exposition of it, then going back to Sachs' description of it, and wound up writing off Sachs' description as a piece of fluff - in fact, I began to wonder about how reliable his descriptions of Byron, Heine, Stendahl, and everything else was, if that was the best he could do with Beethoven himself. Still, it made me think. The whole Napoleonic and post-Napoleonic period is interesting and important, and I need to learn more about it. The book was a start.

The premier of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in Vienna on May 7, 1824, was the most significant artistic event of the year—and the work remains one of the most precedent-shattering and influential compositions in the history of music. Described in vibrant detail by eminent musicologist Harvey Sachs, this symbol of freedom and joy was so unorthodox that it amazed and confused listeners at its unveiling; yet it became a standard for subsequent generations of creative artists, and its composer came to embody the Romantic cult of genius. In this unconventional, provocative book, Beethoven's masterwork becomes a prism through which we may view the politics, aesthetics, and overall climate of the era. Part biography, part history, part memoir, *The Ninth* brilliantly explores the intricacies of Beethoven's last symphony—how it brought forth the power of the individual while celebrating the collective spirit of humanity.

From Publishers Weekly Starred . Beethoven wasn't always a cultural icon. At least one critic attending the 1824 premiere of his Symphony No. 9 in D Minor likened what he heard to a hideously writhing wounded dragon. Just why the composer and his works endure is the question behind this absorbing book by music historian Sachs (Toscanini). Through detailed musical analysis and condensed readings of cultural politics and 19th-century history, Sachs ponders what role so-called high culture played, plays, and ought to play in civilization. Using the year 1824 and the premiere of the Ninth as ground zero, Sachs reviews the literary, artistic, and social movements of the time, noting how Beethoven's innovative symphony (the first with a vocal score) and its themes of equality and redemption no doubt challenged the resurgent conservatism among Europe's monarchies. Sachs places Beethoven alongside Pushkin, Byron, and other prominent romantics, whose talents he finds linked to a common quest for freedom—political, artistic, and above all of the mind and spirit. After first presenting the Ninth as a Viennese social event and then as emblematic of Beethoven's artistic process, Sachs shines with a close reading of the Ninth's musical score, interpreting its techniques and emotive narrative. Readers will want a recording nearby. In the book's last chapter, Sachs deals with the impact and legacy of Beethoven's masterwork and explains what makes his music universal. (Apr.) Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Bookmarks Magazine The aspect of *The Ninth* that most consistently impressed critics is Sachs's explanation of this musical masterpiece in a way that is accessible to all readers. They disagreed somewhat on the value of the work's attempt at historical and cultural contextualization, however. A few reviewers found that Sachs overreaches a bit by providing commentary on Beethoven's life from various perspectives, setting him in his historical context, analyzing his music, and then also examining his wider impact. But on the whole, reviewers praised *The Ninth* as an excellent introduction to the symphony and the man who created it. As the *Washington Post* noted, "it will send readers to their CD players." From Booklist On May 7, 1824, the premier of Beethoven's ninth and last symphony pushed symphonic music into Romanticism. Napoleon had been overthrown. Byron, Pushkin, and Stendhal had advanced poetry and prose fiction; Delacroix, painting. Maturing as such political and artistic ferment mounted, Beethoven had discovered the "Ode to Joy" of Romantic literary forefather Friedrich Schiller 30 years earlier and employed it to sum up his art. Sachs discusses each movement of the Ninth in detail, from the terror and despair of the first to the anger and acceptance in the second to the peace of the third. The fourth begins with quotations from the its predecessors. Then, the bass vocal soloist interrupts to launch the movement into joy and hope. The Ninth influenced all subsequent nineteenth-century composers, who from Berlioz to Meyerbeer to Wagner built upon the foundations laid by Beethoven. This discussion of the cornerstone of Romantic music, whose influence extended deep into the twentieth century, is concise, thorough, and written from the heart of a great biographer, musicologist, and lover of fine music. -- Alan Hirsch