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BEETHOVEN

SYMPHONY No. 8
F major/F-Dur/Fa majeur
Op. 93



Eulenburg

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

SYMPHONY No. 8

F major/F-Dur/Fa majeur

Op. 93

Edited by/Herausgegeben von

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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 | 1799–1800 | 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 ^b (<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 ^b | 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, Kämmertortheater, 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 |

PREFACE

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',¹ 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 1818.² 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.

¹ 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.

² 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.³

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. 8

Together with the Seventh, Beethoven's Eighth Symphony was composed in 1811–12, at a time when Napoleon's armies were retreating across Europe and Vienna was celebrating its freedom from French occupation. For Beethoven, too, it was a relatively happy period, as his fame as a composer was approaching its height; much of the work on the Eighth Symphony

must have taken place in the summer of 1812 in the Bohemian spa of Teplitz, from whence he wrote the famous letter to the 'Immortal Beloved' he had seen a few days before, in Prague.

The first ideas connected with the symphony are found in the 'Petter Sketchbook', and immediately follow those for the finale of the Seventh. But, as Sieghard Brandenburg has shown, Beethoven originally conceived the new piece not as another symphony, but as a piano concerto: the early sketches include material for an orchestral ritornello which remains in the key of F (and thus cannot belong to a movement in normal sonata form) and a cadenza or *Eingang* leading to the soloist's exposition, as well as several *solo* and *tutti* indications.⁴ The idea of writing a concerto was, however, abandoned; and Beethoven must have decided soon afterwards to use this material for a symphony, for he entered the remark '3te Sinfonie D moll' a few pages later in the sketchbook. The other movements were sketched in rapid succession; the autograph score of the symphony is dated 'Linz, in the month of October 1812',⁵ and so the work must have been finished before the composer returned to Vienna.

The first performance of the Eighth Symphony took place on 27 February 1814 in the Grosse Redoutensaal in Vienna, in a programme which began with the Seventh Symphony and ended with *Wellingtons Sieg oder die Schlacht bei Vittoria* (known as 'Wellington's Victory', or the 'Battle Symphony'). Sandwiched between these larger, and noisier, works it made only a modest impression upon its audience. But its musical merits were not lost upon the reviewer for the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, who described the impression it made in the following terms:

⁴ Sieghard Brandenburg, 'Ein Skizzenbuch Beethovens aus dem Jahre 1812', in: *Zu Beethoven* [1], ed. H. Goldschmidt (Berlin, 1979), 117–48; substantial transcriptions of the concerto sketches are given on 135–9

⁵ The title-page of the autograph score, the first movement of which is in the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin, reads 'Sinfonia. Linz im Monath october 1812'.

³ 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

The greatest interest of the listeners seemed centred on this, the *newest* product of B's muse, and expectation was tense, but this was not sufficiently gratified after the *single* hearing [the audience had demanded that the *Allegretto* of the Seventh Symphony be repeated], and the applause which it received was not accompanied by that enthusiasm which distinguishes a work that gives universal delight; in short – as the Italians say – it did not create a *furore*. This reviewer is of the opinion that the reason does not lie by any means in weaker or less artistic workmanship [...] but partly in the faulty judgement which permitted this symphony to follow that in A major [...]. If this symphony should be performed *alone* hereafter, we have no doubt of its success.⁶

In fact it proved popular enough to be repeated at concerts in Vienna in 1817 and 1820.

The Eighth Symphony was published in 1817 by S. A. Steiner in Vienna; strangely enough, it bears no dedication, nor does one ever seem to have been intended. It is now known that the work was revised sometime during the five years separating its composition and publication: a

sketch for the coda of the first movement survives in the Berlin autograph, and a separate autograph leaf in the Beethovenhaus in Bonn preserves a complete early version of the ending.⁷ The symphony, in fact, appears to be one of a group of works revised during this creatively quiet period in the composer's life, including the Quartet in F minor Op. 95, the Violin Sonata in G Op. 96, the 'Archduke' Trio Op. 97, and the opera *Leonore* (revised as *Fidelio*).

For a long time, the theme of the slow movement was thought to have been based on the canon 'Ta ta ta ... lieber Mälzel', which Beethoven had supposedly written earlier in 1812 for Johann Nepomuk Maelzel (1772–1838), an inventor who had patented an improved design for the metronome. But the canon, together with its connections with the symphony, were recently shown to have been fabricated by Beethoven's factotum and unscrupulous early biographer Anton Schindler.⁸

William Drabkin

⁷ See Alfred Orel, 'Der ursprüngliche Schluss des ersten Satzes in Beethovens achter Symphonie', in: *Schweizerische Musikzeitung* XC (1950), 50–3; and Willy Hess, 'Zum ursprünglichen Schluss des 1. Satzes von Beethovens achter Symphonie', in: *Beethoven-Studien* (Bonn, 1972), 158–62 (first published in 1961). The original (completed) ending is published in Hess, *Ludwig van Beethoven: Sämtliche Werke. Supplemente zur Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 4 (Wiesbaden, 1961).

⁸ All the passages in Beethoven's conversation books relating to the canon were forged by Schindler; see Dagmar Beck and Grita Herre, 'Anton Schindlers fingierte Eintragungen in den Konversationsheften', in: *Zu Beethoven* [1], ed. H. Goldschmidt, *ibid.*, especially 19, 54–5. On the history of the canon, which now must be consigned to the list of Beethoven's spurious works, see Standley Howell, 'The Mälzel Canon: Another Schindler Forgery?', in: *The Musical Times* CXX (1979), 987–90; Kathryn John, 'Das Allegretto-Thema in op. 93, auf seine Skizzen befragt', in: *Zu Beethoven* 2, ed. H. Goldschmidt (Berlin, 1984), 172–84.

⁶ Quoted in A. W. Thayer, *Thayer's Life of Beethoven*, rev. and ed. Elliot Forbes (Princeton, 1964), 575

VORWORT

Obwohl nunmehr traditionell Beethovens Schaffen in drei Perioden eingeteilt wird, ist es wahrscheinlich treffender, die neun Sinfonien in vier Gruppen zu untergliedern. Die erste und zweite Sinfonie entstanden zu einer Zeit, die nach allgemeiner Einschätzung den Übergang zwischen früherer und mittlerer Periode darstellt. Die folgenden vier kann man einer „heroischen Phase“¹ zuordnen, die sich, 1803 beginnend, durch eine beachtliche Produktion von in höchstem Maße originären Werken großen Umfangs auszeichnet. Die „Siebte“ und „Achte“ als Abschluss der mittleren Periode lassen einen gewissen Rückzug von den kühnen Wegen erkennen, die er in den ersten sechs Werken dieser Gattung eingeschlagen hatte. Die „Neunte“ ist Beethovens einzige Sinfonie der letzten 15 Lebensjahre; ihre außergewöhnliche Gesamtform und nie vorher dagewesene Ausführungsdauer machen sie zu einem Sonderfall.

Die Sinfonien 1 und 2 sind in der Tat eher eine Rückschau auf die Wiener Klassik des 18. Jahrhunderts, als dass sie die bahnbrechenden Errungenschaften des Komponisten in der Gattung erkennen ließen: Besonders die „Zweite“ zeigt eine enge Verwandtschaft mit Mozarts „Prager“ Sinfonie KV 504 aus dem Jahre 1786, mit der sie Tonart, Grundstimmung und das Vorhandensein einer langsamen Einleitung zum 1. Satz gemein hat. Die „Eroica“ wurde unmittelbar nach der „Zweiten“ in Angriff genommen, jedoch unter grundsätzlich veränderten persönlichen Umständen für den Komponisten: Sie war sein erstes Werk, worin er sich mit seiner fortschreitenden Ertaubung arrangierte, indem er die Grenzen der musikalischen Konvention weit hinter sich ließ. Die nächste Sinfonie, die Beethoven zu komponieren begann, stand in c-

Moll (die spätere „Fünfte“) und war in Anbetracht der satzübergreifenden Anlage, deren vier kontrastierende Sätze durch die differenzierte Präsenz der gleichnamigen Dur-Tonart C-Dur miteinander verklammert werden, ein großer Schritt in der Weiterentwicklung der Gattung. In der „Sechsten“, der *Sinfonia pastorale*, kam Beethoven hinsichtlich der großformatigen Gliederung zu einer ganz anderen Lösung, indem er einerseits die letzten drei Sätze miteinander verband und andererseits das gesamte Werk mit einem wirksamen Gestaltungsbogen überzog.

Beethovens Fortgang als Sinfoniker lässt sich nicht als Einbahnstraße oder als gerade Linie verfolgen, wie es sich für das Streichquartettsschaffen anbietet. Die vierte Sinfonie, im Sommer 1806 schnell hingeworfen, scheint zu den Ursprüngen der Klassik zurückzukehren – so ist beispielsweise die Orchesterbesetzung von allen Beethoven-Sinfonien die kleinste – und hat vermutlich aufgrund der mehr als zurückhaltenden Reaktion auf die Uraufführung der „Eroica“ (1805) vor ihr den Vorzug der früheren öffentlichen Präsentation erhalten. Noch wahrscheinlicher ist die Annahme, Beethoven habe in Anbetracht des künstlerischen Misserfolgs der Erstaufführung von fünfter und sechster Sinfonie sich dazu veranlasst gesehen, in den Jahren 1811/12 ein Paar von musikalisch unbeschwerteren oder gar zurückhaltenderen Werken zu komponieren; mehr noch als die „Vierte“ kehrt schließlich die achte Sinfonie zu der üblichen Ausdehnung einer Sinfonie des 18. Jahrhunderts zurück.

Mit der neunten Sinfonie hatte Beethoven natürlich die Rolle als sinfonischer Vorkämpfer für sich zurückgewonnen, indem er den höchsten Anspruch an Sonatenhauptsatzform und orchestrale Mittel mit meisterhafter Beherrschung des Potentials von Chor und Solostimmen verband und so einen Kompositionstyp schuf, der bis dahin in der ernstesten konzertanten Musik ohnegleichen war. Diese Verquickung von Sinfonie und Oratorium war indes von lan-

¹ Der Ausdruck wurde geprägt von Alan Tyson in seinem Essay „Beethoven's Heroic Phase“, in: *The Musical Times*, CX (1969), S. 139–141, mit Bezug auf die Jahre 1803–1805, während derer die „Eroica“, das Oratorium *Christus am Ölberge* op. 85 und die Oper *Leonore* komponiert wurden. Doch kann man diese Schaffensperiode ebenso erweitern und die in den folgenden Jahren entstandenen instrumentalen Hauptwerke einbeziehen.