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# BEETHOVEN

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SYMPHONY No. 1  
C major/C-Dur/Ut majeur  
Op. 21



Eulenburg

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LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

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# SYMPHONY No. 1

C major/C-Dur/Ut majeur

Op. 21

Edited by / Herausgegeben von

Richard Clarke



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BEETHOVEN'S SYMPHONIC PRODUCTION: COMPOSITION, PERFORMANCE, PUBLICATION  
 BEETHOVENS SINFONISCHES WERK: DATEN DER ENTSTEHUNG, URAUFFÜHRUNG, VERÖFFENTLICHUNG

	Title and key/ Titel und Tonart	(Preliminary) principal dates of composition/ (Entwürfe) Haupt- Kompositionsdaten	First performance (all in Vienna)/Uraufführung (alle in Wien)	First edition/Erstausgabe	Dedication/Widmung
Hess 298	<i>Sinfonia</i> , C minor/Moll (sketches/Skizzen)	? late 1780s/späte 1780er	–	–	–
–	<i>Symphony</i> , C	c. 1795–1797			
Op.21	Symphony No.1, C	c. 1795–1800	Burgtheater, 2 April 1800	Hoffmeister, Vienna/ Wien, December 1801	Freiherr Gottfried van Swieten
Op.36	Symphony No.2, D	1801–1802	Theater an der Wien, 5 April 1803	Bureau of Arts and Industry, Vienna/Kunst- und Industrie-Kontor, Wien, March/März 1804	Fürst Carl von Lichnowsky
Op.55	Symphony No.3, E <sup>b</sup> ( <i>Sinfonia eroica</i> )	1803–1804	Theater an der Wien, 7 April 1805	Bureau of Arts and Industry, Vienna/Kunst- und Industrie-Kontor, Wien, October 1806	Fürst Franz Joseph von Lobkowitz
Op.60	Symphony No.4, B <sup>b</sup>	1806	Palais Lobkowitz 7 March 1807	Bureau of Arts and Industry, Vienna/Kunst- und Industrie-Kontor, Wien, 1808	Graf Franz von Oppersdorff
Op.67	Symphony No.5, C minor/Moll	(1804–1805) 1807–1808	Theater an der Wien, 22 December 1808	Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig, March/März 1809	Fürst Lobkowitz und Graf Andreas von Rasumovsky
Op.68	Symphony No.6, F ( <i>Sinfonia pastorale</i> )	(1807) 1808	Theater an der Wien, 22 December 1808	Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig, May 1809	Fürst Lobkowitz und Graf Rasumovsky
Op.92	Symphony No.7, A	1811–1812	Great Hall of the University/Universitäts- aula, 8 December 1813	Steiner, Vienna/Wien November 1816	Graf Moritz von Fries
Op.93	Symphony No.8, F	1812	Großer Redoutensaal, 27 February 1814, Kärntnertheater, 7 May 1824	Steiner, Vienna/Wien 1817	–
Op.125	Symphony No.9 D minor/ Moll ('Choral')	(1812–1822) 1823–1824		Schott, Mainz, August 1826	König Friedrich Wilhelm von Preußen

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# PREFACE

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Despite the well-known tradition in Beethoven criticism of assigning the composer's works to one of three creative periods, the nine symphonies are perhaps best divided into four groups. The First and Second were written during the time that conventionally marks the transition between the early and middle period. The next four belong to what may be described as the 'heroic phase',<sup>1</sup> which begins in 1803 and is marked by a prodigious output of highly original works on a grand scale. The Seventh and Eighth, which mark the end of the middle period, show a certain retreat from the bold directions taken in the first six works. The Ninth is Beethoven's only symphony of the last 15 years of his life; and its unusual structure and unprecedented large performing forces place it in a category of its own.

In fact, Symphonies 1 and 2 look back to 18th-century Viennese classicism more than they foreshadow their composer's path-breaking achievements in the genre; the Second, in particular, enjoys a close kinship with Mozart's 'Prague' Symphony (K504) of 1786, a work with which it shares tonality, mood, and the shape of the slow introduction to the first movement. The *Eroica* was begun immediately after the Second, but under profoundly different personal circumstances for its composer: it is the first work in which he came to terms with his increasing deafness by going far beyond the limits of musical convention. The next symphony Beethoven began composing, in C minor (the Fifth), took the genre a stage further by its concern for overall planning, its four contrasting movements being 'unified' by the presence – at different levels – of the parallel tonality of C major. In the *Sinfonia pastorale*

(the Sixth) he solved the problem of large-scale organisation in other ways, by joining the last three movements to one another and by drawing a dynamic curve across the entire work.

Beethoven's progress as a symphonist did not pursue a single path, or a straight line, as seems to have been the case in the string quartets. The Fourth Symphony, which was composed quickly in the summer of 1806 and represents something of a return to classical principles (the orchestral forces required for it are the smallest for a Beethoven symphony), may have been released before the Fifth on account of unfavourable reactions to the *Eroica* after its first performance in 1805. It is more likely that memories of the artistic failure of the first concert featuring the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies prompted the composer to write a pair of musically lighter works, or at least cooler ones, in 1811–12; more than the Fourth Symphony, the Eighth marks a return to 18th-century symphonic dimensions.

With the Ninth, of course, Beethoven resumed his pioneering role as a symphonist, combining a supreme command of sonata structures and orchestral technique with masterly control of the additional forces of chorus and solo voices to shape a type of composition hitherto unknown in serious concert music. This fusion of symphony and oratorio was by no means quickly realized. The intention to write a symphony in D minor was first expressed during the composition of the Eighth; the theme of the Scherzo was first sketched a few years later in 1815; the first sketchleaf entry describing a symphony with chorus dates from 1818.<sup>2</sup> By the time the Ninth was completed 12 years had elapsed since the previous symphonies; only the composition of a still more innovatory set of works, the late string quartets, remained to be achieved.

<sup>1</sup> The expression was coined by Alan Tyson (in his essay 'Beethoven's Heroic Phase', *The Musical Times*, CX (1969), 139–41) in connection with the years 1803–5, which saw the composition of the *Eroica*, the oratorio *Christus am Ölberge* ('The Mount of Olives'), and the opera *Leonore*; but the period may be extended to include the major instrumental works that followed in their wake.

<sup>2</sup> For a full account of the early plans for Beethoven's last symphony, see Sieghard Brandenburg, 'Die Skizzen zur Neunten Symphonie', *Zu Beethoven* 2, ed. H. Goldschmidt (Berlin, 1984), 88–129.

Towards the end of his life Beethoven expressed the desire to write one more symphony. Two of his companions from the late years, Anton Schindler and Karl Holz, claimed that large sections of a 'Tenth Symphony' had been sketched and that the work was complete in the composer's mind; but from the evidence of the surviving manuscripts, it appears that little, if any, progress was made on a new work in the genre.<sup>3</sup>

From the point of view of performance and early reception, it is not the year 1803, but 1807 that marks the dividing line in Beethoven's symphonic output. The first four symphonies were originally intended more for private consumption, being written for and dedicated to their patrons and played mainly in aristocratic circles. The last five symphonies were written specifically for public concerts. The Fifth and Sixth, composed in 1813–14, were heard for the first time in December 1808; the Seventh and Eighth (also composed in rapid succession) at a series of concerts in the winter of 1807–8. For each pair of works, Beethoven composed – nearer the date of the concerts – an occasional piece that would provide a fitting end to a musically arduous programme; the Choral Fantasy in 1808, the 'Battle Symphony' (*Wellingtons Sieg*) in 1813. When the Ninth Symphony was first performed in May 1824, in a programme that included other Viennese Beethoven premieres, its own finale provided the rousing conclusion to the concert.

## SYMPHONY No. 1

Although there are no surviving sketches that can be linked to the composition of the First Symphony, Beethoven left behind a vast array of material for a C major symphony projected in 1795 but abandoned the following year. Sketches for all four movements exist in various manuscript sources, and are in particular abundance for the slow introduction and the open-

ing *Allegro*. The main theme of this movement bore a close relationship to that of the finale of the present work:<sup>4</sup>



The symphony was first performed on 2 April 1800 at the Burgtheater in Vienna, at a concert that also included the first public performance of the Septet Op.20, and was an instant success. The reviewer for the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* praised it for its 'considerable art, novelty and wealth of ideas'.<sup>5</sup> It was played at each of the concerts at which Beethoven's next three symphonies were performed for the first time.

Beethoven offered the symphony to the Leipzig firm Hoffmeister & Kühnel (later known as C.F.Peters), who published it in December 1801. It soon entered the repertory of orchestras throughout Germany: in Berlin, Breslau, Brunswick, Dresden, Frankfurt am Main, Leipzig, and Munich. A full score was published, without Beethoven's authorization, in London in 1809; Simrock of Bonn issued a score in 1822, the first to be prepared with the composer's knowledge.

The composer originally intended to dedicate his First Symphony to Archduke Maximilian Franz, who had been the Elector of Cologne while Beethoven was employed at the court orchestra in Bonn. But the elector, who had fled the Rhineland in 1794 during the Napoleonic

<sup>4</sup> Gustav Nottebohm had dismissed the sketches for the projected symphony as 'offering little interest in themselves' (*Zweite Beethoveniana*, Leipzig, 1887, 228); but Joseph Kerman and Douglas Johnson have shown that they represent the most fully documented compositional process for any of Beethoven's works up to the late 1790s. See Kerman, *Ludwig van Beethoven: Autograph Miscellany from Circa 1786 to 1799 ...* (The 'Kafka Sketchbook') (London, 1970), Vol.II, 166–74 (transcriptions) and 290–1 (commentary); Johnson, *Beethoven's Early Sketches in the 'Fischhof Miscellany'* (Ann Arbor, 1980), Vol.I, 461–9 (commentary) and Vol.II, 163–76 (transcription). The sketch reproduced here was transcribed by Johnson from the manuscript A75, bundle 9 in the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Vienna.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in A.W.Thayer, *Thayer's Life of Beethoven*, rev. and ed. Elliot Forbes (Princeton, 1964), 255

<sup>3</sup> The problems of the 'Tenth' are summarized and discussed by Robert Winter in an essay (in English) entitled 'Noch einmal: wo sind Beethovens Skizzen zur Zehnten Symphonie?', in *Beethoven-Jahrbuch*, X (1977), 531–2

invasions, died in June 1801; and the dedication was instead given to Baron Gottfried van Swieten, an influential (if conservative) figure in the Vi-

ennese musical world who had made Beethoven's acquaintance as early as 1793.

William Drabkin