



Beethoven: Opening page of the autograph manuscript of his Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 67 (1808). (Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, Musikabteilung. Photo: Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz)

## BEETHOVEN: SYMPHONY NO. 5 IN C MINOR

Themes for Beethoven's popular Fifth Symphony began to appear in his sketch books in 1801 and 1802. Its impact is powerful, but specific emotional reactions are left to each listener as there are no descriptive titles for movements. Great rhythmic energy, dramatic contrast in instrumentation, and spectacular creativity of melodic materials and their development result in an extraordinary work.

The symphony is in four movements. The first and second movements each come to a complete stop, as was usual for symphonies of this time, but the third movement proceeds with a transition directly into the fourth. The orchestra consists of the string section, plus pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, trumpets, and timpani. Piccolo, three trombones, and contrabassoon make their first appearance in a symphony in the last movement of this work.

### First Movement: *Allegro con brio*; Sonata form

The symphony opens with its famous four-note motive. Three short notes on the same pitch descend a third to a longer note.





When asked for an explanation of this compelling motive, Beethoven answered that it was "Fate knocking at the door." It is unlikely that he meant that the music literally reproduced such a sound; he was more likely to have been using the words figuratively, making reference to the energy conveyed by the motive. In the course of the first movement, this motive is stated, restated, and very creatively changed while still keeping some aspect of its original melodic or rhythmic form. It is heard in the other movements as well, bringing a new unity to symphonic writing. The most significant characteristic of the opening motive is its rhythm—three short notes followed by a longer note. The original melodic shape varies considerably as the symphony unfolds, but the original rhythm is clearly heard many times.

The motive is presented by all the strings and clarinets in unison and repeated one step lower. The first theme then grows from overlapping presentations of the motive—by the second violins, violas, and first violins in turn. This opening section ends with a strong cadence on the dominant and a general pause.

*Characteristics: theme not very lyrical, stark - it's what he does with it.*

*sequence*

First Theme

Violins, etc. *ff* Second Violas *p*

Violas First Violins Second Violins Violas

First Violins First Violins *cresc.*

First Violins, etc. Second Violins

*could you say that he is designing this already?*

The opening motive is then stated by the entire orchestra in unison. The motive is heard first in descending, then in ascending forms, leading to a dramatic climax. Rapid descending arpeggios follow; these serve as a bridge that brings about a modulation to the key of E $\flat$  major, the relative major. The modulation is completed by two chords set off with pauses. The horns then present an introductory fanfare that is a variation of the original motive in the new key of E $\flat$  major.

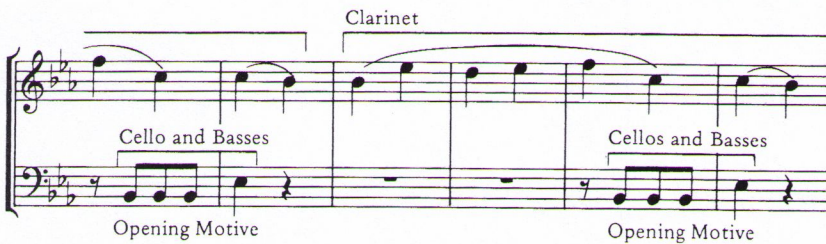
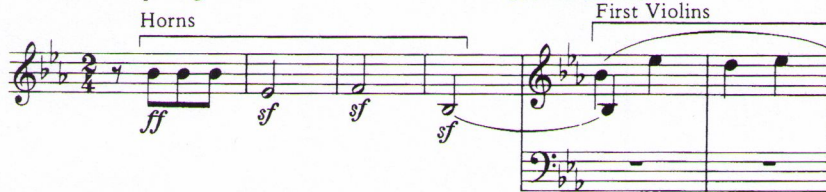


## Variation of Opening Motive



The second theme begins with a gentle, lyrical phrase, accompanied by the motive in the low strings.

## Variation of Opening Motive



The phrase is played in turn by violins, clarinet, and flute with violin, after which it is extended by a rising sequence in the violins. At the same time the rhythm of the basic motive continues to assert itself in the lower strings, as a climax in pitch and dynamics is reached. At the peak of the climax, a strong closing theme emerges, starting with a descending scale then becoming more disjunct, in the violins.

Closing Theme  
Violins

The rhythm of the basic motive returns, and the exposition ends with a feeling of great power and a complete pause.

The development section begins with the first motive played by horns and clarinets. The strings answer, and different groups of instruments play the first motive imitatively in rising sequence. At the climax of the development section, the rhythm of the basic motive is pounded out by the entire orchestra. The fanfare that preceded the second theme is then heard, answered by an



impatient staccato passage. The latter part of the development is remarkable for a number of reasons—the suspense created by unusual harmonies, the momentary absence of the motive, and the slower rhythmic motion. In the final measures of the development, Beethoven succeeded beautifully in making one anticipate the return of the first theme.

The basic motive returns to close the development section and to announce the recapitulation. When the basic motive returns to introduce the tonic C minor, sounding just as it did at the beginning of the movement, the effect is especially powerful.

The recapitulation continues after the two presentations of the motive. After the first statement of the theme, a brief oboe solo is heard. The opening motive returns and builds to a climax, as in the exposition. The fanfare motive recurs, this time in the bassoons, after which follows the second theme, now in C major. The closing theme follows, and the recapitulation ends with a return of the opening motive. The movement continues, however, with an extensive coda. In its varied presentations of the opening motive, the coda equals the scope and intensity of the development section. It also introduces a new, four-note melodic motive, played in sequence.

New theme in  
Coda



A bold presentation of the basic motive by the entire orchestra is followed by a reappearance of the first theme, which is cut off abruptly by a forceful cadence.

The three-part structure of the sonata form has been extended in this movement to a four-part structure; exposition—development—recapitulation—coda. In effect the coda has become a second development section.

#### LISTENING ANALYSIS CASSETTE 2 SIDE A EXAMPLE 3; CD 2 TRACK 13

### Ludwig van Beethoven: Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 67 (1808), First Movement

#### GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Performed by:	moderately large orchestra of strings and pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, trumpets, and timpani.
Rhythm:	$\frac{2}{4}$ meter; tempo <i>Allegro con brio</i> (fast with spirit); rhythm of opening motive is heard repeatedly.
Melody:	opening motive of primary importance; first theme based on overlapping presentations of opening motive; second theme more lyrical; closing theme begins conjunct, then turns disjunct.



harmony: mainly minor mode; begins in C minor, modulates most significantly to Eb major, and ends in C minor.  
 form: sonata form with large coda

# OUTLINE FOR LISTENING

Exposition	TIME	<i>Allegro con brio</i> , $\frac{2}{4}$ meter
Motive	0'00"/1'16"	Basic four-note motive introduced—heard twice in descending sequence.
First theme	0'06"/1'22"	First theme grows from overlapping basic motive; imitated in inversion, followed by strong cadence and a pause.
Motive		Opening motive stated once by entire orchestra.
First theme		Descending version of theme presented and repeated. Violins begin an ascending pattern with the motive, alternating with cellos and basses.
Bridge		Climax in pitch and dynamics is reached. Descending arpeggios follow, modulating to Eb major. Two chords set off with pauses complete the modulation.
Second theme	0'39"/1'54"	Horns play brief fanfare based on opening motive. Second theme begins with lyrical phrase; <u>accompanied by motive in low strings</u> ; phrase played by violins, clarinet, and flute with violin. Complementary phrase in violins moves by step in rising sequence; rhythm of basic motive accompanies in low strings, as climax builds.
Closing theme	0'59"/2'14"	At peak of climax, closing theme in violins begins with descending scale then turns disjunct. Theme repeated. Rhythm of basic motive returns to close exposition. Complete pause.

## Exposition is repeated

Development	2'32"	Opening motive played by horns and clarinets. Motive developed with imitation, sequence, changing instrumentation, changing keys; at climax, rhythm of motive powerfully prominent. Fanfare motive recurs three times. (from horns) modulation Rhythmic motion slows, motive disappears, and dynamics become quiet. → break down material to look closely Motive returns loudly, followed by quiet, long notes. Motive returns in overlapping presentations and builds to a climax, as two loud presentations of motive recur to announce return to C minor and
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3/4 notes

break down material to look closely



## Recapitulation

- First theme** 3'49" First theme recurs, followed by a brief oboe solo. Opening motive returns and builds to a climax. At peak of climax, descending arpeggios recur. Two chords set off with pauses confirm the key of C.
- Second theme** 4'28" Bassoons play brief fanfare based on opening motive. Second theme in C major, accompanied by motive in lower strings. Complementary phrase follows with motive and builds to climax.
- Closing** 4'53" At peak of climax, closing theme recurs and is repeated. Rhythm of basic motive returns to close the recapitulation. Strong cadence leads into coda.
- Coda** 5'10" Basic motive developed with scales. 6'07" New motive added and developed. Bold presentation of basic motive followed by brief recurrence of first theme. Strong cadence with rhythm of motive followed by repeated V-I progression.
- Reorchestrated*  
*lyrics: such as 'to come'*  
*idea of 'who's to come'*  
*psychological progression*
- then trans then*
- 27

**Second Movement: *Andante con moto*; Theme and Variations form**

The second movement is slower and calmer in spirit, set in the contrasting key of A♭ major. Although basically in theme and variations form, it bears little resemblance to the theme and variations movements in Haydn's "Surprise" Symphony. Beethoven's work is more complex and lacks the clearly sectionalized variations found in the earlier work.

There are two important themes in the movement, each of which undergoes considerable development. The first, marked *dolce*, is reflective in spirit. It is played by the cellos and violas, accompanied by basses playing pizzicato:

First Theme

Cellos and Violas



The first theme continues in the woodwinds, and the entire orchestra brings the first theme to a close.

The second theme combines the rhythm of the opening motive of this movement with that of the first movement.



Second Theme with Rhythm of Opening Motives



Throughout the movement both themes undergo changes in dynamics, tempo, and harmony. Each is played to a variety of accompaniments and by different groups of instruments. The variations emphasize the first theme somewhat more than the second. There is a growing sense of mastery of style as the lilting rhythm of the first theme becomes more even and secure. The opening measures of the first two variations illustrate these changes:

First Theme: Variation 1

Cellos and Violas



First Theme: Variation 2

Cellos and Violas



The third variation of the first theme is followed by a coda played at a slightly faster tempo. It is based on motives heard earlier in the movement and ends with a cadence played by the entire orchestra.

LISTENING ANALYSIS

CASSETTE 2 SIDE A EXAMPLE 4; CD 2 TRACK 28

# Ludwig van Beethoven: Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 67 (1808), Second Movement

## GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Performed by:

Rhythm:

Melody:

Harmony:

moderately large orchestra

$\frac{3}{8}$  meter; tempo *Andante con moto* (moderate with motion); rhythm of first movement's opening motive recurs in second theme

two themes, both subjected to variation; first theme has many dotted rhythms; second theme has more even rhythms

mainly major mode; begins in Ab major, modulates to C major and Ab minor, ends in Ab major

variations with coda



## OUTLINE FOR LISTENING

	TIME	
Theme 1	0'00"	Violas and cellos present quiet, reflective theme, accompanied by pizzicato basses; woodwinds continue the theme. Strings join woodwinds to bring the theme to a close. <i>(song like 3 measures)</i>
Theme 2	0'52"	Woodwinds and strings present the theme, accompanied by triplet pattern in violas. Theme is repeated in C major with entire orchestra. <i>sound more uplifting</i> A quiet extension brings theme to a close. <i>modulation back to Ab</i>
Variation 1	1'47"	Returns to tonic Ab major.
Theme 1		Violas and cellos vary theme 1 by <u>smoothing</u> out the previously dotted rhythms; other strings and winds accompany and join in variation process.
Theme 2		Clarinets and bassoons present theme 2; strings accompany, with violas adding quadruplet pattern. <i>5-2</i> Theme is repeated in C major with entire orchestra. <i>light notes</i> A quiet extension brings the variation to a close.
Variation 2	3'27"	Returns to tonic Ab major. <i>32nd notes</i>
Theme 1		Violas and cellos vary theme 1 using a quadruplet rhythmic pattern; form is <u>freer and longer</u> . <i>long</i>
Theme 2		Strong statement of theme by entire orchestra in C major. Transition to next variation.
Variation 3	5'49"	Returns to tonic Ab, but this time in minor. Winds state first theme with strings accompanying. Theme restated by strings in Ab major. Variation ends with strong cadence in Ab.
Coda	7'07"	Over repeated tonic chords, first theme recurs in bassoon. Other instruments expressively expand on theme.

**Third Movement: *Allegro*; Ternary form (ABA<sup>1</sup>)**

One of the important changes made in the Classical symphony in Beethoven's time was the replacement of the third movement minuet with a scherzo or some other style of composition. A scherzo ("joke" or "trifle" in Italian) is generally in the triple meter of the minuet, but tends to be lighter and quicker than the earlier dance movement. Beethoven did not use the term "scherzo" for the third movement of Symphony No. 5, and the opening section is not typical



of most scherzos; even so, it is sometimes called a scherzo. The form is that of the typical scherzo—ternary, or ABA—but only the B section is some of the scherzo's lighter spirit. This is hinted at in the choice of key: the A section is in the home key of C minor, while the B section is in C major.

The movement opens with an ominous dialogue between low and high registers. Cellos and basses enter first, playing the opening phrase of the first theme that begins with a rising arpeggio. This phrase is balanced by a descending phrase played by the first violins. The minor key and the very slow tempo contribute to the foreboding mood of the theme.

Theme

Cellos and Basses

First Violins

*pp*

*Rocket theme*

When the first theme is repeated, the short-short-short-long rhythm of the first theme's opening motive suddenly recurs as the second theme. Confined to a single tone, it is more insistent than ever. It thus offers an extreme contrast to the hesitant theme that opens the movement. The second theme is played very loudly by the horns and is then taken up by the entire orchestra.

Horns, etc.

*ff*

The first theme of the A section alternates between the two contrasting themes. It ends with a burst of activity in the violins and closes with a statement of the first theme.

The B section begins with double basses and cellos lumbering away at the bottom of the orchestra in the key of C major. A delightful imitative passage follows as the theme moves upward. Violas, second violins, and first violins are then added in turn. The mood is one of exuberant playfulness. The first subsection is repeated, after which cellos and basses hesitantly present the theme again in the first subsection, which builds to a climax. The second subsection is



then repeated, softly and with changes. Pizzicato cellos and basses lead back to the minor key with an air of quiet mystery.

The A section is then repeated, but this time the second theme is hushed and its rhythm is much less insistent than it was at the beginning of the movement. This creates a feeling of suspense and anxiety, as does the sound of the violins, played pizzicato or at times softly bowed. Suspense is further heightened by a quiet tapping of the timpani, played over a sustained tone in the strings. The timpani part begins with the rhythm of the second theme, which turns into continuously repeated notes. Above these the violins present a lengthy passage that finally resolves to the tonic as the music moves without pause to the triumphant opening of the finale—one of the most exciting moments in symphonic music.

## LISTENING ANALYSIS

CASSETTE 2 SIDE A EXAMPLE 5: CD 2 TRACK 34

## Ludwig van Beethoven: Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 67 (1808), Third Movement

## GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Performed by:	moderately large orchestra
Rhythm:	$\frac{3}{4}$ meter; tempo <i>Allegro</i> ; rhythm of opening motive of first movement recurs in second theme
Melody:	first theme begins with rising arpeggio; second theme stresses repeated notes; third theme is lighter and quicker than the first two
Harmony:	mainly minor mode; C minor in section A, C major in section B
Form:	ternary (ABA <sup>1</sup> )

## OUTLINE FOR LISTENING

<b>Section A</b>	<b>TIME</b>	Marked <i>Allegro</i> , in $\frac{3}{4}$ meter.
Theme 1	0'00"	First theme begun by cellos and basses in C minor, continued by violins. <i>rocket theme</i>
Theme 2	0'20"	Second theme stated by horns, accompanied by strings—uses rhythm of motive from first movement.
Theme 1	0'38"	Entire orchestra repeats theme and extends it. <i>rocket theme</i>
Theme 1 & Theme 2	0'58"	First theme returns in strings. Theme is repeated and extended. Second theme presented by entire orchestra; theme is extended.
Theme 1 & Theme 2		First theme repeated; during its second phrase the second theme combines with it; the two are developed together. This leads to a rapid passage in the violins.



*use of what was from*  
*is from*  
 Section B  
 Theme 3  
*after first imitation*

1'44"

Section closes with a final dramatic statement of second theme in C minor by entire orchestra.

Cellos and basses present new theme in C major. *-gruffly humorous motive of running 8th notes*

It is imitated by violas and bassoons, then by second, then first violins.

A strong cadence is followed by a brief pause.

This opening subsection is repeated.

Cellos and basses hesitantly present the theme and other instruments again imitate it, building to a great climax.

This subsection is repeated quietly and with some changes; woodwinds and pizzicato strings close the section. *first solo woodwinds - CD set repeats entire piece*

Section A  
 Theme 1

a  
 a

3'03"

First theme returns in C minor in pizzicato low strings followed by winds.

Theme repeated quietly and slightly extended.

Theme 2

b

Second theme presented quietly. *(3 cadences)*

Theme 1

a

First theme returns; second phrase is extended and developed.

Theme 2

b

Second theme follows.

Sustained chord in the strings under timpani playing short-short-short-long rhythm from opening motive of first movement.

The motive changes into constant motion in the timpani, while violins play elaborated version of theme 1.

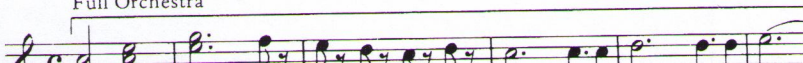
Theme reaches higher and higher, bass note becomes a repeated G, winds rejoin the ensemble, and a crescendo in the last measures gloriously resolves the G major chord to the opening chords of the fourth movement in C major.

# Fourth Movement: Allegro-Presto; Sonata form

With the opening chord of this finale, Beethoven establishes the brilliant key of C major, the symphonic debut of the trombone, and the added rich colors of the piccolo and contrabassoon. The first three notes are simply the tonic chord of C major followed by the distinctive continuation of the theme with quicker, detached notes, dotted notes, and scalar passage that includes melodic sequence.

First Theme

Full Orchestra





The orchestration of the first theme, and of the movement as a whole, is especially colorful. The first theme is extended with brilliant scale passages. The second theme is also in C major and is quite disjunct.

Second Theme  
Horns



As the theme is extended it modulates to the key of the dominant, G major. A third theme appears in the new key. In it, the rhythm of the motive from the opening movement adds to a sense of growing excitement.

Third Theme  
Violins



Following a repetition of the third theme, rapid scales signal the beginning of the closing section. Here a final theme is presented and repeated.

Closing Theme  
Violas



The exposition ends with a strong cadence.

The development is a virtuosic display characterized by dynamic contrasts, rapid modulations, and fragmentation and recombination of motives from the third theme. There is also a striking and unprecedented return to the second theme from the third movement. This theme, which was used to connect the third movement with the fourth, is used here to connect the end of the development with the beginning of the recapitulation.

The recapitulation reviews the material from the exposition in the original order. A long coda follows, integrally fashioned from the thematic materials of the movement; the second, third, and closing themes are extensively developed. The conclusion of the symphony is marked *Presto*. The first theme of the movement returns in a great climax before a strong cadence closes the symphony on a unison C.



## LISTENING ANALYSIS

CASSETTE 2 SIDE B EXAMPLE 1: CD 2 TRACK 40

# Ludwig van Beethoven: Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 67 (1808), Fourth Movement

## GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Performed by:	moderately large orchestra, with added piccolo, contrabassoon, and trombones
Rhythm:	duple meter; tempo <i>Allegro</i> ; <i>Presto</i> at end of the movement; rhythm of the opening motive of the first movement recurs in different forms
Melody:	four themes, as illustrated above
Harmony:	mainly major mode; begins in C major, modulates most significantly to G major, ends in C major
Form:	sonata form with coda

## OUTLINE FOR LISTENING

Exposition	TIME	Marked <i>Allegro</i> with C ( $\frac{4}{4}$ ) meter
40 Theme 1	0'00"/2'04"	Begins with rising triad, filled in with descending, conjunct line; continued with dotted motive, followed by a rising scale with sequence. Theme extended and concluded with descending scalar passage.
Theme 2	0'36"/2'40"	More disjunct and slowly moving, but with rapid motion in accompaniment. Modulates to key of the dominant, G major.
Theme 3	1'04"/3'07"	Quickly moving theme featuring triplet motive followed by a longer note: <u>short-short-short-long.</u> Theme repeated and concluded with scalar passages.
Closing theme	1'31"/3'34"	Begins with a descending motive, repeated, and extended. Strong cadence concludes the exposition. <u>The exposition is repeated.</u>
Development	4'12"	Third theme is developed extensively in changing keys and a variety of instrumentations and leads to a great climax. After a pause, strings quietly bring back second theme from third movement—based on short-short-short-long motive—in C minor. This serves as a transition into the recapitulation.
Recapitulation		
Theme 1	6'11"	First theme returns in C major.
Theme 2	6'47"	Second theme restated.



Closing theme	52	7'46"	Closing theme restated.
Coda	53	8'17"	Motives from third theme developed. Varied form of second theme stated by bassoons and developed by other instruments.
	54	9'44"	Closing theme returns in faster tempo—marked <i>Presto</i> .
	55	10'00"	First theme returns as a powerful climax. After several repeated cadences, an impressive, fanfarelike repetition of the tonic chord closes the symphony.

Beethoven wrote only four more symphonies after the Fifth Symphony. Symphony No. 6, as we have seen, is a celebration of the pleasures of country life. Symphony No. 7 is a powerful, romantic work on a large scale; Symphony No. 8 is a complement to it—relaxed, joyful, and strong, with more obvious adherence to Classical principles. Symphony No. 9, like No. 3 and No. 5, is an artistic milestone. A colossal work, it ends with a finale in which the words of Schiller's "Ode to Joy" are sung by four soloists and a large choir. It is one of the strongest statements of brotherhood, faith, serenity, and strength that a composer has ever made. Never before had vocal forces been used in a symphony, and not until decades later did other composers attempt it.

#### Schubert's symphonies

Beethoven's younger contemporary, Franz Schubert (1797–1828), was another major composer of symphonies in the early nineteenth century. In his nine symphonies, one can hear the change from Classical directness to greater length and complexity. In other types of music Schubert declared himself a romantic, turning to miniaturist forms such as the solo song for much of his output. He died the year after Beethoven, having had a very short but extremely productive musical career.