

OCR AoS1: Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony, first movement

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by Jonathan James

INTRODUCTION

Right from its opening canon-shot chords, Beethoven's Third Symphony, the *Eroica*, signals a musical revolution. The composer's student Ferdinand Ries predicted that 'heaven and earth' would 'tremble at its performance'. Certainly, the world of the symphony would never be the same again.

It's an exciting choice by OCR for their 'prescribed piece' in the orchestral section of the A level AoS1, Instrumental music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. The first movement of the *Eroica* is of epic length, built on a nexus of closely related themes, with rebellious touches that merit inspection in every paragraph.

This resource is about how to navigate through that complexity, and present Beethoven's revolutionary genius in ways that connect with the learner. The approach is to start wide with a look at broad themes and historical context, and then narrow down to specific musical elements in each section of the movement.

THE UPSTART FROM BONN

Have a look at this portrait of Joseph Haydn:



It reflects the style of the day, at the beginning of the 19th century, with powdered wig, frilly cuffs and cravat. What you can't see are the traditional silk stockings and buckled shoes.

Now have a look at this artistic impression of Beethoven:



The wig is off, the clothes are relatively shabby and provincial, and there are no effete stockings either. This was remarked on in conservative Viennese society, members of which viewed the young man from Bonn at first as an outsider, an upstart who deliberately flouted their social etiquette. Frau von Bernhard, one of Beethoven's early Viennese students, noted that he was 'dressed in the informal fashion of the other side of the Rhine, almost *badly*'.

In this case, appearances were not deceptive. Beethoven did indeed hold himself aloof to social protocol, sure of his own artistic greatness from an early age – and of the status that he felt it entitled him. There was an air of rebellion to how he presented himself, from dressing down through to avoiding the niceties and *politesse* of high-society conversation. He once admonished the celebrated writer Goethe for fawning to the upper classes and 'showing too much esteem to these people'.

Beethoven was a republican at heart – as will be demonstrated in the ideals behind the *Eroica* Symphony. Although some Viennese patrons saw through his gruffness and recognised him as a 'new Mozart', most were disturbed by his swarthy, pockmarked complexion, bullish physique and surly views. This man, it was felt, was a danger to the establishment.

Beethoven had come to Vienna in 1792 to escape the unpromising musical environment in Bonn, claiming that 'fate was not favourable' to him there. Although Vienna did not rival Paris, Berlin or London in terms of its concert activity and venues, it did house plenty of potential sponsors. And Beethoven, with his enduring mercenary streak, was drawn to that in particular.

Musical aesthetics in 1800

The writer Charles Burney defined music in 1776 in a way that chimes well with this Viennese milieu, stating that 'music is the art of pleasing'. It requires 'neatness of execution, sweetness of melody, richness of harmony, as well as the charm of refined tones, lengthened and polished into passion'. These are principles that are exemplified through Mozart's writing, for example, which is the height of refinement and 'polished passion'.

As the 18th century moved into the 19th, however, the aesthetic moved on, shaped by the themes of Romanticism prevalent in literature by Schiller, Brentano, von Kleist and Hoffmann. In their works, the protagonist's internal world is laid bare with all its yearnings, passions and conflicts. The struggle to overcome these impediments is what defines the character, often idealised in the process into heroic proportions.

There is no doubt that Beethoven was a Romantic, in terms of his individualism and stylistic leanings. These are tempered in his earlier years by the predominant Classical style of the time, but from his 'middle period' onwards, his writing is led by Romantic preoccupations, in particular the quest for freedom and the heroic. Beethoven loved heroes, literary or actual. He saw himself as one, and remained fascinated with greatness throughout his life.

The Sachertorte. Encased in a shiny chocolate glaze, with a neat signature and finely layered ingredients: is it a metaphor for Viennese conservatism?



Beethoven's middle, 'heroic' period

In 1852, a critic and theorist called Wilhelm von Lenz divided Beethoven's work into three periods: early, middle and late. This basic categorisation has stuck to the present day and is a useful means of discerning stylistic traits and aesthetic shifts in the composer's work, as laid out in the table below:

Dates	Period	Characteristics	Examples
1770-1802	Early	Influenced by Haydn and Mozart. Classical constraints respected: symmetrical periodic phrasing, conventional instrumentation and form.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Piano concertos Nos 1 & 2 Piano sonatas Nos 1-14 Wind Septet Symphonies Nos 1 & 2 String quartets Op. 18
1802-1812	Middle, 'heroic'	The beginning of the 'new path'. Epic, ground-breaking forms, heightened emotional language, surprising rhetoric.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Symphonies Nos 3-8 <i>Appassionata</i> and <i>Waldstein</i> piano sonatas <i>Coriolan</i> Overture <i>Egmont</i> Overture
1813-1827	Late	Increasingly 'hard', eccentric material that would take several generations to be fully appreciated. Visionary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Hammerklavier</i> Piano Sonata Diabelli Variations Symphony No. 9 The last string quartets (Opp. 127-135)

Beethoven referred to this middle period as a 'neuer Weg', a 'new path'.

DEDUCING BEETHOVEN'S STYLE

Can students put words on the Romantic features of Beethoven's 'heroic' style by watching just the openings to the following works?

- Piano Sonata No. 23 (*Appassionata*)
- Piano Trio in D, Op. 71 No. 1 (*Ghost*)
- *Egmont* Overture
- Piano Concerto No. 5 in E flat (*Emperor*)

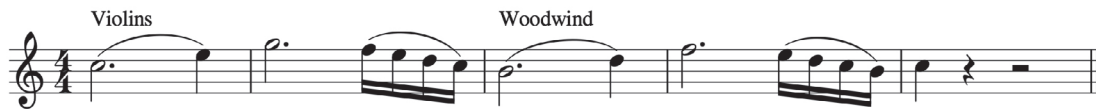
Evolution or revolution?

Beethoven's composing style may have taken a 'new path' from the turn of the century, but it very much took its shape from his earlier works. With his symphonies, there is a clear evolution of idea and style from the First to the Third. His very first symphonic statement shocked the listener with a series of dominant 7th chords (or discords, relatively), and the ensuing Allegro is filled with aggressive rhythmic repetition, a recurring feature throughout his symphonies. In the Second Symphony, the first and last movements are already markedly longer than predecessors by Haydn or Mozart, and their emotional scope has widened, with greater dynamic range and a liberal use of accents to pepper the line.

There is also a 'genealogy' apparent in the motivic development of these first three symphonies. In a Mozart symphony, a melodic idea would typically be sculpted over a well-balanced phrase, and would contain germs for later development. Here's the graceful, scalic opening idea that opens Mozart's Symphony No. 40 in G minor, for example:



Beethoven's melodic ideas seem to have a more basic, pithier form. They are 'germs' more than melodies, small units that will later be expanded. And it's striking how Beethoven is drawn to the triad, the equivalent of a primary colour in music. Here's the principal idea from the first movement of his First Symphony:



It's essentially two triads connected by a little run.

And here's the first subject from his Second Symphony:



Again, it's basically a triad with connecting turns. A template is beginning to establish itself. And sure enough, the first idea in the *Eroica* could hardly be more triadic:



These are ideas that are simple and compact compared to their predecessors, and so the emphasis is put on their development. What can the master make out of such apparently blunt material? How will he transform the simple into the complex? This creative process of 'working out' motives often left the early Viennese listeners cold, even perplexed. In the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, the most eminent musical publication of the day, critics found Beethoven's *Appassionata* Sonata 'incomprehensible, abrupt and dark... enormously difficult'. The same publication found the finale of the Second Symphony 'overwhelmingly long... all too bizarre, wild and ugly'.

Partly due to reviews such as these, Beethoven was singled out as a radical, notorious in some circles, and therefore definitely one to watch. Public interest in him rose accordingly, and by the time of writing the *Eroica* Symphony in 1803 he had already made his mark, winning support from the most illustrious Princes in the city as benefactors, and able to trade one publisher off against another, much to their annoyance.

Haydn nicknamed Beethoven 'Big Shot' ('der Große Mogul') around this time.

THE SEEDS OF THE *EROICA*

So, Beethoven was enjoying a lot of fame, at least within his home city. This, coupled with his lifelong obsession with greatness, makes it hardly surprising that he should choose the heroic as the theme of his next major work, which he embarked on in December 1803.

The bitter wintry elements were against him, and Austrian troops were parading constantly outside his house in preparation for possible conflict with Napoleonic forces. He must have felt in a battling state, and that certainly permeates his new Symphony. There is a sense of striving against the odds throughout. The exposition of the first movement in the *Eroica* expresses that, in its way, by being more like a development section in its striving for new ideas. The music seems dynamic and questing, surging forward in every bar.

As inspiration, Beethoven will have drawn on heroic ideals from the literature he held dear: Schiller's plays and their Enlightenment ideals; Plutarch's philosophy and heroes from Classical works such as Homer's *Odyssey*; contemporary Romantic themes in Goethe's poetry.

And then there was the hero of the French Revolution, Napoleon Bonaparte.

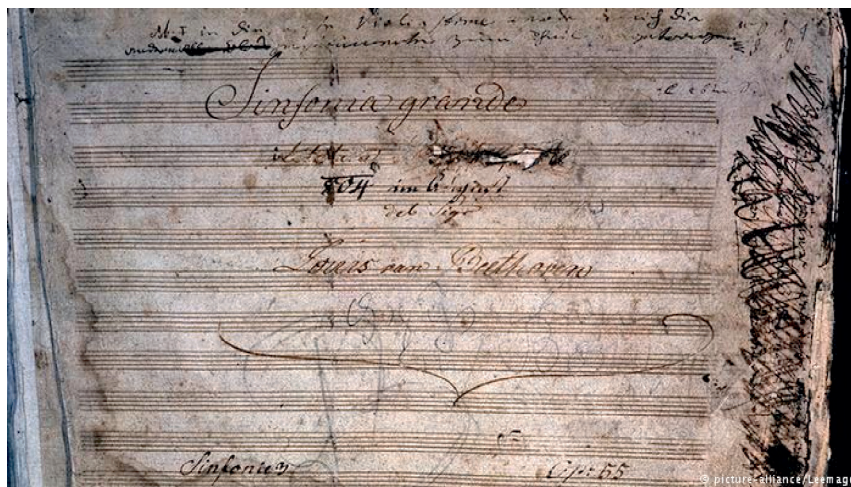
Beethoven's attitude towards Napoleon oscillated between admiration and revulsion. As a self-made artist, Beethoven would have respected Napoleon's own resourcefulness, ambition and self-determination, seeing

the Frenchman's will to power mirrored in his own. By 1800, Napoleon had risen from relative obscurity to being France's First Consul, mainly through military acumen and irrepressible self-belief.

In 1804, Napoleon had himself crowned 'Emperor of the French', dominating European affairs until his regime expansion was brought to a final halt in the battle of Waterloo in 1815. Beethoven called his death in 1821 a 'catastrophe', saying he had already written the music to accompany his funeral (referring to the second movement 'Marcia funebre' of the *Eroica* Symphony).

In the early 1800s, Austria's foreign policy leaned more to appeasement and collaboration with the French rather than conflict. It could be that Beethoven was eyeing up Paris for his next composing post. Republican ideals aside, a dedication to Napoleon in his next symphony would have oiled the wheels for such an appointment.

However, when Napoleon went from anti-monarch to Emperor, Beethoven could not stand the hypocrisy. Ferdinand Ries, his student, tells the famous – and probably somewhat exaggerated – tale of the composer, on hearing about Bonaparte's coronation, scratching out the original dedication on the manuscript of the *Eroica* Symphony with such vehemence that the nib tore through the page.



Closer historical analysis suggests Beethoven took four months (from August to December 1804) to amend his dedication – enough time to extract a higher commission fee from its new dedicatee, Prince Lobkowitz, who paid four times what had been offered to Napoleon. Beethoven was always the canny businessman.

At the first performance in Lobkowitz's chilly castle in Eisenberg, the manuscript bore the new subtitle of 'Heroic Symphony (*Sinfonia eroica*), composed to celebrate the memory of a Great Man'. From that point on, the Symphony was simply referred to as the *Eroica*.

Heroic themes

Each movement in the *Eroica* seems to be inspired by a different facet of the heroic:

- First movement: noble, grand style, with music constantly striving and developing.
- Second movement: tragic death of a hero and of the ideals that they embody.
- Third movement: calls to battle.
- Fourth movement: the hero returns, now deified, as a Promethean creator figure.

The finale is worth elaborating on, as it was the first movement to take shape, having been based on ideas from Beethoven's ballet *The Creatures of Prometheus* (1801) and ensuing piano variations. Prometheus in the Western Classical tradition was a figure associated with the quest for knowledge and, by extension, creativity.

In the *Eroica's* finale, it's as if Beethoven is showing how a magnificent, heroic work is created, how its protean elements are gradually and impressively drawn together. After a lightning bolt in the whole orchestra, he starts with the bass line, before adding layers and progressing to the principal melody. This creative rationale of building from small to large will be applied in the first movement as well, as the potential of the opening ideas are gradually fulfilled in increasing complexity. In these movements, the Symphony becomes a metaphor for the creative act itself, with all the mythical greatness that implies.

GENERAL MUSICAL TRAITS IN THE FIRST MOVEMENT

How else does Beethoven represent heroism and the struggle for greatness in the *Eroica*'s first movement? Mainly through conflict, which is played out in all the arenas available: melody, harmony, rhythm and texture. Before we look at some of those in detail, there are some more general factors that help set the scene.

The **mood marking** is given as 'Allegro con brio', lively and with brilliance, with a swift tempo of dotted minim = 60 bpm. Try having your students sing the opening theme at that speed. It's surprisingly fast.

To make the point, you could compare the grandiose interpretation of Otto Klemperer with the Philharmonia Orchestra to this more modern version with the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen conducted by Paavo Järvi, which hits Beethoven's desired tempo.

With Klemperer the music is akin to a large oil painting, full of magnificent detail. With Järvi, it's a dynamic film, with each line setting up the next musical attack.

The **orchestration** is notable for the addition of a third horn, which gives harmonic ballast to the brass at critical moments, as well as making sense of the hunting motif in the trio of the third movement – try playing that with just two horns and immediately it sounds bare. The horn, with its elegant sound and aristocratic associations, has always been a good emblem of the heroic. Beethoven researched the natural horn in articles from the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* as well as consulting players to make sure he was exploiting the full potential of the instrument.

The clarinet is also given more prominence and a more elaborate part than previously, and the woodwind in general are released from traditional 'serenade' duties into being a truly versatile ensemble. The strings, meanwhile, are tested to their technical limits (for the day), with the double basses coming into their own, no longer beholden to the cello section above. This Symphony represents a harder technical challenge for almost all the instruments compared to what they were used to – and that in itself is also a reason behind the premiere's poor reception. The Symphony needed time to 'bed in' and for the players to acclimatise themselves to the new language and technical difficulties.

The **texture** of the first movement is also telling. Beethoven often has the instruments in some form of counterpoint, whether simple contrary motion, multiple dialogue or a fugue. Everybody has a voice, as if the musical organisation itself is a reflection of the composer's democratic ideals.

The **structural organisation** also testifies to an ambition for epic grandeur. The first movement is over 700 bars long and lasts 15 minutes, almost the length of an early Haydn symphony. The coda is in five parts and approaches the weight of the exposition, so the bookends to the movement are sturdier and more evenly balanced than usual. Up to this point, Classical symphonies usually had a grand introduction that ensured a top-heavy quality to the first movement. Here that is done away with, and replaced by two abrupt chords. It's as if Beethoven can't wait to get on with the action. The development, too, will be hugely eventful and itself contain a new theme.

1. MOTIVIC DENSITY

The exposition rolls out no fewer than six themes, many of them interrelated through their intervallic vocabulary or organisation into three-note cells. This proliferation of ideas can be bewildering on a first listen, and certainly makes it a challenge to navigate the opening section. The overall effect is that the exposition is, as mentioned before, in a constant state of evolution, suggesting a hero on a quest.

Here are the ideas in turn:

First subject group

1. A triadic motif in the cellos, derived from the opening block chords. Its character is expansive and rolling, like a fat prince on horseback (maybe):



2. A transitional motif leading to B flat, which, unlike the motif above, is all about dancing from the offbeat. It's more lithe and athletic:



3. Another transitional motif in G minor, contracting the basic rhythmic unit from three beats to one, and extending them over a tumbling two-bar phrase:



Second subject group

1. This comes quite late in the exposition compared to conventional sonata form. It is more of a texture than a melody:



These sentences (bars 83-99) have a clear rhetoric that seems to suggest words. Can the students imagine a conversation going on? The first phrase seems to implore, the second affirms, the third questions and the fourth adds more doubt.

2. Then comes a transitional idea that is closely related to the second one above:



3. And finally a closing idea:



2. RHYTHMIC BATTLES

Another typically Beethovenian way of denoting conflict is to have the music fight the barline or the metre so that strong beat is displaced, for example through:

- Hemiolias (where the rhythm is organised into twos within a triplet metre), as in bars 28 to 34, or 128 to 131. The apotheosis of this feature comes in the development in an extended stretch of hammer chords, bars 248 to 279.
- Heavy off-beat accents, repeated for emphasis, eg bars 109 to 117.
- Syncopation in the melodic line, eg bars 135 to 140.
- Rhythmic counterpoint, eg bars 220 to 236.

3. HARMONIC BATTLES

There are some shocking harmonic moments in this first movement that still jar on the ear even today. Beethoven is clearly testing the limits of discord and modulation in an attempt to express a heroic struggle to escape the normal confines of the Classical language. Arguably, he does not reach the same level of harmonic intensity again until his final, Ninth Symphony, with the unparalleled 'crisis chord' that launches its finale. In the *Eroica*, the harmonic conflict is shown on several planes:

- The rogue C sharp in the cellos in bar 8, which sets up semitonal tension and is a tritone against the G above in the first violins:



- The distant tonal centres through which the music passes, including E minor in the development (ie flattened supertonic) and C flat major (flattened submediant).
- 'Tonic-dominant' chords. How better to denote elemental conflict than clash the two strongest harmonic poles in music – the tonic and the dominant – by directly piling them on top of each other? Here's bar 147 in the exposition (and note its equivalent in the recapitulation, bar 560):



Above, an F diminished 7th (dominant) clashes against the B flats (tonic) that encircle it.

- Aggressive repetition of diminished 7th chords, eg from bar 248 onwards.
- 'Crisis chords', again in the development, for example the semitonal clash between the brass's F against the E natural that acts as a culmination of harmonic tension in bar 276:



or the B7sus9 chord that immediately follows:



ANALYSIS OF KEY FEATURES

Such is the level of innovation in this Symphony that you could pick out points of interest in almost every bar. For A level, the challenge is more one of how to see the wood for the trees. The first step is to keep the overall schema of sonata form in mind:

- **Exposition**, repeated to give balance to the long coda: opening to double bar (bar 151).
- **Development**: bars 151 to 397 (rehearsal letter M in most scores).
- **Recapitulation**: bars 398 to 550 (letter S).
- **Coda**: bars 551-close.

Each of these sections serves to develop the material, some more radically than others. There's no respite in that evolutionary process in this first movement. It's all about pushing into new territory, bar by bar.

Exposition

The two opening chords seem to brush away any vestiges of an old design, putting paid to any grand introduction. These tutti, staccato 'hammer chords' will be a defining feature of each section, not least the development.

Their articulation and speed are critical in setting the tone. Here's a useful and fun YouTube video that shows a comparison of interpretations throughout the years.

Despite their apparently brute nature, they actually contain the DNA of ideas to come.

Bars	Commentary
3	<p>In complete contrast to the shrill opening chords, the first idea is given quietly in a low register, in the cellos. Beethoven thought deeply about instrumentation and tried lots of different combinations in his notebook for this Symphony. The cello sound obviously struck him as the most elegant to introduce this heraldic motif.</p> <p>The idea is triadic, a broken chord version of the opening two chords...</p> <p>...until that C sharp, which introduces the first note of tension. C sharp clearly doesn't belong in E flat major.</p> <p>The first violins respond to this 'disruption' with a yearning, off-beat G a tritone above, itself leading to A flat.</p>
15	The triadic theme is now extended by being shifted up a tone then a minor 3rd, leading – quite prematurely, in traditional terms – to the dominant, B flat.
23	Here come the hemiolas! Notice how many <i>sforz</i> accents there are in a row, and how the triadic shape is maintained. The beat is cunningly displaced in bars 33-34, wrong-stepping the listener.
37	Counterstatement, <i>fortissimo</i> , of the first theme.
45	<p>Second theme (transitional). Where before everything was in unison, this section is now about dialogue, giving each woodwind instrument a solo role.</p> <p>The falling figure is countered by a rising one in the bass – notice its triadic shape, bringing a sense of cohesion to the preceding section.</p>
65	Third theme (transitional). Two hammer chords, recalling the opening, set off a tumbling figure in the violins, itself an ornamentation of a triad. Diminished 7ths, an important colour in this movement, get their first major outing here.
71	<p>After the broken chords come sweeping scalic lines.</p> <p>The <i>ff</i> at bar 81 is a surprise and should be heard as an accent, a sudden new bright tint.</p>
83	Second group of themes starts here, in the dominant. They have an imploring quality, building the texture instrument by instrument, with sudden off-beat accents, immediately echoed on the down-beat.
99	The opening two-chord rhythm echoed here <i>pianissimo</i> . The tension is built as much through the crescendo as through building rhythmic momentum and the contrary motion.
109	The fifth theme (transitional) adopts the rhythm of the second, but now the mood is much more boisterous.
119	Hemiolas, this time given extra urgency through the fast semiquavers in the upper strings, achieved through disciplined tremolo bowing.
123	This explodes into triple-stopped chords, again born of the opening. Dominant 7ths are accented in a way that gives them superior weight to the tonic. The C7 repeated chords, aside from the unrelenting accent and rhythmic arrangement, are shocking because of their first inversion.
132	<p>This closing material, the sixth theme, plays on the semitonal tension set up in the very opening statement. Notice the syncopated melody and playful interplay of accompanying chords.</p> <p>This leads into downward triads, as if negating the surge of before, bringing the material under control again.</p>
147	Tonic-dominant chords, as discussed earlier. A harmonic symbol for a clash of alpha wills. Notice how quickly the dominant B flat gives way to the tonic in the bars that follow. Nothing is stable.

Development section

Is this the most stupendous development section of any Beethoven symphony? It is certainly hard to match in terms of drama and intensity.

Bars	Commentary
152	A moment of rare stasis and calm. The melodic shape is a fragment of the melody in bar 137, and brings out the chromatic lean that has also been a recurring feature from bar 7.
166	The second theme leads the texture here, answered by a graceful upwards scale. The counterpoint gets thicker with stretto entries.
178	<p>Here the tonality shifts from light to dark, slipping into C minor.</p> <p>The first, triadic idea moves upwards in the bass through C sharp minor, then D minor, E minor, F sharp diminished, and so on up to B diminished. It gives a strong harmonic movement that governs almost 50 bars.</p> <p>Meanwhile, tremolo chords in the middle strings add to the tension, which finds two release points in bars 186 and 198, where the third, tumbling theme is brought back.</p> <p>Are the repeated-note crotchets in the accompaniment an echo of the yearning motif of the first violins in bar 7-9?</p>
205	The accompanying rhythms, ricocheted in twos, take on a nervous edge, which is reflected in the <i>subito p</i> in bar 210. The tension is being built again, but...
220	... this time it doesn't culminate in another <i>ff</i> outburst. Instead, the material from bar 166 returns with more textural intricacy, each new entry of the upwards scale being announced with a short stab, an <i>sfp</i> . The ear doesn't know where to settle, and that's the point.
236	<p>A fugato section starting in the low strings and rising methodically upwards, using the fifth theme as its subject.</p> <p>As the woodwind enter, so the accents suddenly accumulate and the harmonies intensify. It feels as if every instrument is arguing against each other, despite basically saying the same 'word'.</p>
248	<p>This is all a means to laying the battleground for the larger conflict to come. What follows is a famously dramatic sequence of hammer-blow chords and harmonic progressions that really has to be heard live to be fully appreciated.</p> <p>Hemiola rhythms dominate this build-up as the triple meter is demolished, together with any sense of the barline.</p> <p>There are four phrases of six bars, each building triadically against a pedal in the bass. Diminished 7ths and dominant 7ths are used as emphatically as tonic chords, and the bassline drops from D progressively down to a G.</p> <p>Those six-bar phrases are suddenly contracted to two-bar ones at 272, then one bar from 276 at the height of the tension, as winds are pitted against strings. The horns blast through the texture here, sounding terrifying.</p>
280	The rhythmic tension that has culminated in the heated exchange of those minims suddenly releases into crotchets in the strings. The harmonic tension is still high, with a minor 9th suspended for two bars before resolving as the dynamic drops.
284	This leads to a startling new theme – the movement's seventh – in the 'alien' key of E minor, itself made up of two elements: a rising upper line that prefigures a similar shape in the 'Marcia funebre'; and a bassline in contrary motion that will be used independently later. The repeated <i>sfp</i> accents seem to be a residue from the accented passage before.
300	The opening theme returns in bold C major, with a familiar repeated-note accompaniment in the brass. This surges upwards, passing through a kaleidoscope of flat keys until finally reaching the tonic minor, E flat minor.
322	The seventh theme, new to the development, returns here, fulfilling the same function as before – mourning after a moment of high dramatic tension. It is a relatively harmonically stable theme, giving balance to the quick harmonic pace that precedes it in both instances. The 'bassline' takes on melodic duties from bar 370.

Bars	Commentary
338	This is a wonderful textural moment, with overlapping triads (first theme), legato against a more athletic, staccato version in the bassline, chromatically rising until reaching the unusual key of C flat major in bar 363.
367	In a way that prefigures a similar passage in the first movement of the Fifth Symphony, all that textural build-up and momentum is suddenly lost in a chiming of a single chord. The chord alters one note at a time until reaching a hushed B flat 7.
394	The second horns enters in E flat above, recalling the tonic-dominant tension from before. It sounds so odd that Beethoven's student, Ries, cursed the horn player for making an apparent early entry. He got his ear cuffed by the master. The false entry makes sense in the grand design of tonic-dominant thinking and was also a deliberately daring touch, 'heroic' in its rebelliousness.

Recapitulation

The elements from the exposition return in basically the same order, just with a different instrumentation and exploring different key centres, both of which are to be expected. Things cannot be the same once you return 'home' after a development such as the one just encountered!

Coda

This coda represents an extension of the already formidable codas in the Second Symphony, complementing the monumental structure of the movement as a whole.

Bars	Commentary
551	The first surprise in this coda are the 'brute' changes of key, without any modulation, from E flat down through D flat and then C.
567	A countermelody springs up in the first violins, sprightly against a slow-rolling iteration of the first theme.
581	The 'new' theme from the development returns here, leading to an extended <i>pp</i> section that uses fragments of earlier ideas (from bar 595). Notice how long Beethoven sustains the tension of this quiet dynamic (until bar 647!), using <i>subito pianos</i> to drop back when required, each time saying 'not yet' to the inevitable final build-up.
631	The first theme is now passed between tonic and dominant as the texture builds around it. The violins pick up the rhythm of the third theme, this time given a scalic treatment. From here to the end the harmony revolves around the tonic, reinforcing a sense of finality.
665	The off-beat 'hammer chords' return, now tamed. A transition motif recurs at bar 673, its contrary motion expanded by staccato scales until eight bars of repeated B flat 7 chords. It's as if the final fight for supremacy between the dominant and tonic is being played out. Luckily the tonic wins and the movement ends with the same abrupt tutti E flat chords with which it began.

Further reading

- *Beethoven, the Music and the Life* by Lewis Lockwood, pages 181 to 214.
- *Beethoven, Anguish and Triumph* by Jan Swafford, pages 331 to 442.
- *OCR AS and A level study guide* by Ellis-Williams, Johnson and Roberts (published by Rhinegold Education).
- Leonard Bernstein's comments – here and here – are always so valuable.