

## Music of the Classical Period: Part 3

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### MUSIC OF LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

Beethoven was born in Bonn in December of 1770. As you can see from the map at the beginning of this chapter, Bonn sat at the Western edge of the German-ic lands, on the Rhine River. Those in Bonn were well-acquainted with traditions of the Netherlands and of the French; they would be some of the first to hear of the revolutionary ideas coming out of France in the 1780s. The area was ruled by the Elector of Cologne. As the Kapellmeister for the Elector, Beethoven's grandfather held the most important musical position in Bonn; he died when Beethoven was three years old. Beethoven's father, Johann Beethoven, sang in the Electoral Chapel his entire life. While he may have provided his son with music lessons at an early stage of Ludwig's life, it appears that Johann had given into alcoholism and depression, especially after the death of Maria Magdalena Keverich (Johann's wife and Ludwig's mother) in 1787.

Although hundreds of miles east of Vienna, the Electorate of Cologne was under the jurisdiction of the Austrian Habsburg empire that was ruled from this Eastern European city. The close ties between these lands made it convenient for the Elector, with the support of the music-loving Count Ferdinand Ernst Gabriel von Waldstein (1762-1823), to send Beethoven to Vienna to further his music training. Ferdinand was the youngest of an aristocratic family in Bonn. He greatly supported the arts and became a patron of Beethoven. Beethoven's first stay in Vienna in 1787 was interrupted by the death of his mother. In 1792, he returned to Vienna for good.

Perhaps the most universally-known fact of Beethoven's life is that he went deaf. You can read entire books on the topic; for our present purposes, the timing of his hearing loss is most important. It was at the end of the 1790s that Beethoven first recognized that he was losing his hearing. By 1801, he was writing about it to his most trusted friends. It is clear that the loss of his hearing was an existential crisis for Beethoven. During the fall of 1802, he composed a letter to his brothers that included his last will and testament, a document that we've come to know as the "Heiligenstadt Testament" named after the small town of Heiligenstadt, north of the Viennese city center, where he was staying. ~~(To view the Testament go to [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heiligenstadt\\_Testament#/media/File:Beethoven\\_Heiligenstaedter\\_Testament.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heiligenstadt_Testament#/media/File:Beethoven_Heiligenstaedter_Testament.jpg))~~

The “Heiligenstadt Testament” provides us insight to Beethoven’s heart and mind. Most striking is his statement that his experiences of social alienation, connected to his hearing loss, “drove me almost to despair, a little more of that and I have ended my life—it was only *my art* that held me back.” The idea that Beethoven found in art a reason to live suggests both his valuing of art and a certain self-awareness of what he had to offer music. Beethoven and his physicians tried various means to counter the hearing loss and improve his ability to function in society. By 1818, however, Beethoven was completely deaf. Beethoven had a complex personality. Although he read the most profound philosophers of his day and was compelled by lofty philosophical ideals, his own writing was broken and his personal accounts show errors in basic math. He craved close human relationships yet had difficulty sustaining them. By 1810, he had secured a lifetime annuity from local noblemen, meaning that Beethoven never lacked for money. Still, his letters—as well as the accounts of contemporaries—suggest a man suspicious of others and preoccupied with the compensation he was receiving.



**Figure 5.6** | Ludwig van Beethoven

**Author** | Joseph Karl Stieler

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## Overview of Beethoven's Music

Upon arriving in Vienna in the early 1790s, Beethoven supported himself by playing piano at salons and by giving music lessons. Salons were gatherings of literary types, visual artists, musicians, and thinkers, often hosted by noblewomen for their friends. Here Beethoven both played music of his own composition and improvised upon musical themes given to him by those in attendance.

In April of 1800 Beethoven gave his first concert for his own benefit, held at the important Burgtheater.

As typical for the time, the concert included a variety of types of music, vocal, orchestral, and even, in this case, chamber music. Many of the selections were by Haydn and Mozart, for Beethoven's music from this period was profoundly influenced by these two composers.

Scholars have traditionally divided Beethoven's composing into three chronological periods: early, middle, and late. Like all efforts to categorize, this one proposes boundaries that are open to debate. Probably most controversial is the dating of the end of the middle period and the beginning of the late period. Beethoven did not compose much music between 1814 and 1818, meaning that any division of those years would fall more on Beethoven's life than on his music.

In general, the music of Beethoven's first period (roughly until 1803) reflects the influence of Haydn and Mozart. Beethoven's second period (1803-1814) is sometimes called his "heroic" period, based on his recovery from depression documented in the "Heiligenstadt Testament" mentioned earlier. This period includes such music compositions as his Third Symphony, which Beethoven subtitled "*Eroica*" (that is, heroic), the Fifth Symphony, and Beethoven's one opera, *Fidelio*, which took the French revolution as its inspiration. Other works composed during this time include Symphonies No. 3 through No. 8 and famous piano works, such as the sonatas "Waldstein," "Appassionata," and "Lebewohl" and Concertos No. 4 and No. 5. He continued to write instrumental chamber music, choral music, and songs into his heroic middle period. In these works of his middle period, Beethoven is often regard-



**Figure 5.7** | Burgtheater

**Author** | Michael Frankenstein

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ed as having come into his own because they display a new and original musical style. In comparison to the works of Haydn and Mozart and Beethoven's earlier music, these longer compositions feature larger performing forces, thicker polyphonic textures, more complex motivic relationships, more dissonance and delayed resolution of dissonance, more syncopation and **hemiola** (hemiola is the momentary simultaneous sense of being in two meters at the same time), and more elaborate forms.

When Beethoven started composing again in 1818, his music was much more experimental. Some of his contemporaries believed that he had lost his ability to compose as he lost his hearing. The late piano sonatas, last five string quartets, monumental *Missa Solemnis*, and Symphony No. 9 in D minor (*The Choral Symphony*) are now perceived to be some of Beethoven's most revolutionary compositions, although they were not uniformly applauded during his lifetime. Beethoven's late style was one of contrasts: extremely slow music next to extremely fast music and extremely complex and dissonant music next to extremely simple and consonant music.

Although this chapter will not discuss the music of Beethoven's early period or late period in any depth, you might want to explore this music on your own. Beethoven's first published piano sonata, the Sonata in F minor, Op. 2, No. 1 (1795), shows the influence of its dedicatee, Joseph Haydn. One of Beethoven's last works, his famous Ninth Symphony, departs from the norms of the day by incorporating vocal soloists and a choir into a symphony, which was almost always written only for orchestral instruments. The Ninth Symphony is Beethoven's longest; its first three movements, although innovative in many ways, use the expected forms: a fast sonata form, a *scherzo* (which by the early nineteenth century—as we will see in our discussion of the Fifth Symphony—had replaced the minuet and trio), and a slow theme and variations form. The finale, in which the vocalists participate, is truly revolutionary in terms of its length, the sheer extremes of the musical styles it uses, and the combination of large orchestra and choir. The text or words that Beethoven chose for the vocalists speak of joy and the hope that all humankind might live together in brotherly love. The “Ode to Joy” melody to which Beethoven set these words was later used for the hymn “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee.”

### Focus Composition:

#### **Beethoven, Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67 (1808)**

In this chapter, we will focus on possibly Beethoven's most famous composition, his Fifth Symphony (1808). The premier of the Fifth Symphony took place at perhaps the most infamous of all of Beethoven's concerts, an event that lasted for some four hours in an unheated theater on a bitterly cold Viennese evening. At this time, Beethoven was not on good terms with the performers, several who refused to rehearse with the composer in the room. In addition, the final number of the performance was finished too late to be sufficiently practiced, and in the concert, it

had to be stopped and restarted. Belying its less than auspicious first performance, once published the Fifth Symphony quickly gained the critical acclaim it has held ever since.

The most famous part of the Fifth Symphony is its commanding opening. This opening features the entire orchestra playing in unison a musical motive that we will call the short-short-short-long (SSSL) motive, because of the rhythm of its four notes. We will also refer to it as the Fate motive, because at least since the 1830s, music critics have likened it to fate knocking on the door, ~~as discussed at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=3473894>~~. The short notes repeat the same pitch and then the long, held-out note leaps down a third. After the orchestra releases the held note, it plays the motive again, now sequenced a step lower, then again at the original pitches, then at higher pitches. This sequenced phrase, which has become the first theme of the movement, then repeats, and the fast sonata-form movement starts to pick up steam. This is the exposition of the movement.

After a transition, the second theme is heard. It also starts with the SSSL motive, although the pitches heard are quite different. The horn presents the question phrase of the second



**Figure 5.8** | Opening of Symphony No. 5, Op. 67

**Author** | Stelios Samelis

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second theme; then, the strings respond with the answer phrase of the second theme. You should note that the key has changed—the music is now in E flat major, which has a much more peaceful feel than C minor—and the answer phrase of the second theme is much more legato than anything yet heard in the symphony. This tuneful legato music does not last for long and the closing section returns to the rapid sequencing of the SSSL motive. Then the orchestra returns to the beginning of the movement for a repeat of the exposition.

The development section of this first movement does everything we might expect of a development: the SSSL motive appears in sequence and is altered as the keys change rapidly. Also, we hear more polyphonic imitative in the development than elsewhere in the movement. Near the end of the development, the dynamics alternate between piano and forte and, before the listener knows it, the music has returned to the home key of C minor as well as the opening version of the SSSL motive: this starts the recapitulation. The music transitions to the second theme—now still in the home key of C minor—and the closing section. Then, just when the listener expects the recapitulation to end, Beethoven extends the movement in a coda. This coda is much longer than any coda we have yet listened to in the music of Haydn or Mozart, although it is not as long as the coda to the final movement of this symphony. These long codas are also another element that Beethoven is known for. He often restates the conclusive cadence many times and in many rhythmic durations.

The second movement is a lyrical theme and variations movement in a major key, which provides a few minutes of respite from the menacing C minor; if you

listen carefully, though, you might hear some reference to the SSSL fate motive. The third movement returns to C minor and is a scherzo. Scherzos retain the form of the minuet, having a contrasting trio section that divides the two presentations of the scherzo. Like the minuet, scherzos also have a triple feel, although they tend to be somewhat faster in tempo than the minuet.

This scherzo third movement opens with a mysterious, even spooky, opening theme played by the lower strings. The second theme returns to the SSSL motive, although now with different pitches. The mood changes with a very imitative and very polyphonic trio in C major, but the spooky theme reappears, alongside the fate motive, with the repeat of the scherzo. Instead of making the scherzo a discrete movement, Beethoven chose to write a musical transition between the scherzo and the final movement, so that the music runs continuously from one movement to another. After suddenly getting very soft, the music gradually grows in dynamic as the motive sequences higher and higher until the fourth movement bursts onto the scene with a triumphant and loud C major theme. It seems that perhaps our hero, whether we think of the hero as the music of the symphony or perhaps as Beethoven himself, has finally triumphed over Fate.

The fourth movement is a rather typical fast sonata form finale with one exception. The second theme of the scherzo (b), which contains the SSSL fate motive, appears one final time at the end of the movement's development section, as if to try one more time to derail the hero's conquest. But, the movement ultimately ends with a lot of loud cadences in C major, providing ample support for an interpretation of the composition as the overcoming of Fate. This is the interpretation that most commentators for almost two hundred years have given the symphony. It is pretty amazing to think that a musical composition might express so aptly the human theme of struggle and triumph. Listen to the piece and see if you hear it the same way.

### LISTENING GUIDE

For audio of the first and second movements performed by the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique (on period instruments) conducted by John Eliot Gardiner, go to:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jUrd2WPmQfY>

~~For audio of the third and fourth movements performed by the NBC Orchestra in 1952, conducted by Arturo Toscanini, go to:~~

~~<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gMt7NIPFgQk>~~

~~[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nZ4\\_aWfH/s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nZ4_aWfH/s)~~

**Composer:** Beethoven

**Composition:** Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67

**Date:** 1808

**Genre:** symphony

<p><b>Form:</b> Four movements as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Allegro con brio – fast, sonata form</li> <li>II. Andante con moto – slow, theme and variations form</li> <li>III. Scherzo. Allegro – Scherzo and Trio (ABA)</li> <li>IV. Allegro – fast, sonata form</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Performing Forces:</b> piccolo (fourth movement only), two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, contrabassoon (fourth movement only), two horns, two trumpets, three trombones (fourth movement only), timpani, and strings (first and second violins, viola, cellos, and double basses)</p>		
<p><b>What we want you to remember about this composition:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Its fast first movement in sonata form opens with the short-short-short-long motive (which pervades much of the symphony): Fate knocking at the door?</li> <li>• The symphony starts in C minor but ends in C major: a triumphant over fate?</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Allegro con moto</b>                  For a guided analysis by Gerard Schwarz of the first movement go to:  <a href="https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/all-star-orchestra/masterpieces-old-and-new/beethoven-fifth-symphony/v/ludwig-van-beethoven-part-1">https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/all-star-orchestra/masterpieces-old-and-new/beethoven-fifth-symphony/v/ludwig-van-beethoven-part-1</a></p>		
<p><b>What we want you to remember about this movement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Its fast first movement in sonata form opens with the short-short-short-long motive (which pervades much of the symphony): Fate knocking at the door?</li> <li>• Its C minor key modulates for a while to other keys but returns at the end of this movement</li> <li>• The staccato first theme comprised of sequencing of the short-short-short-long motive (SSSL) greatly contrasts the more lyrical and legato second theme</li> <li>• The coda at the end of the movement provides dramatic closure.</li> </ul>		
Timing	Performing Forces, Melody, and Texture	Text and Form
0:00	Full orchestra in a mostly homophonic texture and <i>forte</i> dynamic. Melody starts with the SSSL motive introduced and then suspended with a fermata (or hold). After this happens twice, the melody continues with the SSSL motive in rising sequences.	EXPOSITION: First theme

0:21	The <i>forte</i> dynamic continues, with emphasis from the timpani. Falling sequences using the SSSL rhythm.	Transition
0:40	After the horn call, the strings lead this quieter section. A horn call using the SSSL motive introduces a more lyrical theme—now in a major key.	Second theme
1:01	SSSL rhythms passes through the full orchestra that plays at a forte dynamic. The SSSL rhythm returns in downward sequences.	Closing
1:17		EXPOSITION: Repeats
2:32	Some polyphonic imitation; lots of dialogue between the low and high instruments and the strings and winds. Rapid sequences and changing of keys, fragmentation and alternation of the original motive.	DEVELOPMENT
3:23	Music moves from louds to softs	Retransition
3:40	but ends with a short oboe cadenza. Starts like the exposition.	RECAPITULATION: First theme
4:09	Similar to the transition in the exposition but does not modulate.	“Transition”
4:28	Now started by the oboes and bassoons. Now in C minor, not E flat major, which provides a more ominous tone.	Second theme
4:53	As above	Closing
5:08	After a sudden <i>piano</i> articulation of the SSSL motive, suddenly ends in a loud and bombastic manner: Fate threatens. Re-emphasizes C minor.	Coda



<p><b>II Andante</b></p> <p>For a guided analysis by Gerard Schwarz of the first movement from an orchestra conductor’s perspective, go to:  <a href="https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/all-star-orchestra/master-pieces-old-and-new/beethoven-fifth-symphony/v/gerard-schwarz-gives-a-conducting-lesson-beethoven-5th-part-1Andante">https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/all-star-orchestra/master-pieces-old-and-new/beethoven-fifth-symphony/v/gerard-schwarz-gives-a-conducting-lesson-beethoven-5th-part-1Andante</a></p>		
<p>For a guided analysis by Gerard Schwarz of the second movement, go to:  <a href="https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/all-star-orchestra/master-pieces-old-and-new/beethoven-fifth-symphony/v/ludwig-van-beethoven-symphony-no-5-analysis-by-gerard-schwarz-mov-2">https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/all-star-orchestra/master-pieces-old-and-new/beethoven-fifth-symphony/v/ludwig-van-beethoven-symphony-no-5-analysis-by-gerard-schwarz-mov-2</a></p>		
<p><b>What we want you to remember about this movement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a slow theme and variations movement</li> <li>• Its major key provides contrast from the minor key of the first movement</li> </ul>		
<b>Timing</b>	<b>Performing Forces, Melody, and Texture</b>	<b>Text and Form</b>
0:00 [6:32]	Mostly homophonic. Consists of two themes, the first more lyrical; the second more march-like.	Theme: a and b
1:40 [8:12]	More legato and softer at the beginning, although growing loud for the final statement of b in the brass before decrescendoing to <i>piano</i> again. Violas subdivide the beat with fast running notes, while the other instruments play the theme.	Variation 1: a and b
3:15 [9:47]	Starts with a softer dynamic and more legato articulations for the “a” phrase and staccato and louder march-like texture when “b” enters, after which the music decrescendos into the next variation. Even more rapid subdivision of the beat in the lower strings at the beginning of “a.” Then the “b” phrase returns at the very end of the section.	Variation 2: a and b
5:30 [12:02]	Lighter in texture and more staccato, starting <i>piano</i> and crescendoing to <i>forte</i> for the final variation. The “a” phrase assumes a jaunty rhythm and then falls apart .	Variation 3: a

6:05 [12:37]	The full orchestra plays <i>forte</i> and then sections of the orchestra trade motives at a quieter dynamic. The violins play the first phrase of the melody and then the winds respond with its answer.	Variation 4: A
6:46 [13:17]	Full orchestra plays, soft at first, and then crescendoing, decrescendoing, and crescendoing a final time to the end of the movement. Motives are passed through the orchestra and re-emphasized at the very end of the movement.	Coda
<p><b>III Scherzo. Allegro</b></p> <p>For a guided analysis by Gerard Schwarz of the third and four movements, go to: <a href="https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/all-star-orchestra/masterpieces-old-and-new/beethoven-fifth-symphony/v/beethoven-fourth-movement">https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/all-star-orchestra/masterpieces-old-and-new/beethoven-fifth-symphony/v/beethoven-fourth-movement</a></p>		
<p><b>What we really want you to remember about this movement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a scherzo movement that has a scherzo (A) trio (B) scherzo (A) form</li> <li>• The short-short-short-long motive returns in the scherzo sections</li> <li>• The scherzo section is mostly homophonic, and the trio section is mostly imitative polyphony</li> <li>• It flows directly into the final movement without a break</li> </ul>		
<b>Timing</b>	<b>Performing Forces, Melody, and Texture</b>	<b>Text and Form</b>
15:26	Lower strings and at a quiet dynamics. Rapidly ascending legato melody.	Scherzo (A): A
15:49	Presented by the brass in a forte dynamic. Fate motive.	B
16:05		a b a b
17:09	Polyphonic imitation lead by the lower strings. Fast melody.	Trio (B): c c d d
18:30	Now the repetitious SSSL theme is played by the bassoons, staccato. Fast melody.	Scherzo (A): A

18:49	Strings are playing pizzicato (plucking) and the whole ensemble playing at a piano dynamic. Fate motive but in the oboes and strings.	B
19:31	Very soft dynamic to begin with and then slowly crescendos to the forte opening of the fourth movement. Sequenced motive gradually ascends in register.	Transition to the fourth movement
<p><b>IV Allegro</b></p> <p><b>What we want you to remember about this movement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a fast sonata form movement in C major: the triumph over Fate?</li> <li>• The SSSL motive via the scherzo “b” theme returns one final time at the end of the development</li> <li>• The trombones for their first appearance in a symphony to date</li> <li>• It has a very long coda</li> </ul>		
<b>Timing</b>	<b>Performing Forces, Melody, and Texture</b>	<b>Text and Form</b>
20:02 [0:31]	Forte and played by the full orchestra (including trombones, contrabassoon and piccolo). Triumph triadic theme in C major.	EXPOSITION: First theme
20:41	Full orchestra, led by the brass and then continued by the strings. The opening motive of the first theme sequenced as the music modulates to the away key.	Transition
21:05 [1:31]	Full orchestra and slightly softer. Triumphant, if more lyrical, using triplet rhythms in the melody and in G Major.	Second theme
21:34 [2:11]	Full orchestra, <i>forte</i> again. Repetition of a descending them.	Closing theme
22:03 [2:29]	Motives passed through all sections of the orchestra. Motives from second theme appear, then motives from the first theme.	DEVELOPMENT

23:36 [4:00]	<i>Piano</i> dynamic with the theme in the winds and the strings accompanying. Using the fate motive	Return of scherzo theme
24:11 [4:35]	Performing forces are as before. C major.	RECAPITULATION: First theme
24:43 [5:08]	Performing forces are as before. Does not modulate.	“transition”
25:14 [5:39]	As before.	Second theme
25:39 [6:04]	Starts softly with the woodwinds and then played <i>forte</i> by the whole orchestra. Does not modulate.	Closing theme
26:11 [6:40]	Notice the dramatic silences, the alternation of <i>legato</i> and <i>staccato</i> articulations, and the sudden increase in tempo near the coda’s conclusion: full orchestra. Lengthy coda starting with motive from second theme, then proceeding through with a lot of repeated cadences emphasizing C major and repetition of other motives until the final repeated cadences.	CODA
<p><del>For Leon Botstein’s “An Appreciation” of Beethoven and his Symphony, go to:</del>  <del><a href="https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/all-star-orchestra/masterpieces-old-and-new/beethoven-fifth-symphony/v/ludwig-van-beethoven-symphony-no-5-an-appreciation-by-leon-botstein">https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/all-star-orchestra/masterpieces-old-and-new/beethoven-fifth-symphony/v/ludwig-van-beethoven-symphony-no-5-an-appreciation-by-leon-botstein</a></del></p>		

## GLOSSARY

**Cadenza** – section of a concerto in which the soloist plays alone without the orchestra in an improvisatory style

**Chamber music** – music—such as art songs, piano character pieces, and string quartets—primarily performed in small performing spaces, often for personal entertainment

**Coda** – optional final section of a movement that reasserts the home key of the movement and provides a sense of conclusion

**Da capo** – instruction—commonly found at the end of the B section or Trio of a Minuet and Trio, to return to the “head” or first section, generally resulting in an A - B - A form

**Development** – the middle section of a sonata-form movement in which the themes and key areas introduced in the exposition are developed;

**Double-exposition form** – form of the first movement of a Classical period concerto that combines the exposition, development, and recapitulation of sonata form with the ritornello form used for the first movements of Baroque concertos; also called first-movement concerto form

**Exposition** – first section of a sonata form movement, in which the themes and key areas of the movement are introduced; the section normally modulates from the home key to a different key

**Hemiola** – the momentary shifting from a duple to a triple feel or vice versa

**Minuet and trio form** – form based on the minuet dance that consists of a Minuet (A), then a contrasting Trio (B), followed by a return to the Minuet (A)

**Opera Buffa** – comic style of opera made famous by Mozart

**Opera Seria** – serious style of eighteenth-century opera made famous by Handel generally features mythology or high-born characters and plots

**Pizzicato** – the plucking of a bowed string instrument such as the violin, producing a percussive effect

**Recapitulation** – third and final section of a sonata-form movement, in which the themes of the exposition return, now in the home key of the movement

**Rondo** – instrumental form consisting of the alternation of a refrain “A” with contrasting sections (“B,” “C,” “D,” etc.). Rondos are often the final movements of string quartets, classical symphonies, concerti, and sonata (instrumental solos).

**Scherzo** – form that prominently replaced the minuet in symphonies and strings quartets of the nineteenth century; like the minuet, scherzos are ternary forms and have a triple feel, although they tend to be somewhat faster in tempo than the minuet.

**Sonata form** – a form often found in the first and last movements of sonatas, symphonies, and string quartets, consisting of three parts—exposition, development, and recapitulation

**String quartet** – performing ensemble consisting of two violinists, one violist, and one cellist that plays compositions called string quartets, compositions generally in four movements

**Symphony** – multi-movement composition for orchestra, often in four movements

**Ternary form** – describes a musical composition in three parts, most often featuring two similar sections, separated by a contrasting section and represented by the letters A – B – A.

**Theme and Variation form** – the presentation of a theme and then variations upon it. The theme may be illustrated as A, with any number of variations following it – A', A'', A''', A''''', etc.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE TRANSITION TO THE ROMANTIC STYLE

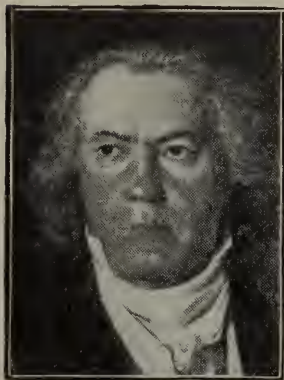
**135. Democratic Ideas.** The spirit of human equality which voiced itself at the close of the eighteenth century in the American and French Revolutions influenced also all forms of art. One result was that artists who had before depended upon wealthy patrons for their maintenance now found means of support and inspiration in public patronage; another was that they turned their attention from classic subjects and ideals of abstract beauty to the consideration of every-day life and the thoughts of the every-day individual. In Germany, after Napoleon's overthrow, a vital national spirit arose which furnished still greater incentive to such study, and poets and musicians began to take for their subjects not only the real peasant life, but also the rich fund of traditions and myths perpetuated in German folk-lore. Thus arose the *romantic* school, which did not at first abandon the formal lines of preceding art, yet rendered these subject to the intense expression of individual emotion.

#### *Section 1*

#### LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN, 1770-1827

**136. Early Life.** Beethoven's position in relation to this romantic movement was unique, in that he furnished a link between it and the formal style. Thus, conserving the best fruit of each, he spoke easily in the art forms which had been proven adequate by long experiment, and dominated these forms by expression deep, intense, and original. Like

Haydn and Mozart, he was of peasant birth, since his mother had been a cook, while his father was a singer in the Elector of Cologne's chapel. Born at Bonn, he showed early musical



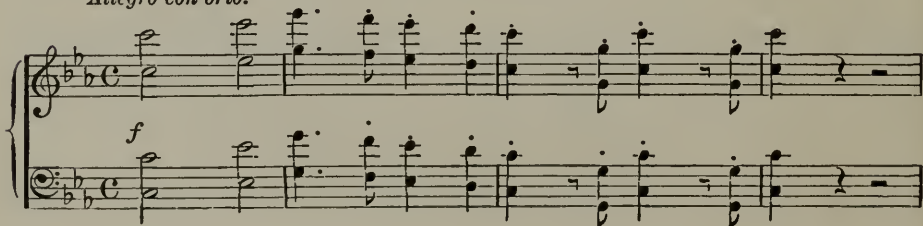
BEETHOVEN

talent, and was taught first by his father and then by local musicians, especially *Neefe*, of the court chapel. At eight he played the violin well, and at twelve had mastered the chief contrapuntal clavier works. His first compositions were also published in 1783, and his remarkable extemporizing attracted the attention of influential people. This gift, displayed at Vienna in 1787, won Mozart's praise, and gained Beethoven a warm welcome from the Elector, Max Franz. His mother died in the following year, and his father's intemperate habits rendered his home so disagreeable that he accepted an invitation from the cultured von Breuning family to dwell with them as friend and teacher. Here he had ample time for the study of literature and music, and here also he met many people of refinement and wealth, among them Count Waldstein, his staunch friend in after life.

**137. First Period.** In 1792 he was sent by the Elector to Vienna, where he studied with Haydn, and afterwards with the contrapuntist *Albrechtsberger* and others; but while these older musicians looked askance at his free ideas, he was warmly welcomed in Viennese society, where his musical gifts excused his eccentric and independent manners.

THEME FROM THIRD PIANO CONCERTO.

*Allegro con brio.*





The first system of the musical score is written for piano. The right hand features a melodic line with several trills (tr) and a final flourish. The left hand provides harmonic support with chords and moving bass lines. The second system begins with a repeat sign (P) and continues with a similar melodic and harmonic texture, ending with an &c. marking.

He also appeared as a concert pianist, making his first appearance with his C minor concerto in 1795. His compositions during this time, extending to the year 1803, and embracing those from opus 1 to opus 50, are classed as belonging to his first period, and include the first two symphonies, the first three piano concertos, many piano sonatas, etc.

**138. Second Period.** During this time, extending to 1815, his hearing, which had begun to trouble him about 1800,

THEMES FROM FUNERAL MARCH IN THIRD SYMPHONY (EROICA).

*Adagio assai.*

The musical score is for the Funeral March in the Third Symphony, marked *Adagio assai*. It is written in C minor and 2/4 time. The score consists of two systems. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with a somber, rhythmic melody in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand. The second system continues the theme, featuring a more active melodic line in the right hand and a complex, rhythmic bass line in the left hand, ending with an &c. marking.

grew steadily worse, obliging him to use an ear-trumpet. The faithlessness of his two brothers and the care of an ungrateful nephew added to his troubles, which so preyed upon an irritable disposition as to cause him at times to become suspicious of his best friends. Meanwhile domestic mismanagement, and frequent changes of servants and lodgings, kept him in a constant turmoil. Yet he turned from these annoyances to write some of the sublimest strains in music — the “Eroica” symphony, the opera “Fidelio,” piano concertos, sonatas, and the like.

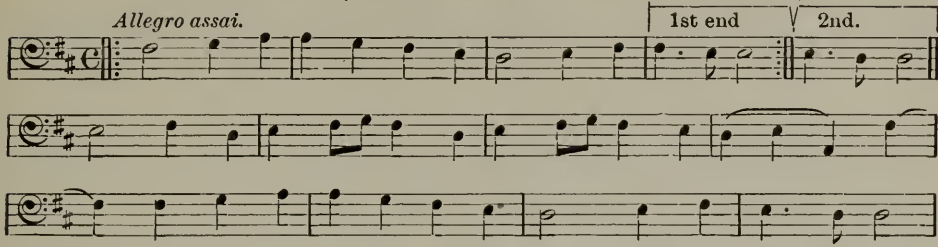
**139. Third Period.** This, extending to his death, marked the culmination of his troubles, for in 1822 he became stone-deaf. Yet many faithful friends rallied about him and preserved him from pecuniary want, while so great was his fame that it is said 20,000 people attended his funeral. His most

THEMES FROM THE NINTH SYMPHONY.

Opening Theme.

Scherzo Theme.

Theme of Choral Part (Words from Schiller's "Ode to Joy").



daring works, the ninth symphony, the Solemn Mass in D, and his later piano sonatas, were fruits of this time, all of which called down a storm of hostile criticism which was finally silenced by the recognition of their greatness.

140. **Character.** Beethoven exhibited a strange mixture of unworldliness and sublimity of thought. When engaged in composition, he frequently spent days apparently unconscious of his environment, sometimes performing absurd actions in his absent-mindedness. Yet his neglect of his person and surroundings did not at all extend to his writings, which were scrupulously exact in notation, and were frequently reworked many times. His nature was that of a sturdy Teuton, of unimpeachable uprightness and depth and originality of thought; slow, moreover, to mature, in marked contrast to Mozart. In social circles his eccentric manners won him the title of an "original"; independent of spirit, he treated marks of rank with disdain. An enthusiast over democratic principles, he at first hailed Napoleon as the champion of liberty, dedicating to him his "Eroica" symphony; but on learning of Napoleon's election as Emperor, he trampled on the title-page in rage. With his contemporaries he mingled but little; and his impatient spirit unfitted him for teaching, so that of his pupils *Ferdinand Ries* alone attained eminence.

His mind lent itself most readily to composition for the orchestra, and traces of this orchestral cast of thought are found in all his other works. Many effects afterwards embodied in his symphonies were discovered by experiment upon the piano, so that the piano works are in musical re-

source generally in advance of the symphonic. From this it also follows that the division of his works into fixed periods is somewhat arbitrary, since these necessarily overlap.

**141. Virtuosity.** Like Mozart, Beethoven was eminent as a pianist, and was thus able to study the effect of his piano compositions upon his hearers. But, employing a piano which furnished far more resources, he was fitted to develop these to the expression of much greater individuality. Thus we find *sonorous effects*, full, rich chords; a more *sustained style* in these chords, and in the melodies, made possible by the fuller tone of the piano and by pedal assistance; and the use of a *greater compass*, which gives not only more brilliancy but also more contrast by the employment of different registers. In place of Mozart's light, delicate runs, we find runs with double notes, octaves, or interwoven with chords.

**142. Piano Sonatas.** The thirty-eight sonatas, extending from opus 2 to opus 111, and written from 1796 to 1822, claim first attention. The earlier ones have four movements, but later the number varies. Beethoven begins apparently where Haydn and Mozart left off, although in his very first sonata we find enlarged forms, and a depth of expression in the slow movement never before attained. The sonata form, employed in the majority of his large works, gradually becomes more elastic, sometimes being prefixed by a slow introduction, as in the "Sonate Pathétique," opus 13. The *coda* is finally enlarged to a fourth part. In the two sonatas, opus 27, the freedom in the use of form is a plausible reason for calling them "Fantasia-Sonatas," while with the "Waldstein," opus 53, and the "Appassionata," opus 57, form is quite subordinated to vigorous emotional treatment. Titles are occasionally given, as an index to the general mood. In the last five sonatas, beginning with opus 101, Beethoven adopts a number of short movements, each embodying some intense personal expression, and all connected

by the principle of contrast; while in the free use of form he even returns to the fugue, which is embodied in a free polyphony, mingled with modern harmonies.

Pertinency and connection of thought are most noticeable in the sonatas. The themes are short, sharply defining the key, while the more tender second theme contrasts with the vigorous first. In the connecting passages the transition is made so organic by the continued use of thematic material, that there is no perceptible break in the thought, the ideas overlapping and coalescing perfectly with one another, with an infrequent appearance of the full cadence. Other devices for unity are sequences, the piling up of climaxes, and the use of characteristic subordinate figures. Emotional ideas are emphasized by decided and original rhythms and accents, for which Beethoven employed an unheard-of number of expression marks.

His slow movements, full of deep feeling, are generally in the abridged sonata form, or the rondo form. The *minuet*, when used, becomes later the lighter and quicker *scherzo*; while the last movement is frequently cast in a union of the sonata and rondo forms invented by Beethoven, and attains a climax of intensity in contrast to the somewhat trivial style of the earlier writers. Although there is seldom thematic unity between the movements, the organic unity of thought in each sonata is quite evident.

**143. Other Piano Compositions.** Beethoven showed equal progress in his numerous *variations*, in which he finally comes to treat the theme with a marvellous command of resources, varying it not only melodically, but also rhythmically and harmonically. Among his solo piano works there are also a number of rondos, bagatelles, waltzes, etc.

The five piano concertos embody the technical resources of the times; these, however, are always subordinated to the musical content. In the fourth and fifth, which are the most elaborate, he abandoned his former custom of allow-

ing extemporization in the cadenzas, writing the entire movement in full.

**144. Orchestral Works.** Beethoven wrote nine overtures and nine symphonies, adopting for these the orchestra as constituted by Haydn and Mozart. The clarinet is a fixed member, while other instruments, especially trombones,

THEMES FROM THE FIFTH SYMPHONY.

First Movement, 1st Theme.

*Allegro con brio.*

First Movement, 2d Theme.

Second Movement.

*Andante con moto.*

appear occasionally. The climax in number of instruments occurs in the ninth symphony, where extra horns, a piccolo, double bassoon, triangle, cymbals, big drum, and voices are added. The string compass is much extended by Beethoven, and the 'cellos are separated from the basses. He has perfect command over the individuality of the

instruments, using each for its particular shade of expression. His scoring is full and normal, never blatant. The development of the wind band gives especial opportunities for contrast of tone color; and in this direction wonderful effects are frequently obtained by the simplest means, as with the horn trio in the scherzo of the third symphony.

The first and second symphonies, in C and D, follow Mozart closely; the third, "Eroica," asserts the master hand; the fourth, in B flat, is subjective in feeling; the fifth, in C minor, most popular of all, is compact and vigorous; the sixth, in F, is called the "Pastorale," and contains descriptions of nature; the seventh is in A; the eighth, in F, is bright and joyous; while in the great *choral symphony*, number nine, in D minor, he oversteps all boundaries, finally calling the chorus to his aid. In form, the symphonies, except the ninth, show the same characteristics as the piano sonatas, except that the movements are always four in number. The enlargement of the *coda* was an outcome of his genius for thematic development, which invested each movement with constantly increasing intensity. Modulations, and key transitions between the movements, are of much greater variety, and are employed to emphasize particular moods.

**145. Other Works.** Beethoven's chamber works include string quartets, trios, sonatas for piano with violin or 'cello, two octets, a septet, and a celebrated violin concerto, all displaying characteristics similar to those already discussed.

His principal vocal work is the opera "Fidelio," for which he wrote four overtures. Of these the third is most popular. The music of this opera, written in Italian forms, is grand and impressive, with orchestration which paints the climaxes with great intensity. It did not however affect the development of opera to any great extent, since it did not assert any especially new forms.

Many settings of folk-songs, and original songs of great beauty, besides choruses and cantatas, make up the list of

Beethoven's other vocal works. Especially noteworthy are his oratorio "The Mount of Olives" and the "Missa Solennis" in D, an imposing and difficult work, adapted to the concert hall rather than the church.

*Section 2*

FRANZ SCHUBERT, 1797-1828

**146. Life.** Schubert passed the most of his uneventful and commonplace life in Vienna, existing only for his music, which filled his every thought. One of nineteen children,



SCHUBERT

he was born in Lichtenthal, a district of Vienna, and was educated in violin and piano playing by his father and brothers, who were school teachers. At ten he was a choir boy in the parish church, receiving what appears to have been somewhat superficial instruction in theory from the choir master; and the next year he attended the Konvikt, a school which prepared boys for the Imperial Chapel. Here he suffered many privations, but his remarkable musical gifts, displayed in his violin playing and compositions for the school orchestra, made him popular with his fellow pupils and teachers. These early attempts at composition were pretentious, and show an irregularity of form which indicates his romantic tendencies. At sixteen he began to teach in his father's school, in order to avoid military service. His musical genius already displayed itself in a multitude of songs of every character, which he poured forth in a continuous stream all his life. Even the earliest of these showed his remarkable ability for adapting music to the sentiment of the text, a notable instance of which was the "Erlking," written in 1815. A mass, performed in 1814 in the Lichtenthal church, excited much enthusiasm, and was followed by an