Concise History of Western Music
5th edition

Barbara Russano Hanning
Career and music reflect tumultuous changes

- revolutions of France and America
- Industrial Revolution, enthusiasm for the future
- works divided into three periods:
  - first period, to 1802, assimilated styles of his time
    - six String Quartets Op. 18
    - first piano sonatas (through Op. 14)
    - first three piano concertos
    - first two symphonies
  - 1802–16, new level of drama and expression
    - Symphonies Nos. 3 to 8
    - incidental music to *Egmont*; *Coriolan* overture
    - opera *Fidelio*
Career and music reflect tumultuous changes (cont’d)

- last two piano concerts
- Violin Concerto
- String Quartets Op. 59, 74, 95
- Piano Sonatas through Op. 90
- after 1816, introspective late works
  - last five piano sonatas
  - *Diabelli Variations* for piano
  - *Missa solemnis*
  - Ninth Symphony
  - last great quartets
Most familiar cultural icon of Western art music

- born in Bonn, Germany
- studied piano, violin with his father, Johann
- age eleven, formal education ended
- moved to Vienna
  - 1787, visited Vienna, probably met Mozart
  - 1792, moved to Vienna on Haydn’s recommendation
  - 1792–94, lessons with Haydn
- success outside the patronage system
  - commission
  - sales of music
Prelude (cont’d)

Most familiar cultural icon of Western art music (cont’d)

- public concerts
- support from aristocratic sponsors
- gradual hearing loss, crisis in 1802
  - new resolve to compose
  - works of unprecedented scope and depth
  - peak of popularity
- 1815, guardian of his nephew, Karl; troubled relationship
- growing deafness
  - increasing withdrawal from society
  - music more intense, concentrated, difficult
Most familiar cultural icon of Western art music (cont’d)

• funeral procession, over 10,000 people
• major works: nine symphonies, eleven overtures, five piano concertos, one violin concerto, sixteen string quartets, nine piano trios, ten violin sonatas, five cello sonatas, thirty-two piano sonatas, opera *Fidelio*, *Missa solemnis*, Mass in C Major, song cycle *An die ferne Geliebte*, and numerous other works
First Period, to ca. 1802

Circumstances of the First Period

- patrons among local nobility
  - Prince Karl von Lichnowsky
    - traveled to Prague for concerts, 1896
    - sponsored concerts in his palace, Vienna
  - Prince Lobkowitz
    - kept private orchestra; Vienna, Bohemian country estates
    - bought rights to some of Beethoven’s works
  - Lobkowitz, Prince Kinsky, Archduke Rudolph
    - set up annuity to keep Beethoven in Vienna

- success as freelance musician
  - established as pianist, private and public concerts
  - taught well-to-do students
  - sold works to Leipzig publisher
First Period, to ca. 1802 (cont’d)

Works for piano

- sonatas, variations, shorter works
- aimed at the amateur market; increasing technical demands
- strong contrasts of style delineate form, broaden expressive range
- first three sonatas dedicated to Haydn
  - reveals debt to Haydn’s themes from brief motives, developed extensively
  - all have four movements
  - replaces minuet with scherzo
Sonate pathétique, Op. 13 (1799)

- “with pathos,” term used in rhetoric
- C minor: stormy, passionate character
- first movement (NAWM 125)
  - dramatic, Grave introduction; dense textures, symphonic grandeur
  - opening measures recalled
    - beginning of development, end of recapitulation
    - sudden, unexpected; deepens the pathos
  - powerful Allegro follows
  - evokes depths of suffering, struggle to overcome it
Sonate pathétique, Op. 13 (1799) (cont’d)
- middle movement: profoundly serene, songful Adagio
- sonata-rondo finale, serious intensity; intermovement connections

Op. 18 String Quartets, published in 1800
- first six quartets, indebted to Haydn and Mozart
- individuality: unexpected turns of phrase, unconventional modulations, subtleties of form
Op. 18 String Quartets, published in 1800 (cont’d)

- almost every movement is unique
  - slow movement of No. 1, inspired by *Romeo and Juliet*, dramatic, operatic
  - hilarious scherzo in No. 6, emphasizes offbeats
  - finale of No. 6, slow introduction, *La malincolia*, later recalled

- simultaneous invocation and subversion of tradition
- stark juxtapositions of opposing emotions and styles
First Period, to ca. 1802 (cont’d)

- Symphony No. 1 in C Major, premiered in 1800
  - unusual prominence of woodwinds
  - carefully placed dynamic markings
  - scherzo-like third movement
  - long, meaningful codas in other movements
Second Period, ca. 1803–16

Circumstances in the Second Period

- foremost pianist and composer for piano
- established reputation as symphonic and string quartet composer
- publishers competed for Beethoven’s music
  - Beethoven drove hard bargains; publishers bid against each other
  - published works in several countries at once
  - wrote on commission
Second Period, ca. 1803–16 (cont’d)

- Notebooks of sketches
  - themes and plans for compositions
  - deliberate way of composing
  - sophisticated relation of each part to the whole

- Deafness: psychological crisis, 1802
  - Heiligenstadt Testament, written letter, describes crisis
  - considered suicide, resolved to continue composing
Deafness: psychological crisis, 1802 (cont’d)

- works interpreted as narratives or dramas
  - compositions reflect struggle of his life
  - thematic material often character of protagonist
  - struggles against great odds, emerges triumphant

Symphony No. 3 in E-flat Major, Op. 55 (1803–4)

- eventually named *Sinfonia Eroica*
- music in the style of heroic greatness
  - exemplifies new approach
Second Period, ca. 1803–16 (cont’d)

- Symphony No. 3 in E-flat Major, Op. 55 (1803–4) (cont’d)
  - celebration of a hero
  - longer, more complex than any previous symphony
  - difficult for audience members to grasp
- dedication to Napoleon
  - originally titled “Bonaparte”
  - Napoleon proclaimed himself emperor, Beethoven tore up title page
Second Period, ca. 1803–16 (cont’d)

Symphony No. 3 in E-flat Major, Op. 55 (1803–4) (cont’d)

- first movement (NAWM 126), possible interpretation
  - story of challenge, struggle, final victory within enlarged sonata form
  - protagonist: opening motive
    - emerges in triadic shape of fanfare, heroic character
    - suddenly sinks down to unexpected C#, inner conflict
  - theme undergoes transformations, eventually triumphs
    - recurrence of syncopations
    - syncopations culminate, crashing dissonant chords in development
Ex18-01

a. Opening theme

b. Rhythmic climax near the end of the exposition
Second Period, ca. 1803–16 (cont’d)

Symphony No. 3 in E-flat Major, Op. 55 (1803–4) (cont’d)

- reappearance of main theme in the horn
  - suspenseful dominant preparation for recapitulation
- second movement, *Funeral March*
  - tragic grandeur and pathos
  - references to French Republic
    - imitates roll of muffled drums, Revolutionary processions
    - one passage parallels famous French Revolutionary march by François-Joseph Gossec
Second Period, ca. 1803–16 (cont’d)

**Fidelio**, Beethoven’s only opera

- composed directly after the Third Symphony
- libretto: French Revolutionary opera
- glorifies Leonore’s heroism, humanitarian ideals of the Revolution
- original production: 1805, called *Leonore*, financial failure
- 1814, third version after extensive revisions: new title, successful
Second Period, ca. 1803–16 (cont’d)

- Chamber music
  - fresh explorations in each genre
  - three string quartets of Op. 59
    - dedicated to Count Razumovsky, Russian ambassador to Vienna
    - themes in No. 1 and No. 2, Russian melodies
    - frequent changes of texture, extreme ranges, fugal passages
    - tested limits of amateur players
Middle symphonies

- Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Symphonies, 1806–8
- period of exceptional productivity
- worked on Fourth and Fifth Symphonies simultaneously
- Fifth Symphony
  - symbolizes struggle for victory, C minor to C major
  - first movement: dominated by four-note motive
  - same rhythmic idea recurs in other movements
  - passage leads from scherzo to triumphant finale
  - finale adds piccolo, contrabassoon, trombones
Middle symphonies (cont’d)

• Sixth (*Pastoral*) Symphony in F Major
  ▪ premiered on same program with Fifth Symphony
  ▪ five movements, scenes from life in the country; character piece
  ▪ extra movement before finale (*Storm*)
  ▪ coda of Andante movement (*Scene by the brook*): woodwinds imitate bird calls

• Symphonies No. 7 in A Major and No. 8 in F Major (1812)
  ▪ diverse capabilities in single genre
    ▪ Seventh, grand scale
    ▪ Eighth, greatly condensed
Middle symphonies (cont’d)
- both well received at premieres in 1813, 1814
  - *Wellington’s Victory* (1813), descriptive symphony performed at both concerts

Piano sonatas
- 1800 to 1805, ten piano sonatas
- exemplify traits of the middle period
  - Op. 26 in A-flat, funeral march
  - Op. 27 Nos. 1 and 2, designated “quasi una fantasia”
  - Op. 31, No. 2 in D minor, character of a recitative, anticipates Ninth Symphony
Piano sonatas (cont’d)

- *Waldstein* Sonata, Op. 53 in C major, and *Appassionata* Sonata, Op. 57 in F minor (1805)
  - outstanding among middle period sonatas
  - unexpected, provocative relationships; unusual, evocative thematic ideas
  - dramas of contrast, conflict, and resolution
  - *Waldstein* Sonata, dedicated and named after patron
    - C major, dark and brooding; thick, low chords
    - bright, chordally accompanied melody in E major follows
    - recapitulation, 2nd theme first heard in A major, restatement in C major in coda
Ex18-03

a. Opening

Largo

b. Beginning of development

Largo

pp

con espressione e semplice

c. Recitative before recapitulation

Largo

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Second Period, ca. 1803–16 (cont’d)

Concertos

- three piano concertos, composed for his own performance
- middle-period concertos, grander scale
  - Piano Concerto No. 5 in E-flat Major, Op. 73 (*Emperor*, 1809); Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 61 (1806)
  - expanded expressive range and dimensions
  - soloist often coequal with the orchestra
Third Period, after 1816

Circumstances in the Third Period
- profound deafness, greater isolation
- slowed pace of composition
- final defeat of Napoleon 1815
  - postwar depression
  - repression by Austrian government
  - Beethoven investigated, spied upon
- two large public works
  - Missa solemnis (1819–23)
  - Ninth Symphony (1822–24)
Third Period, after 1816 (cont’d)

**Circumstances in the Third Period (cont’d)**

- genres intended for private music-making
  - five piano sonatas (1816–21)
  - *Diabelli Variations* for piano (1819–22)
  - last five string quartets (1824–26)

**Characteristics of the late style**

- compositions for connoisseurs
  - late quartets published in score; meant to be studied
  - concentrated musical language, introspective character
- variation technique
  - within slow movements
  - Piano Sonata No. 29 in B-flat Major, Op. 106
GRAND QUATUOR
EN PARTITION

pour
deux Violons, Alto, et Violoncelle

consacré à
à Son Excellence Monsieur
le Baron de Stutterheim

Lieutenant-Marchal du Corps Impérial et Royal d’Autriche

par
L. v. BEETHOVEN


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Third Period, after 1816 (cont’d)

Characteristics of the late style (cont’d)

- String Quartet in A Minor, Op. 132
- finale of the Ninth Symphony
- one independent set for piano, *Thirty-three Variations on a Waltz by Diabelli*, Op. 120
  - transformed character of the theme
  - variations built on motives derived from theme

• emphasis on continuity
  - within movements
    - intentionally blurring divisions between phrases
    - cadences on weak beats
  - between movements
    - successive movements played without pause
Characteristics of the late style (cont’d)

• improvisatory passages
  ▪ later piano sonatas
    ▪ long trill, last movement, Piano Sonata in E Major, Op. 109
    ▪ reflective passages culminate in instrumental recitative

• new sonorities
  ▪ widely spaced intervals
  ▪ scherzo, C-sharp Minor Quartet
    ▪ simultaneous use of pizzicatos, all four instruments
    ▪ *sul ponticello* effects
  ▪ composer’s vision at expense of performer freedom, audience comfort
    ▪ model for later composers
Characteristics of the late style (cont’d)

- imitation and fugue
  - sources
    - reverence for J. S. Bach, Handel
    - familiarity with Haydn, Mozart
    - meditative quality of his late style
  - numerous canonic imitations, contrapuntal devices
  - fugatos central role in development sections
  - many movements or sections predominantly fugal
    - Piano Sonatas Opp. 106 and 110
    - String Quartet in C-sharp Minor, Op. 131 (NAWM 127), first movement
    - Grosse Fugue for String Quartet, Op. 133
    - Ninth Symphony, two double fugues in finale
Characteristics of the late style (cont’d)

- reconceiving multimovement form
  - reconceived number and arrangement of movements
  - last five piano sonatas
    - unique succession of movements
    - often linked without pause
  - String Quartet in C-sharp Minor, Op. 131: seven movements, played without pause
    - introduction and first movement, (Nos. 1–2)
    - introduction and slow movement, (Nos. 3–4)
    - scherzo (No. 5)
    - introduction and finale (Nos. 6–7)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mvt.</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Tempo</th>
<th>Time Sig.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fugue</td>
<td>C# minor</td>
<td>Adagio ma non troppo e molto espressivo</td>
<td>$\frac{3}{4}$</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sonata-rondo</td>
<td>D major</td>
<td>Allegretto molto vivace</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Brief recitative and transition</td>
<td>B minor to V of A major</td>
<td>Allegro moderato—Adagio</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Variations</td>
<td>A major</td>
<td>Andante</td>
<td>$\frac{3}{4}$</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Scherzo</td>
<td>E major</td>
<td>Presto</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Brief rounded binary</td>
<td>G# minor</td>
<td>Adagio quasi un poco andante</td>
<td>$\frac{3}{4}$</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sonata form</td>
<td>C# minor</td>
<td>Allegro</td>
<td>$\frac{3}{4}$</td>
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</table>
Ex18-05

a. First movement

b. Finale

* = prominent notes that appear as the tonic of a later movement.
Third Period, after 1816 (cont’d)

Characteristics of the late style (cont’d)
• movements integrated more closely
  ▪ subtle motivic and key relationships
  ▪ Op. 131, prominent notes in fugue subject
    ▪ keynotes of principal movements
    ▪ two motives from first-theme group

Missa solemnis
• shaped as unified five-movement symphony
• choruses and solo ensembles alternate freely
• liberties with liturgical text
• intended as a concert piece
Ninth Symphony

- Beethoven conducted the premiere, 1824
- solo voices and chorus in the finale; choral ode
  - Schiller’s *Ode to Joy*
  - considered as early as 1792
  - selected stanzas emphasize universal fellowship, love of eternal heavenly Father
TIMELINE

The Beethoven Years

1770
Beethoven born

1787
Mozart, Don Giovanni (NAWM 124) in Prague

1791
Mozart dies

1792
Beethoven moves to Vienna

1797–98
Beethoven, Sonata pathétique (NAWM 125)

1802
Beethoven, Heiligenstadt Testament

1803
Beethoven, Eroica Symphony (NAWM 126)

1805
Beethoven, Fidelio premieres unsuccessfully

1808
Premiere of Beethoven’s Fifth and Sixth Symphonies

1809
Haydn dies; Beethoven receives lifetime annuity

1812
Beethoven, letter to the Immortal Beloved

ca. 1815
Invention of the metronome

1824
Beethoven, Ninth Symphony

1824–26
Beethoven, late string quartets

1827
Beethoven dies

1775

1776
American Declaration of Independence

1781
Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason

1789
French Revolution begins

1804
Napoleon crowns himself emperor

1805–15
Napoleon’s forces intermittently occupy Vienna

1806
Holy Roman Empire dissolves

1813
Jane Austen, Pride and Prejudice

1814–15
Congress of Vienna

1815
Wellington defeats Napoleon at Waterloo

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Beethoven became a cultural hero, reputation grew throughout the nineteenth century

- helped define Romantic view of the creative artist
- influence stemmed from Second Period
- self-expression in tune with growing Romantic movement
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This concludes the Lecture Slide Set for Chapter 18

by

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