

ABSTRACT

Title: A MELODY FAVORED BY BEETHOVEN IN BALLET,
CONTREDANSE, VARIATIONS, AND A SYMPHONIC
FINALE

Jessica M. Abbazio, M.A., 2010

Directed By: Professor Richard Wexler, Department of Musicology

During the transition to his heroic period, Ludwig van Beethoven employed Classical era ideas in an experimental way that led to the discovery of his personal style. Beethoven's transition to the heroic style was marked by desire to compose music in what he referred to as a "new way." The refinement of his novel and complex heroic style occurred through technical experimentation with an idea known in this thesis as the Eroica Theme. In Opus 43, *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus*, WoO 14, *Zwölf Contretänze für Orchester*, Opus 35, *Fünfzehn Variationen (Es-dur) mit einer Fuge für Klavier*, and Opus 55, *Symphonie Nr. 3, "Sinfonia eroica,"* Beethoven built upon and expanded this idea to test the limits of its structural potential as symphonic material. Beethoven's use and manipulation of the Eroica Theme provides us with insight into the compositional process through which Beethoven developed his signature heroic style.

A MELODY FAVORED BY BEETHOVEN IN
BALLET, CONTREDANSE, VARIATIONS,
AND A SYMPHONIC FINALE

by

Jessica M. Abbazio

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Advisory Committee:

Dr. Richard Wexler, Advisor, Professor of Music

Dr. Barbara Hagg-Huglo, Professor of Music

Dr. Shelley Davis, Associate Professor of Music

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Preface and Acknowledgements

The following thesis began in the fall of 2005 as a suggestion made by Prof. Richard Wexler in his seminar on the music of Ludwig van Beethoven. In the course of a discussion of the *Eroica* symphony, Prof. Wexler mentioned the correlation between the symphonic finale, a set of piano variations, a contredanse setting, and the finale to Beethoven's ballet *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus*. These four pieces, which lie in close chronological proximity to one another, all feature the same melodic material. Exploration of this topic led me to surmise that an analysis of these four pieces would yield valuable information about Beethoven's compositional process in the experimental phase that led up to his third symphony. Though many scholars have acknowledged this curious instance of musical borrowing, my thesis marks the first time that these four pieces have been compared for the purpose of gaining insight into the evolution of Beethoven's heroic style.

My advisor, Prof. Wexler, has provided me with excellent ideas and suggestions as this thesis evolved, and I thank him for his willingness to edit the many revisions of this work. I am grateful for the insightful comments of Profs. Barbara Haggh-Huglo and Shelley Davis, who were generous with their advice and support as members of my thesis committee. Additionally, I would like to acknowledge Cathy Laughna, who taught me how to write and who was an invaluable resource in the process of editing my work. Finally, I owe many thanks to Marie M. Abbazio, without whose help, advice, and support this thesis would never have been completed.

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CHAPTER 1

Revolution and Evolution: the Influence of Classicism on the Development of Beethoven's Style

Ludwig van Beethoven's creative output is traditionally divided into three periods: early, middle, and late. The evolution of the composer's style throughout these periods can be attributed to external factors, as well as to the intrinsic motivation Beethoven felt concerning his approach to his music. No change is as easily traced as the shift from the early period to the middle, in which he composed many works referred to as "heroic."¹ The composer himself stated on more than one occasion that he recognized a shift in his approach toward composition, a pivotal occurrence in the development of his heroic style.² Part of the evolution of the heroic style occurred through a series of experiments with a simple melody, hereafter known as the Eroica Theme. Beethoven

¹ The term "heroic" has traditionally been associated with the middle period of Beethoven's stylistic development. The style itself can be described as bombastic, expressive, and inspired by emotion and the ideals of heroism. According to Michael Broyles, "The term heroic works from many directions and may be defended on several grounds: as a historiographical phenomenon encompassing the romantic view of Beethoven; as an expressive-subjective phenomenon articulating the predominant tone or character of many [but not all] of the works of that time, or as a biographical phenomenon, in which sufficient external correspondence exists to justify the label as Beethoven's own." (*Beethoven: The Emergence and Evolution of Beethoven's Heroic Style* [New York: Excelsior, 1987], 111.) On the literature discussing the three periods of Beethoven's development, see Maynard Solomon, "The Creative Periods of Beethoven," *Music Review* 34 (1973): 30-38.

² "Usually I have to wait for other people to tell me when I have new ideas, because I never know this myself. But this time – I myself can assure you that in both these works the method is quite new so far as I am concerned. . . ." Emily Anderson, ed., *Letters of Beethoven*, vol. 1 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1961), letter no. 62 (numbering system for letters is Anderson's), written in Vienna on October 18, 1802, 77. "Ich höre es sonst nur von andern sagen, wenn ich neue Ideen habe, indem ich es selbst niemals weiß, aber diesmal - muß ich sie selbst versichern, daß die Manier in bei jeden Werken ganz neu von mir ist." A.C. Kalisher, ed., *Beethovens sämtliche Briefe* (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1909), 96. "You yourself are aware what changes a few years may produce in an artist who is constantly progressing. The greater stride he makes in his art, the less he is satisfied with his earlier works." Anderson, *Letters*, letter no. 40, addressed to Friedrich von Matthisson, Dessau, written in Vienna on August 4, 1800, 41. "... Sie wissen selbst, was einige Jahre bei einem Künstler, der immer weiter geht, für eine Veränderung hervorbringen; je größere Fortschritte in der Kunst man macht, desto weniger befriedigen einen seine ältern Werke." Kalisher, *Beethovens sämtliche Briefe*, 50-51. See also notes 11 and 35 below.

treated this musical idea in multiple settings, borrowing it from earlier pieces and transforming it to fit the medium and requirement of each new work.

Beethoven, consistently described as one of the greatest composers in the history of music and as the man who, in the words of Count Ferdinand von Waldstein, was said to have received “. . . Mozart’s spirit from Haydn’s hands,”³ was a musical borrower. Like many composers who came before him and many who would follow, Beethoven incorporated well-known folk melodies into his compositions and employed the music of other composers as inspiration for new and original pieces. In addition, he borrowed ideas from his own works and modified the thematic material to serve the structure of each new composition. A striking example of Beethoven’s musical borrowing is the shared material of the finale of *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus*, Op. 43 (1801),⁴ the seventh of the twelve contredanses of WoO 14 (also 1801),⁵ *Fünfzehn Variationen mit einer Fuge*, Op. 35 (1802),⁶ and the finale of the *Eroica* Symphony, Op. 55 (1804).⁷ The theme of the Op. 43 finale became the basis for Beethoven’s most heroic work – the *Eroica* Symphony marks the culmination of Beethoven’s experimental stage and the true realization of his heroic period.

Beethoven chose the *Eroica* Theme for its strong sense of direction, its rhythmic flexibility, and the compositional possibilities afforded by its bass (referred to below as the *basso del tema*.) Despite the relative simplicity of this melody, Beethoven enhanced

³ Maynard Solomon, *Beethoven*, 2nd ed. (New York: Schirmer, 1998), 77.

⁴ Georg Kinsky, “Opus 43 *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus*, Ballett von Salvatore Viganò,” in *Das Werk Beethovens: Thematisch-bibliographisches Verzeichnis seiner sämtlichen vollendeten Kompositionen*, completed and ed. by Hans Halm (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 1955), 100-04.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 449-51.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 87-88.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 128-31.

its meaning in the series of compositions named above. This continuous recycling of the Eroica Theme was unusual for the composer, being the only instance in which he employed the same material four times in as many years. Despite the prominent position the Eroica Theme held in his music between 1801 and 1804, it would never again appear in any of Beethoven's works after his third symphony. In his reuse of the Eroica Theme, he experimented with the musical material and his efforts resulted in the emergence of his new way of composing.⁸ It is my belief that an examination of these four pieces provides us with a detailed picture of Beethoven's compositional process. Examining the evolution of the Eroica Theme through the early part of the heroic period provides insight into Beethoven's thoughts, in a different way than do the sketchbooks, as he was developing his signature style. It is possible to trace the evolution of this specific melodic idea as Beethoven experimented with and transformed it into a heroic anthem; to see the Eroica Theme evolve to its most sophisticated level in the symphony illustrates the way in which Beethoven assessed the potential of musical ideas. The observation that the Eroica Theme is present in Op. 43, WoO 14, Op. 35, and Op. 55 is a point often made in discussions of the piano variations and the symphonic finale, but never before has it been suggested that an examination of this evolution provides insight into Beethoven's compositional process.

⁸ Beethoven began experimenting with the expansion of form and tonal structure in his second symphony, Op. 36 (1802). This work is a valuable piece of evidence that Beethoven began composing in a "new way" after 1800. An analysis of Op. 36 from this standpoint would only strengthen my argument that the years 1801 through 1804 constituted an experimental phase for Beethoven that resulted in his heroic style, but as Op. 36 does not employ the Eroica Theme, it lies beyond the score of this thesis to include an analysis in this thesis.

Borrowing or recycling musical ideas allows a composer to experiment with material that has already been proven to possess solid construction. In early stages of Beethoven's heroic period, as will be discussed below, the composer used this technique to hone and develop his personal style. In addition to borrowing material from the medium of folk music and from his own works, Beethoven sometimes borrowed from the music of other composers.⁹ Scholars have debated the accuracy of the Beethoven's claim that the Eroica Theme was purely original.¹⁰ Noted musicologists Leon Plantinga and Alexander Ringer acknowledge the "Beethovenian" nature of the Eroica Theme, but both scholars suppose that the inspiration for the theme came from Classical era composer Muzio Clementi. Plantinga theorizes that its source is Clementi's Piano Sonata in F minor, Op. 13, No. 6, while Ringer maintains that the first movement (*Allegro con spirito*) of Clementi's Piano Sonata in G minor, Op. 7, No. 3 was its inspiration.¹¹ The configuration of Beethoven's compositions dictated the characteristics of the thematic material in specific ways, and all of this material was subject to adaptation and

⁹ Sir George Grove observed that Beethoven employed hymns, folk tunes, and trite melodies by other composers as material in the formation of works with formal classical structures: ". . . [his use of folk song material] is an instance of Beethoven's indifference to the sources of his material when they were what he wanted and would submit to his treatment." From George Grove, *Beethoven and his Nine Symphonies*, 3rd ed. (New York: Dover, 1962), 258.

¹⁰ "As these v[ariations] are distinctly different from my earlier ones, instead of indicating them like my previous ones, by means of a number (such as, for instance, Nos. 1, 2, 3 and so on) I have included them in the proper numerical series of my greater musical works, the more so as the themes are also my own." Anderson, *Letters*, letter no. 67, addressed to Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig, written in Vienna on December 18, 1802, 83. ". . . hier der Vorbericht selbst: 'Da diese V. sich merklich von meinem frühern unterscheiden, so habe ich sie, anstatt wie die vorhergehenden nur mit einer Numer (nemlich z. B.: No. 1, 2, 3, u.s.w.) anzußeigen, unter die wirkliche Zahl meiner größern Musikalischen Werke aufgenommen, um so mehr, da auch die Themas von mir selbst sind.'" Kalisher, *Beethovens sämtliche Briefe*, 106.

¹¹ It should be noted that the finale of Clementi's Op. 13, No. 6 is in the key of F minor, and his Op. 7, No. 3 opens in the key of G minor. Despite a brief modulation to E-flat major, the *Allegro con spirito* of Op. 7 returns to G minor when the first theme is revisited. For more information, see Alexander L. Ringer, "Clementi and the Eroica," *The Musical Quarterly* vol. 47, no. 4 (Oct., 1961): 454-68, and Leon B. Plantinga, *Clementi: His Life and Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 103-05.

adjustment. As he experimented with new melodic ideas, the sources of the material may have become obscured. It is impossible to prove if the Eroica Theme was, as Beethoven claimed, truly his own, or if it was inspired by the work of another composer; but in the act of borrowing from himself, Beethoven provided a trail by which it is possible to follow the evolution of his heroic style.¹²

The influence exerted upon Beethoven by the masters of the Classical era is clear from his inclination to borrow from these composers; he was equally affected by their teachings and ideas through his direct contact with the men themselves. In his youth he received instruction from a variety of teachers, and his personal style evolved through a combination of the education he received and his own natural ability to absorb musical precepts. The teachers who most influenced Beethoven's compositional development were Christian Gottlob Neefe (beginning in the early 1780s), Johann Schenk (early in 1793), Franz Joseph Haydn (November 1792 until January 1794), Johann Georg Albrechtsberger (1794 through 1795), and Antonio Salieri (from 1799 to 1801). His independent study of the works of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Georg Frideric Handel, and Johann Sebastian Bach was also influential on the young composer. Beethoven's lessons in harpsichord or piano, organ, figured bass, composition, and counterpoint with Neefe, Schenk, and Albrechtsberger, the advice on the art of vocal composition he received from Salieri, and the knowledge of fugal writing and creativity within the structural confines of the Baroque and Classical forms that he gained from studying the

¹² Many scholars have discussed Beethoven's "heroic period" at length. My account of this period has been influenced in particular by the work of Lewis Lockwood, Michael Broyles, and Scott Burnham, in addition to other authors cited in the following notes and bibliography.

music of Bach, Haydn, and Mozart made up the repertoire of knowledge and skills that would define Beethoven's style throughout his career.

While Beethoven apparently felt he had learned little from Haydn through their direct contact in lessons, he did absorb Haydn's style through his personal study of the great composer's music. This intense study yielded an understanding of counterpoint and partwriting, as well as knowledge of the principles of formal organization, techniques involving dynamic contrast, the handling of sonata form, thematic development, harmonic structure, and the alternation of emotional moods.¹³ Beethoven absorbed the archetypes of the Classical era through the music of Haydn and Mozart. Recognizing these principles of Classical formal procedures helped him to conceive his individual style and sound.

Although Beethoven was a student of the masters of the late Baroque and Classical eras, he strove to differentiate himself from them. Beethoven sought to avoid being labeled a student of Haydn, lest that identity should persist. Many of Haydn's pupils, most notably Ignaz Pleyel, Anton Kraft, Paul Struck, and Anton Wranitzky, were identified with their teacher for the duration of their careers.¹⁴ Beethoven could not accept being known solely as the student of another musician, and his evident dissatisfaction with the little direct instruction he received from Haydn probably kept him from publicly acknowledging their teacher-student relationship.

Haydn certainly recognized that Beethoven might one day become his musical equal, if not someone who would surpass him as a composer. He wished, however, for

¹³ Solomon, *Beethoven*, 93.

¹⁴Ibid., 89.

all of his students to acknowledge a certain debt to him as a teacher. Haydn gave voice to this sentiment in his dealings with Ignaz Pleyel, who later became achieved renown in Paris and London. On an occasion when Pleyel was being praised, Haydn reminded his company, “But I hope it will be remembered that he was my pupil.”¹⁵ Despite the tension that existed between Beethoven and Haydn, the young composer obviously learned much from the Austrian master. In spite of his obstinate efforts to separate himself from his teacher in his younger years, Beethoven eventually acknowledged his debt to him. Although Beethoven had less respect for Haydn as a teacher than as a fellow composer, he clearly considered Haydn to be the equal of Handel and Mozart.¹⁶

While Beethoven may have resisted being labeled Haydn’s student, his style was clearly influenced by the master’s thinking. Beethoven’s music was peppered with Haydn’s ideas on variation technique and counterpoint. Haydn’s habit of employing folk and folk-like melodies in his works may well have provided a paradigm for Beethoven. Haydn’s works abound with Austrian, Croatian, and Hungarian folk melodies, such as his Capriccio in G major, Hob. XVII:1 (1765), which is based on the Austrian folksong “Acht Sauschneider müssen sein,” and his Piano Trio No. 39 in G major, Hob. XV: 25 (1795), in which he used what he called the “*Gypsies Stil*.”¹⁷ The opening theme of the finale of Symphony No. 104 is an example of Haydn’s incorporation of a traditional Croatian song into a Classical piece.¹⁸

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Anderson, *Letters*, Letter no. 376, addressed to Emilie M. at H., written in Teplitz on July 17, 1812, 380.

¹⁷ Marion M. Scott, “Haydn and Folk Song,” *Music & Letters* 31, no. 2 (April, 1950): 119.

¹⁸ David Schroeder, “Melodic Source Material and Haydn’s Creative Process,” *The Musical Quarterly* 68, no. 4 (October, 1982): 504.

While preserving the basic musical ideas behind the borrowed material so it would still be recognizable as folk music, Haydn manipulated musical parameters in order to fashion the material to fit the character of Classical style. These manipulations included changing the barring of measures and the grouping of rhythmic ideas to make the time signature either more or less complex, as well as altering the tempo, rhythm, and key center. Beethoven used folk material in a similar manner in his own work, such as his incorporation of Croatian melodies into his Symphony No. 6, Op. 68.¹⁹ The opening statement in the first violin bears much similarity to a Croatian song that appears in a collection compiled between the years 1878 and 1881 by Franjo Xavier Kuhac.²⁰ Beethoven did not simply state this theme and abandon it; he transformed the melody into the basis of the entire opening movement of the symphony. The Croatian melody appears here in example 1:

1) Croatian melody No. 1016, Kuhac, Vol. 3:²¹



Beethoven's adaptation of this modal folk tune and its instrumentation made it appropriate to the symphonic form. He transformed a simple musical statement into thematic material by altering its rhythm, its tempo, and ultimately its character. When comparing the original with Beethoven's interpretation of it, one observes that many

¹⁹ Kinsky, "Opus 68 *Symphonie Nr. 6* ("*Sinfonia pastorale*"; *F-dur*)," in *Das Werk Beethovens*, 161-63.

²⁰ Grove, *Beethoven*, 212.

²¹ *Ibid.*

aspects remain the same. The register and time signature do not change, although the emphasis of the rhythm is altered slightly.²² Beethoven's transformation of this melody to suit his compositional needs illustrates his creativity and ability to see complex potential in simple music. See musical examples 2 and 3 below:

2) Symphony No. 6, mvt. 1, m. 1 –4:²³



²² Despite the fact that the key signature does not change (the melody appears with one flat in both examples), the melodic material shifts from the transposed hypophrygian mode in the folk song setting to the major mode when Beethoven employs the melodic idea in the symphony.

²³ Ludwig van Beethoven, "Sechste Symphonie (Pastorale), Opus 68," in *Ludwig van Beethovens Werke: Vollständige kritisch durchgesehene überall berechtigte Ausgabe*, Serie 1, no. 6 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1862); repr., *Series A: Complete Works and Monumenta No. 2 Ludwig van Beethoven's Werke*, vol. 2 (Ann Arbor: J.W. Edwards, 1949), 103.

3) Symphony No. 6, mvt. 1, mm. 310 – 328.²⁴

The musical score is arranged in two systems. The first system (mm. 310-328) includes parts for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Fag.), and Cor Anglais (Cor.). The Flute part begins with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. The Oboe part features a crescendo (*cresc.*) leading into a fortissimo (*ff*) section. The Clarinet part also includes a crescendo (*cresc.*) and fortissimo (*ff*) markings. The Bassoon part has a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic and a second ending marked *a2.* The Cor Anglais part consists of two staves, both marked fortissimo (*ff*). The second system (mm. 310-328) continues the woodwind and brass parts, with the Flute part marked with a *10* and the Cor Anglais part marked with *10* on both staves.

²⁴ Ibid., 117.

Another borrowed idea from Kuhac's collection of Croatian melodies appears in the finale of Beethoven's sixth symphony. The melody is shown in musical example 4:

4) Slavonic tune No. 810, Kuhac, Vol. 3:²⁵



The correspondence between this folk melody and Beethoven's rendition of it can be seen in the second system of musical example 5:

5) Symphony No. 6, mvt. V, mm. 80 - 91²⁶:

A comparison of these examples shows that Beethoven's treatment of the melody differs only slightly from the folk-style original.

²⁵ Grove, *Beethoven*, 223.

²⁶ Beethoven, "Sechste Symphonie (Pastorale), Opus 68," *Beethoven Ausgabe* (1862, repr. 1949), 172.

The Classical style of the late eighteenth century that influenced Beethoven's early work also provided him with parameters and the structure onto which he could impose his own ideas to create his signature heroic style. The Beethovenian style heralded the inception of the Romantic era, but Classical paradigms provided a vessel through which the composer could develop his original ideas. Although Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven used many of the same formal procedures that blossomed during the Classical period, the various techniques they employed resulted in their stylistic differences. Beethoven used the traditional structures as a starting point for his own creative digressions.

As Scott Burnham states,

...whereas composers like Haydn arguably narrate by means of the superficial features of sonata form (ordering, etc.), wittily playing with the outward features of convention and presenting the same story again and again with different tellings, Beethoven treats the form as an underlying dynamic capable of supporting different stories (heroic, etc). If Haydn narrates the sonata form itself, Beethoven narrates through sonata form. He had internalized it to the point where its reality lies not at the level of formal ordering but at a more underlying level of dynamic pattern. This is the gist of Beethoven's relation to the classic style: the conventions of sonata form are now deep enough and strong enough to contain an unprecedented level of drama. As I claimed in chapter 2 [of *Beethoven Hero*], he can thus overrun the superficial boundaries of the style, in order to mark the larger underlying boundaries more emphatically. When he marks these boundaries with his own incomparable drama (as in the case of the *Eroica* horn call, or the famous parallel harmonies at the outset of the coda of that movement) he is in effect narrating them, for such moments rise above the musical texture and assert the presence of Beethoven's unique and unmistakable voice, now heard to speak across the present moment, telling of things like imminent return, or glorious consummation.²⁷

²⁷ Scott Burnham, *Beethoven Hero* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 143.

Although the knowledge and skills Beethoven gained from study of the masters of the Classical era affected the development of his signature style and laid the foundation for future influences to take root, other factors also had a profound effect on the evolution of his heroic style. Beethoven took inspiration from the political ideas of the time, as did some of his teachers. Haydn's *Missa in tempore belli*, Mass No. 7 in C major, also known as *Die Paukenmesse* (1796), and his *Missa in angustiis*, Mass No. 11 in D minor, also known as the "Lord Nelson" Mass (1801) have militaristic and patriotic resonances that foretell the heroic style and, ultimately, the *Missa solemnis*. A foreshadowing of *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus* appears in Salieri's patriotic-flavored cantata *Der Tyroler Landsturm* (1799).²⁸ Besides studying the work of these composers, Beethoven began to develop his own manner of codifying the patriotic ideals of heroism and political struggle.

As a German living in Austria, Beethoven was sensitive to the changing political tone of the whole of Europe. He found appeal in the idea of the demise of both the nobility and the oppressive class system imposed upon society. The composer made his feelings clear in 1812 when he was walking in Teplitz with Goethe, and Beethoven suggested to Goethe that the pair of them should not yield to approaching members of the imperial family. Beethoven strode through the group of royals, acknowledging them with a touch of his hat brim, but Goethe moved to the side of the road, removed his own hat to bow to the royal party. Beethoven later wrote that Goethe was too fond of the court

²⁸ Ibid., 252.

atmosphere than was dignified for a poet.²⁹ Although a single incident may not entirely represent Beethoven's complex attitude toward the aristocracy, it suggests the general feelings he harbored about them.

The ideals of the French Revolution, which Beethoven supported, dominated the European political climate at the close of the Classical era. The influence of Napoleon Bonaparte had a particular effect on him. Beethoven's original admiration for Napoleon derived from the general's support of liberty, equality, and fraternity, the watchwords of the recent French Revolution. The general's rise in the late 1790s signaled a resounding political change, and at one time Beethoven admired the French leader's efforts to improve the quality of life in his country. Bonaparte's list of accomplishments included his implementation of the Napoleonic Code, his reorganization of the government, his extension of rights to the common man, and his support of the ideals of the Enlightenment. His admiration, however, was not sustained. As noted by his student Ferdinand Ries some thirty-four years later,³⁰ Beethoven apparently shifted his allegiance away from the French leader, reportedly calling him a "tyrant," after Napoleon crowned himself Emperor in 1804 and began to adopt the oppressive practices of monarchs. Beethoven's disillusionment solidified as Napoleon's focus turned away from his people and toward his own personal and political agenda. The *Eroica* Symphony was

²⁹ Peter Latham, "His Life," in *The Beethoven Companion*, ed. Thomas K. Scherman and Louis Biancolli (New York: Doubleday, 1972), 381.

³⁰ Franz Gerhard Wegeler and Ferdinand Ries, *Biographische Notizen über Ludwig van Beethoven* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2000), 78.

originally inspired by Napoleon's initial humanistic actions as a leader, but Beethoven eventually shifted the focus of the work to an overarching illustration of an ideal hero.³¹

Beethoven's heroic style was greatly influenced by his internal struggles. His encroaching deafness and the suicidal depression that followed affected his stylistic development. He stated on 6 October 1802 in the so-called Heiligenstadt Testament, "...a little more, and I would have put an end to my life. Art alone stayed my hand..."³² His realization that he still had much to give the world inspired the experimentation and creative efforts resulting in the inception of the heroic style.

Beethoven's own words suggest that he was driven by his desire to create something unique. Use of the Eroica Theme provided a means for expressing his grand compositional ideas, a folk-like medium through which he could express his patriotic sentiments. Beethoven's assertion in the Heiligenstadt Testament that he found it to be "...impossible to quit the world until [he] had brought forth all that [he] felt under an obligation to produce" suggests that he refused to succumb to his depression because of his commitment to music.³³ Had Beethoven been satisfied that his early, Classically oriented style was all he had to contribute as a composer, he might have ended his life in the throes of depression. Instead, his desire to compose in an innovative way inspired him to create a new sound that later would come to be associated with Romanticism.

Beethoven's determination to communicate his new musical ideas becomes evident in his correspondence with his publishers after his stay in Heiligenstadt. Twelve

³¹ Solomon, *Beethoven*, 173.

³² Anton Felix Schindler, *Beethoven As I Knew Him*, ed. Donald W. MacArdle, trans. Constance S. Jolly (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 97.

³³ *Ibid.*

days later, on 18 October 1802, Beethoven wrote the following to Breitkopf & Härtel with regard to the two sets of piano variations that would become Opp. 34 and 35:

Do not let me make this offer [for the firm to be the publisher of Opp. 34 and 35] in vain, for I assure you that you will have no regrets in respect of these two works – each theme is treated in its own way and in a different way from the other one. . . I myself can assure you that in both these works, the method is quite new so far as I am concerned.³⁴

This comment to his publishers, made during a time of great personal crisis, indicates a stylistic breakthrough in spite of the composer's anguish. Because he believed he had something new to offer, Beethoven moved beyond the confines of the music instruction he had received from the Classical masters and his style evolved into a new and heroic method of composition.

³⁴ Anderson, *Letters*, letter no. 62, addressed to Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig, written in Vienna on October 18, 1802, 76-77. "Lassen Sie mich ihnen nicht umsonst den Antrag gemacht haben, in dem ich Sie versichere, das diese beiden Werke Sie nicht gereuen werden - jedes thema ist darin für sich auf einer selbst vom andern verschiedene Art behandelt, ich höre es sonst nur von andern sagen, wenn ich neue Ideen habe, indem ich es selbst niemals weiß, aber diesmal - muß ich Sie selbst versichern, daß die Manier in jeden Werken ganz neu von mir ist." Kalisher, *Beethovens sämtliche Briefe*, 96.

CHAPTER 2

History and Analysis: The Relationships Among Opus 43, WoO 14, Opus 35, and Opus 55

With the composition of Opus 43 and through the subsequent reuse of the Eroica Theme in WoO 14, Opus 35, and Opus 55, Beethoven granted immense importance to an otherwise trivial musical idea. Although the melody is stated verbatim at or near the outset each time it is used, Beethoven experimented with the style, form, and structure of its accompaniment and supportive material. In order to understand the reason for Beethoven's experimentation with the Eroica Theme, it is necessary to study not only the way in which it appears in each of the works in question, but also the history and inspiration behind the pieces. By gaining an understanding of how this melodic material was manipulated in each work, one begins to appreciate the evolutionary processes along the path to the "heroic" style.

Following here are examples of the Eroica Theme as it appears in Op. 43 (1801,) WoO 14 (1801,) Op. 35 (1802,) and Op. 55 (1804.)

6) *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus*, Op. 43 (1801): mm. 1 – 16³⁵

No16. FINALE
Allegretto.

The musical score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes parts for Flauti, Oboi, Clarinetti in B, Fagotti, Corni in Es, Trombe in Es, Timpani in Es, B, Violino I, Violino II, Viola, and Violoncello e Basso. The second system continues the orchestration with parts for Flauti, Oboi, Clarinetti in B, Fagotti, Corni in Es, Trombe in Es, Timpani in Es, B, Violino I, Violino II, Viola, and Violoncello e Basso. The score is in 2/4 time and B-flat major. It features dynamic markings such as *p*, *cresc.*, and *ff*.

³⁵ Ludwig van Beethoven, “Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus Ballett,” in *Beethoven: Werke: neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke – Ballettmusik*, Abteilung II, Band 2, Klaus Kropfnger, ed. (Munich and Duisburg: G. Henle Verlag, 1970), 166.

7) Zwölf Contretänze für Orchester, No. 7, WoO 14 (1801): mm. 1-16³⁶

Clarineti in B

Corni in Es

Violino I

Violino II

Violoncello e Contrabasso

9

p *dolce* *cresc.* *sf* *p*

p *dolce* *cresc.* *sf* *p*

p *cresc.* *sf* *p*

ff *p*

ff *p*

p *ff* *p* *p* *tr*

ff *p*

ff *p*

³⁶ Ludwig van Beethoven, "Zwölf Contretänze für Orchester, WoO 14," in *Beethoven: Werke: neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke – Gratulationsmenuett und Tänze für Orchester, Abteilung II, Band 3*, Shin Augustinus Kojima, ed. (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 1980), 71.

8) Fünfzehn Variationen mit Fuge für das Pianoforte, Op. 35, Tema: mm. 68 – 75³⁷

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *dolce* marking. The second system starts with a forte (*sf*) dynamic, followed by a decrescendo (*decresc.*) and then piano (*p*) dynamics. The third system begins with fortissimo (*ff*) and decrescendo, followed by piano (*p*) and *dolce* markings. The music includes various textures such as arpeggiated chords, block chords, and melodic lines with ornaments.

³⁷ Ludwig van Beethoven, “Fünfzehn Variationen mit Fuge für das Pianoforte, Op. 35,” in *Ludwig van Beethovens Werke: Vollständige kritisch durchgesehene überall berechnigte Ausgabe*, Serie 17, no.163 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1862); repr., *Series A: Complete Works and Monumenta No. 2 Ludwig van Beethoven’s Werke*, vol. 17 (Ann Arbor: J.W. Edwards, 1949), 15.

9) Symphony No. 3, Op. 55 (1804), mvt. IV: mm. 77 – 109³⁸

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 77-86) shows the woodwinds and strings with dynamics ranging from *p* to *sf*. The second system (measures 87-96) features a more intense texture with *sf* dynamics across all parts. The score includes performance markings such as *pizz.* and *arco* for the strings.

³⁸ Ludwig van Beethoven, "Dritte Symphonie (Eroica), Op. 55," in *Ludwig van Beethovens Werke: Vollständige kritisch durchgesehene überall berechtigte Ausgabe*, Serie 1, no.3 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1862); repr., *Series A: Complete Works and Monumenta No. 2 Ludwig van Beethoven's Werke*, vol. 17 (Ann Arbor: J.W. Edwards, 1949), 184.

Musical score for the first system, measures 1-4. The score includes staves for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Fag.), Cor I, Cor II, Trumpet (Tr.), and Trombone (Tb.). The music features various dynamics such as *p*, *f*, and *decresc.* (decrescendo). The key signature has one flat, and the time signature is 4/4. The first staff (Fl.) has a melodic line with a *p* dynamic. The Oboe and Clarinet parts have a *f* dynamic. The Bassoon part has a *f* dynamic. The Cor I and Cor II parts have a *f* dynamic. The Tr. and Tb. parts have a *f* dynamic. The second system (measures 1-4) features a *p* dynamic in the Fl. and Oboe parts, and a *f* dynamic in the Cl., Fag., Cor I, Cor II, Tr., and Tb. parts. The Oboe part has a *decresc.* marking. The Bassoon part has a *f* dynamic. The Cor I and Cor II parts have a *f* dynamic. The Tr. and Tb. parts have a *f* dynamic. The second system (measures 1-4) features a *p* dynamic in the Fl. and Oboe parts, and a *f* dynamic in the Cl., Fag., Cor I, Cor II, Tr., and Tb. parts. The Oboe part has a *decresc.* marking. The Bassoon part has a *f* dynamic. The Cor I and Cor II parts have a *f* dynamic. The Tr. and Tb. parts have a *f* dynamic.

Musical score for the second system, measures 5-8. The score includes staves for Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Fag.), Cor I, Cor II, Trumpet (Tr.), and Trombone (Tb.). The music features various dynamics such as *f*, *decresc.* (decrescendo), and *etc.* (etcetera). The key signature has one flat, and the time signature is 4/4. The first staff (Fl.) has a melodic line with a *f* dynamic. The Oboe part has a *f* dynamic. The Cl. part has a *f* dynamic. The Fag. part has a *f* dynamic. The Cor I and Cor II parts have a *f* dynamic. The Tr. part has a *f* dynamic. The Tb. part has a *f* dynamic. The second system (measures 5-8) features a *f* dynamic in the Fl., Ob., Cl., Fag., Cor I, Cor II, Tr., and Tb. parts. The Oboe part has a *decresc.* marking. The Bassoon part has a *f* dynamic. The Cor I and Cor II parts have a *f* dynamic. The Tr. part has a *f* dynamic. The Tb. part has a *f* dynamic. The second system (measures 5-8) features a *f* dynamic in the Fl., Ob., Cl., Fag., Cor I, Cor II, Tr., and Tb. parts. The Oboe part has a *decresc.* marking. The Bassoon part has a *f* dynamic. The Cor I and Cor II parts have a *f* dynamic. The Tr. part has a *f* dynamic. The Tb. part has a *f* dynamic.

Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus, Opus 43, and No. 7 of the Twelve Contredanses, WoO 14, are dance pieces, the former for ballet and the latter for formal social dance. Both have the same essential rhythmic and structural requirements. Since the first sixteen measures of both are the same, note for note, one does not need theoretical analysis to compare their structures (see examples 6 and 7 above).

Part I: Op. 43, *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus*

Since Greek antiquity, dance on the stage existed as a significant element in drama. By the middle of the seventeenth century, it was established as an integral part of both plays and operas, particularly in France. During the reign of Louis XIV, many operas, including those of court opera composer Jean-Baptiste Lully, featured elaborate dance sequences as well as pantomime. Whereas pantomime was used to convey the action of the story, dance sequences were intended to enhance the dramatic quality of entrances and celebrations. Roles regularly associated with these early ballets were those of shepherds, warriors, and gods; these parts were frequently minor, and the actions they portrayed were often explained in introductory recitative or choruses. After Lully's death, the idea of pantomime fell by the wayside, and dance sequences became limited to celebratory functions.³⁹

Although the basic style of movement of theatrical and social dances was similar at this time, the gap between amateurs and professionals gradually widened. Dance types such as *entrées graves* (in a slow duple meter with stately dotted rhythms), sarabandes, canaries, loures, minuets, passapieds, courantes, chaconnes, rondeaux, and

³⁹ Leo Kersley and Janet Sinclair, *A Dictionary of Ballet Terms* (London: A. & C. Black, 1977), 83.

variation forms were employed; the choreographies for each drew from a large lexicon of steps combined in creative ways.⁴⁰ Composers used these established forms as foundations, customized to fit particular characters and situations.

Ballet underwent a major metamorphosis in the eighteenth century. By the 1760s, Lully's idea of pantomime had been revamped to convey the characters' moods and motives, as well as to advance the storyline through movement without prefatory explanation by means of recitative. This new form of the *divertissement* was referred to as *ballet d'action*. Choreography of a more realistic and descriptive quality replaced the symmetrical patterns of the established dance types. This trend toward a more natural and interpretive form was made possible by simpler costumes and the introduction of slippers to replace the heeled shoes worn earlier in the century. The coordination of costumes and choreography with the plot, as well as the interaction between the principal dancers and the dancers in the corps, contributed to the development of the modern ballet.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, the popularity and quality of ballet in Vienna vacillated according to the taste of the reigning monarch. Under Joseph II, who reigned from 1765 through 1790, imperial nationalistic reforms allowed German language plays and *Singspiele* (*Die Zauberflöte* was one of the most popular works of this type) to overtake the more costly art forms of ballet and Italian opera in popularity. The status of Viennese dance experienced a sharp decline in the decades of Joseph's reign and did not regain its popular status until 1790, when Leopold II reinstated a permanent dance troupe. Dance reached the pinnacle of its public esteem when Leopold's son Emperor

⁴⁰ Curt Sachs, *World History of the Dance*, trans. Bessie Schönberg (New York: Norton, 1965), 405-14.

Franz II and his wife, Maria Theresia, brought the Italian dancer and choreographer Salvatore Viganò to Vienna in 1793. Viganò remained in Vienna until 1795, left to tour central Europe and returned to the city in 1799 as a celebrated choreographer and producer. When Beethoven composed the score for Viganò's ballet *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus* in 1801, Viganò's Vienna company rivaled the brilliance of that of the Paris Opéra.⁴¹

Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus, Opus 43 (1801),⁴² was a combination of the two traditions that existed in Viennese dance at that time. It united the allegorical subject, pastoral music, and use of prescribed dances of the eighteenth-century *divertissement* with the new form of *ballet d'action* by its inclusion of a continuous narrative and pantomime, as well as of Viganò's alterations of the prearranged dance typologies to illustrate the action of the plot. Performed fourteen times in 1801 and nine more times the next year, the ballet was the first piece that gained broad public acclaim in Vienna for Beethoven.⁴³

The work was commissioned by Franz II and Maria Theresia, and Beethoven's fulfillment of this imperial request marked his acceptance into the highest echelon of Viennese society.⁴⁴ Beethoven had dedicated his Septet in E-flat Major, Op. 20 (1799), to the Empress, and this may have had some bearing on his receipt of the imperial commission. Based on comments made by Beethoven to his friend, fellow composer,

⁴¹ Marian Hannah Winter, *The Pre-Romantic Ballet* (New York: Pitman Publishing Corporation, 1974), 189.

⁴² Kinsky, "Opus 43 "Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus," Ballett von Salvatore Viganò," in *Das Werk Beethovens*, 100-04.

⁴³ Thayer, *Thayer's Life*, 272.

⁴⁴ Paul A. Bertagnolli, *Prometheus in Music* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 27.

and publisher Franz Anton Hoffmeister, one can speculate that the collaboration between Beethoven and Viganò occurred as a result of the efforts of Baron Ludwig Karl August von Lichtenstein, the Kapellmeister of the Court Opera and Ballet at the Hoftheater in Vienna. In a letter to Hoffmeister dated 22 April 1801, Beethoven wrote:

Well, to tell you a little more about myself, I have composed a ballet; but the ballet-master has not done his part very successfully. – *Baron von Lichtenstein* has also bestowed on us one of his products, which does not bear out the ideas that the papers have given us of his genius; a further proof of what the papers perpetrate. The Baron seems to have chosen for his ideal *Herr Müller of the Kasperletheater*, without attaining – even to *that ideal* – such are the pleasant conditions in which we poor Viennese have to exist and thrive.”⁴⁵

It is possible that Baron von Lichtenstein knew both Beethoven and Viganò and therefore may have suggested that they work together on the ballet. As seen through his comments to Hoffmeister, Beethoven obviously felt that either his pairing with Viganò or the result of that collaboration was unsatisfactory.

Op. 43 consists of a collection of popular stylized dances, a common practice for composing ballets in the eighteenth century. The ballet includes some of the most familiar dance types of the day, such as the bourrée, contredanse, gavotte, Ländler, march, minuet, musette, pastorale, polonaise, and siciliano. The choice of dance type ultimately transcends an obvious decorative purpose and serves to articulate the plot and propel the story. Prometheus’ first contact with the creatures is his invitation for them to

⁴⁵ Anderson, *Letters*, letter no. 47, addressed to Franz Anton Hoffmeister, Leipzig, written in Vienna on April 22, 1801, 51. “Von mir noch etwas zu sagen so habe ich ein Ballet gemacht wobei aber der Balletmeister seine Sache nicht ganz zum besten gemacht. – Der Freiherr von Lichtenstein hat uns auch mit einem Produkte beschenkt, das den Ideen die unß die Zeitung von seinem genie gaben, nicht entspricht; weider ein neuer Bewieß für die Zeitung. Der Freiherr scheint sich Hr. Müller beim Kasperle sum Ideal gemach zu haben, doch ohne sogar ihn – zu erreichen – das sind die schönen Aussichten unter denen wir arme hiesigen gleich emporteimen sollen.” Kalisher, *Beethovens sämtliche Briefe*, 63.

join him in a contredanse, a dance in which all classes of people were traditionally invited to participate. The creatures are educated by the Muses during a polonaise (a triple-meter dance executed by couples), and a march accompanied Bacchus' invitation to the creatures to join the community of the Muses (a march being a regularly accented duple-meter piece, which would denote forward motion). For their solos, both the male and female creatures favor more egalitarian dances rather than purely aristocratic ones.⁴⁶

Although his ballet passed into obscurity, sections of Beethoven's score, such as the overture, remained popular with Viennese audiences. In addition to the appearance of the theme of the ballet's finale as the seventh contredanse of WoO 14, the second dance of the ballet (Adagio; Allegro con brio) became the eleventh dance in WoO 14.⁴⁷

Op. 43 consists of an opening overture followed by two acts, together comprising sixteen numbers, each of which incorporated one of the dance types mentioned above.

The order is as follows:

Overture – Adagio; Allegro molto con brio

Act I

Introduction – Allegro non troppo

No. 1 – Poco Adagio; Allegro con brio

No. 2 – Adagio; Allegro con brio

No. 3 – Allegro vivace

Act II

No. 4 – Maestoso; Andante

No. 5 – Adagio; Andante quasi allegretto

No. 6 – Un poco adagio; Allegro

No. 7 – Grave

No. 8 – Allegro con brio; Presto

No. 9 – Adagio; Allegro molto

⁴⁶ Bertagnolli, *Prometheus*, 90.

⁴⁷ Scherman, *Beethoven Companion*, 125.

- No. 10 – Pastorale; Allegro
- No. 11 – Andante
- No. 12 – Maestoso; Adagio; Allegro
- No. 13 – Allegro
- No. 14 – Andante; Allegro
- No. 15 – Andantino; Adagio; Allegro
- No. 16 – Finale, Allegretto⁴⁸

These isolated numbers in their fixed forms are a series of musical episodes, juxtaposed with and contrasted against one another, rather than a coherent whole exhibiting continuity in and between each number. The lost libretto for the 1801 version can be vaguely reconstructed from a few extant sources: a program note included in the playbill for the premiere on March 28th, 1801; an unsigned review that appeared the following month in the Viennese belletristic journal, *Die Zeitung für die elegante Welt*; Carlo Ritorni's detailed scenario, published in his biography of Viganò in 1838; annotations in Beethoven's sketchbook; and the music itself, which often directly mirrors the events in the plot.⁴⁹ Written by Viganò, the libretto treats only a portion of the full Promethean legend.

The overture features two contrasting abstract themes but offers little in programmatic associations. The introduction to the first act, by contrast, is rife with allusions to peals of thunder (low string tremolos in the remote key of A flat), flashes of lightning (ascending woodwind arpeggios), and raging storms (unison strings making repeated crescendos while arpeggiating diminished triads, fortissimo tremolos, sustained

⁴⁸ Viganò's original choreography for *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus* has been lost, and an in-depth study of the available primary source material combined with a thorough knowledge of contemporary stylized dance types would be necessary to attribute specific dance types to each of the movements of Op. 43. Although there is insufficient space to do so in this thesis, this is a subject I plan to explore in future writings.

⁴⁹ Bertagnolli, *Prometheus*, 35.

blaring of woodwinds and brasses, wide-ranging broken chords in the violins, and heavy accents and explosive bursts of punctuating eighth notes) as Prometheus the Titan steals celestial fire from the gods. In some versions of the legend, it is fire from the sun, in others a lightning bolt. Beethoven revisited many of these techniques for depicting a storm in his sixth symphony.

The first number depicts Prometheus running toward the statues he has formed out of primeval clay and awakening their hearts with the stolen heavenly fire. The increase in tempo from *Poco adagio* to *Allegro con brio* suggests to the listener the instability of Prometheus' situation, his flight from Zeus's wrath, and the urgency of his desire to bring his creations to life. The second tableau begins with an *adagio* section in which Prometheus laments the fact that his "creatures" (or "children," as they are referred to in some translations) have come to life but are without feelings or reason and resist all attempts to make them human, and he considers destroying them. In the *allegro con brio* of Dance No. 2, Prometheus is persuaded by Pan to bring them to Mount Parnassus to be educated by the Muses. The *Allegro vivace* of the third dance depicts the travel to Mount Parnassus, and closes the first act. The second act consists of various episodes in which Viganò's choreography delineates lessons from Amphion, Orion, Orpheus, Melpomene, Thalia, Terpsichore, Pan, and Bacchus. In the final scene, the entire company, including the creatures, gods, muses, fauns, and Prometheus himself, participates in an egalitarian contredanse, in which all celebrate mankind's education in the arts and sciences.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Riccardo Mezzanotte, ed., *The Simon and Schuster Book of the Ballet* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 81.

The conventional approach to the overture of the late Classical era was to create an emotional ambiance, rather than to encapsulate the impending program of the following work. The overture to *Prometheus* somewhat emulates the theatrical preludes of Gluck, Mozart, and Salieri in its lack of a Beethovenian conflict-crisis-triumph cycle. It is more common practice, however, to align it with Beethoven's later heroic overtures that featured somewhat coherent narratives, such as *Egmont* and *Leonore No. 3*, because of the emergence of the heroic spirit in the story of the rest of the ballet.⁵¹

The Adagio introduction of the *Prometheus* overture opens with two chords (C $\frac{4}{2}$ – F $\frac{6}{4}$) that seem to suggest F major, although it soon becomes apparent that the actual key is C. This unorthodox use of harmony recalls the unconventional chords that open Beethoven's first symphony. It was also an early instance of the Romantic association of Prometheus with unusual sonorities that would eventually be propagated by Liszt in his symphonic poem entitled *Prometheus* (1850) and in Skryabin's 1910 symphonic work, *Prométhée: le poème du feu*. The Allegro molto con brio that begins the exposition at measure 17 is set in sonatina form, without a discernible development section.⁵² The first violins immediately state the main theme of running eighth notes; the rest of the orchestra then repeats the theme at a fortissimo level. An overt similarity exists between the main theme of the overture and the fugato section that concludes the finale of the ballet.

⁵¹ Bertagnolli, *Prometheus*, 36.

⁵² Sonatina form can be described as, "a short, easy, otherwise 'light' Sonata, especially a piece whose first movement, in Sonata form, has a very short development section. The term 'Sonatina form' has occasionally been used for a movement with no development section." *Oxford Music Online*, (accessed 11 March 2009) <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>>.

10) *Die Geschöpfe Des Prometheus* Ballet, Opus 43, Overture: mm. 17 – 25⁵³

Violino I

pp

11) *Die Geschöpfe Des Prometheus* Ballet, Opus 43, Finale: mm. 192 – 199⁵⁴

Violino I

pp

Violino II

Although not identical, these themes are similar in tempo, rhythm, meter, motive, contour, and mode. These links show that the overture foreshadows the lively character of the festive dance of the celebration that ends the ballet.

The flutes and oboes state the overture's second theme in G major at measure 49. Beethoven then devotes the last section of the exposition to an elaboration of the main theme. This section begins at measure 89 and concludes at measure 132. The recapitulation at measure 133 features the main theme in its original form played by the first violins. The second theme (in C major) shortly follows the main theme at measure

⁵³ Ludwig van Beethoven, "Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus Ballett," in *Beethoven: Werke: neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke – Ballettmusik*, Abteilung II, Band 2, Klaus Kropfing, ed. (Munich and Duisburg: G. Henle Verlag, 1970), 3.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 178.

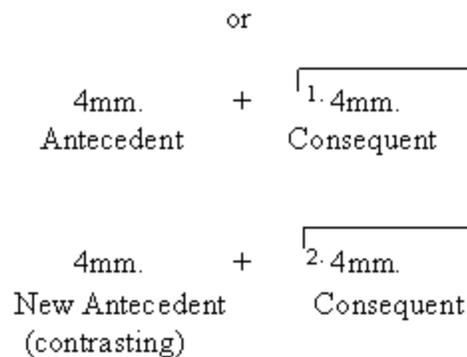
165, played by the flutes and oboes. The coda begins at measure 205 with a development of the main theme. A restatement of this theme, retaining its original key and structure but shifted up one octave, begins at measure 253.

The overture does not yet exhibit the mature stylistic qualities of Beethoven's later heroic works like the *Eroica* symphony, and it lacks the inherent drama of a full development section. The ballet suggests the heroic style, however, by the subject of heroism in the story of Prometheus; this work signals an early attempt by Beethoven to portray the ideal hero through music. The composition of the ballet also coincided with and possibly even stimulated his symphonic ambitions. With the exceptions of his first two symphonies, prior to the *Eroica* symphony the bulk of Beethoven's output had been in the small-scale genres of solo, chamber, and concerted keyboard works of an abstract nature. His appointment to compose a large-scale stage work afforded him the opportunity to explore the theme of heroism in a concrete way.

The final dance in the ballet depicts a celebration of Prometheus's triumph in the education of man, and it is here that Beethoven first employs the *Eroica* Theme. The melody appears in a contredanse form with minimal eighth- and sixteenth-note accompaniment in the woodwinds, a simple downbeat quarter-note bass in the low strings, and a full-scale countermelody in the second violins (see ex. 6, p. 20.)

The melody in ex. 6 is in a rounded binary form and it can be diagrammed in the following ways:

||: a¹ a² :||: b a³ :||



The first antecedent, the first consequent, and the second consequent are constructed from the same material and can form a cohesive group, labeled sections a¹ through a³. The second antecedent, labeled “b” in the first diagram, is the only contrasting section and ends on a dominant seventh chord.

Beethoven’s choice of a contredanse for the final episode of the *Prometheus* is significant when viewed in the context of the plot. In social dancing of the eighteenth century, the partners of each couple faced each other and executed steps in a synchronized way; this simple choreography better suited the amateur public than the professionals of Viganò’s company. Beethoven’s choice to set the finale in this particular dance type was most likely because of the dance’s egalitarian and democratic quality, permitting the participation of both high- and low-born, with the new leaders of mankind acting as the lead couple and the celestial beings whose company they have joined dancing in couples with them. The history of the contredanse makes the form a logical choice for the finale, in which the gods of Parnassus join Prometheus and his creations in

a festive dance celebrating the triumph of the Arts in the education of man and the inception of the creatures' leadership of humankind.⁵⁵

Although presented as a stylized dance to fit the choreography of the ballet, the contredanse Beethoven placed at the end of *Prometheus* exhibits many of the conventions of the popular dance style. The broad characteristics of a contradanse, including simple choreography, lively tempo, simple duple meter (although some are also set in compound duple meter), upbeats to and within phrases, cadences often occurring after the downbeat, periodic subdivisions of the beat into two and four, and phrases of four or eight strong beats, are features all are present in this section of Op. 43.⁵⁶ This particular style of contredanse, called *englische* in Vienna, was extremely popular in the 1790s, and it found its way into the final movement of the ballet. Beethoven faithfully observed the contemporary practices of social dance, even to the standard texture of the contredanse – a three-part texture, made up of two treble parts (one melody, the other accompaniment) and a bass, fulfilled in the violin I and II and bass parts. Since a male-female principal couple would lead the standard contredanse, the treble-bass polarity in the melody and bass serves the purpose of suggesting that the dance is led by the female and male creatures.

The ostinato found in the bass of the opening statement of the finale makes an organic connection with Dance No. 1 (Poco Adagio; Allegro con brio) in which a similar ostinato figure appears. The uneven and staggering bass of the first episode suggests that the creatures' first steps are timid and teetering. In his study of the representations of the

⁵⁵ See also p. 37, below, for a fuller history of this dance type.

⁵⁶ Bertagnolli, *Prometheus*, 80.

legend of Prometheus in music of the Romantic era, Paul A. Bertagnolli makes this connection between these two episodes, observing that the steady pattern of notes and rests that gather momentum toward the half cadence in measure eight of the finale exhibits the creatures' development.⁵⁷

The Eroica Theme that opens the finale serves as the refrain of a self-contained rondo. The theme itself follows the conventional models of rounded binary form, consisting of two repeated periods each symmetrically constructed of two four-measure phrases. These two phrases follow a basic tonal scheme, the first modulating from E-flat major (I) to B-flat (V), and the second period reversing the process and ending on the tonic. A fermata punctuates the second period, and Beethoven employs this pause to coordinate the music with the choreography.

The structure of this rondo is ABACADA, so the Eroica Theme is clearly stated throughout the movement. The essential contour of the melody is preserved, but it is enhanced with syncopated rhythms and extreme dynamic contrasts. A coda begins at measure 192, and here Beethoven discontinues the use of the Eroica Theme. Most of the orchestra falls silent at measure 193, leaving the clarinets and horns to sustain simple primary chords (I, ii, iii, and vii). The piece abruptly ends with tutti tonic chords and a timpani flourish. This basic analysis illustrates the simplicity of the finale theme.

Beethoven composed *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus*, his first full-fledged theatrical work, at a crucial juncture in his career. As music for the stage, *Die Geschöpfe*

⁵⁷ Ibid., 44.

des Prometheus was preceded only by his *Ritterballet* (WoO 1, 1790-91),⁵⁸ which consists of a series of disjointed dances of a generic quality and not a continuously danced dramatic piece. The completion of *Prometheus* at the start of the heroic period may have had a two-fold effect on the development of his signature style. The Viennese public warmly received several of the more popular numbers from the ballet in the Augarten concert series, greeting them “with uncommon applause, an honor ... heretofore never ... accorded to ballet music.”⁵⁹ This reception may have inspired Beethoven to explore further the potential of this musical material.

The subject matter of the libretto of the ballet may have had a certain bearing on the evolution of the heroic style as well. Many writers, philosophers, and musicians have been inspired by the legend of Prometheus, and the theme of heroism in the story held an interest for Beethoven, who produced multiple portrayals of a beneficent rescuer in subsequent works. The theme of heroism is clearly present in the stories of several works by Beethoven: in the celebration of Christ’s valor in *Christus am Ölberge*, through Leonore’s bravery and the power of love in *Fidelio*, and in the chronicle of a Flemish aristocrat’s rebellion against Spanish oppression in the overture to Goethe’s *Egmont*. Although these works are not linked through thematic musical material, they all portray the ideal hero. To summarize, Beethoven’s representation of heroism through music was born with *Prometheus* and grew through his further experimentation with the Eroica Theme.

⁵⁸ Kinsky, “WoO 1 Musik zu einem Ritterballett,” in *Das Werk Beethovens*, 427-29.

⁵⁹ Theodore Albrecht, trans. and ed., *Letters to Beethoven and Other Correspondence*, vol. 1 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 90.

Part II: WoO 14, *Zwölf Contretänze für Orchester*

In 1801, the Austrian Royal family gave Beethoven the opportunity to compose a set of dances for one of the city's winter balls. These public events, which began under the reign of Joseph II in 1773, were a highlight of the Viennese social calendar. Emperor Joseph's decree that the ballrooms in the Hofburg palace should be open to the public began a tradition that still continues. Common people mixed with the nobility at these events, and they brought many dances with them that were eventually included in the high-society repertoire of social dances. Some of these dances included the waltz, the folía, and the contredanse.⁶⁰

The *Zwölf Contretänze für Orchester* that comprise WoO 14 were written between 1800 and 1801 and were first mentioned in a Viennese newspaper on April 3, 1802.⁶¹ The Viennese formal ball season began in November, and Beethoven would have been pressed to produce material that could be used immediately. This may explain why two of the contredanses from *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus* are included in this set.

The contredanse was a stylized dance popular with both amateurs and professional choreographers in Beethoven's day. Beginning as a country dance of English origin, the contredanse was introduced at the French court in the 1680s and became the most popular French dance of the eighteenth century. The novelty of the contredanse's egalitarian, democratically progressive quality appealed to the younger generation in France. Oftentimes, English tunes were imported to accompany the dance itself. In 1706 the French publisher and choreographer Raoul Auger Feuillet (1653-1709)

⁶⁰ Sachs, *World History*, 413.

⁶¹ Kinsky, "WoO 14 *Zwölf Contretänze für Orchester*," in *Das Werk Beethovens*, 449-51.

published his *Recüeil de contredances*, which contains many English dances.⁶²

Greensleeves is one of the tunes included, with its title translated into French as *Les Manches vertes*, as is *Christ Church Bells*, here called *Le Carillon d'Oxford*.⁶³ French composers and dance-masters who employed these English melodies would sometimes alter the dance figures or the construction of the tune slightly, but the contredanse itself still maintained its original character.

The country dance type, as it existed in the seventeenth-century English countryside, included dances in circular, square, and long-ways formations. The slightly altered version performed in France in the late seventeenth century consisted exclusively of the long-ways formation, with each dancer facing his partner and all following a lead couple. Individual dancers or the lead couple chose the steps from the most popular steps of the time.

In his collection, Feuillet suggested the steps associated with the *gavotte*, *chassé*, *pas de bourée*, and *petit saut*, while contredanse tunes were also set in minuet, courante, and gigue rhythms.⁶⁴ Feuillet and English publications gave general advice on which steps to choose, leaving the dancers with room for improvisation. Along with the *Ländler*, the contredanse held the bottom-most position among ballroom dances. The minuet, sarabande, and *gavotte* were given the highest standing, since these forms required the most skill to execute, and the *bourrée* and gigue were considered moderately

⁶² Paris, 1706; translated into English by John Essex and re-published in London in 1710 under the title *For the Further Improvement of Dancing*. From Dorion Weickmann, "Choreography and Narrative: the *ballet d'action* of the Eighteenth Century," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ballet*, ed. Marion Kant (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 62.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Sachs, *World History*, 414-24.

difficult. The contredanse and *Ländler* ranked low in the hierarchy of respect, because no special skill was required to execute their simple choreography. The lack of inherent elitism in these latter dance types meant that anyone could participate in their execution regardless of social standing, and in turn this often meant that a contredanse ended social balls. During the repetitions of the theme, couples changed positions and partners, meaning that masters and servants often exchanged roles, creating an atmosphere temporarily free of class distinction.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, the contredanse had reached its most highly developed form. Each contredanse tune, which was most often set in a major tonality, consisted of two repeated sections; an elaborate figure lasting eight measures or more was danced nine times, with each repetition of the figure being preceded by an introduction eight measures in length. Contredanses were set in duple meter (2/4 or 6/8), and often began with a half-measure anacrusis.⁶⁵ Dancing across barlines was an important element of the French-style contredanse (and one that distinguished it from its English counterpart), either throughout a dance by treating the first half bar as an anacrusis or by creating rhythmic contrast within the dance.⁶⁶ This stylistic element is a prominent and recurring feature of the contredanse Beethoven provided for the finale of *Prometheus*. To avoid monotony, alternative figures of contrasting rhythms were sometimes inserted in between the nine repetitions of the tune of a contredanse, such as measures 17-42, 67-105, and 130-55 in the finale of *Prometheus*.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 55

⁶⁶ Richard Semmens, "Branles, Gavottes and Contredanses in the Later Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries," *Dance Research* 15 no. 2 (1997): 52, 55.

Beethoven's use of the contredanse in the finale of the ballet, as well as in the seventh of the twelve contredanses of WoO 14, fits the description given above for the basic form of the standard contredanse of the early eighteenth century. It appears in the following form in WoO 14:

13) *Zwölf Contretänze für Orchester*, No. 7, WoO 14 (1801): mm. 1-16

The image displays the first system of the musical score for the 7th Contredanse from WoO 14. The score is written for a full orchestra and is in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The instruments and their parts are:

- Clarinetti in B:** Part 1 starts with a *p* dynamic, followed by a *(p)* dynamic in the second measure.
- Corni in Es:** Part 1 starts with a *(p)* dynamic, followed by a *sf* dynamic in the second measure, and a *(p)* dynamic in the third measure.
- Violino I:** Starts with a *p dolce* dynamic, followed by a *cresc.* dynamic, a *sf* dynamic, and a *p* dynamic.
- Violino II:** Starts with a *p dolce* dynamic, followed by a *cresc.* dynamic, a *sf* dynamic, and a *p* dynamic.
- Violoncello e Contrabasso:** Starts with a *p* dynamic, followed by a *cresc.* dynamic, a *sf* dynamic, and a *p* dynamic.

The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings. The first system ends with a repeat sign. The second system begins with a *ff* dynamic marking and continues with various dynamics and musical notations.

Since the purpose of the composition was to serve as music for dance, there is no room for creative license to be taken with the melody. It is given in its most simple and basic form, and it suits the purpose for which it was intended. In its subsequent incarnations, the Op. 35 piano variations and the symphonic finale of Op. 55, the Eroica

Theme is subjected to various permutations and altered until it was almost unrecognizable. These alterations were in fact part of the experimentation that led to the emergence of Beethoven's "new way" of composing.

Part III: Op. 35, *Fünfzehn Variationen (Es-dur) mit einer Fuge für Klavier*

The paradigmatic form of the Eroica Theme was firmly established in Op. 43 and WoO 14, and Beethoven began exploring the numerous possibilities offered by this simple idea in the Op. 35 piano variations. The Eroica Theme pervades the piece, and despite its traditional form and straightforward nature, the composer varied and developed the theme in such a way that Op. 35 stands apart from his preceding works.

Beethoven chose to use simple, flexible melodies as themes for the sets of variations that make up Opp. 34 and 35.⁶⁷ The Eroica Theme was pliable material with which to experiment with his "new way" of composing in the latter work. In 1930, Heinrich Schenker published an essay discussing Beethoven's use of the Eroica Theme in Op. 35, and this analysis provided an in-depth look at the way in which Beethoven molded a borrowed melody to fit a new form.⁶⁸ Schenker observed that its use in Op. 35 and the finale of Op. 55 are so closely related that Beethoven's terminology for the melody (*tema*) and the bass (*basso del tema*) from Op. 35 can be utilized to designate the same material as it appears in the finale of the *Eroica* Symphony.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ The relationship between the Op. 34 and 35 piano variations will be discussed in more detail below.

⁶⁸ Nicholas Marston, "Notes to a Heroic Analysis: A Translation of Schenker's Unpublished Study of Beethoven's Variation, Op. 35," in *19th Century Piano Music: Essays in Performance and Analysis*, edited by David Witten (New York: Garland, 1997), 15.

⁶⁹ "A close connection to the form of Opus 35 is so clear in the Finale of the Third Symphony that Beethoven's express indications can also be used here. Thus, one can call the group of bars 1-76 the 'Introduzione col Basso del Tema;' the 'Tema' follows in bars 76-107. Instead of the chain of fifteen

Opp. 34 and 35 are original in comparison to Beethoven's previously composed sets of piano variations.⁷⁰ They were conceived together and sent to the publisher as such. In addition to being submitted to the publishing firm at the same time, Opp. 34 and 35 constitute a unit in a thematic way, linked through a common idea. They are connected to the finale of the *Eroica* symphony through their similarity as theme and variation sets that include modulations to different keys. Prior to Beethoven's composition of Opp. 34 and 35, many theme and variations sets modulated only as far as parallel or relative minor modes. Although modulations occur less often in Op. 35 than in Op. 34, in which the key changes with each variation, it is important to note that experimentation of this kind is present in both. The innovative ideas presented in Opp. 34 and 35 include the concept of independence of the material via differing elements of key, rhythm, and tempo. The following examples illustrate the themes of Opp. 34 and 35, followed by a version in which multiple elements (key, rhythm, tempo, meter, register) have been altered to create an original interpretation of that theme:

variations in the main key, which it would be impossible to translate into an orchestral work – and surely not in a symphony – there appears in its place a fugal passage, which, like that of the 'Finale alla fuga' in Opus 35, has the function of presenting as many contrasting other sonorities to the E-flat major main sonority as possible." "Eine enge Anbindung an die Form des Opus 35 ist so deutlich in die Finale der Dritten Symphonie, dass Beethovens Express Angaben können auch verwendet werden hier. So, ein Anruf kann die Gruppe der Bars 1-76 der 'Introduzione col Basso del Tema' im Folgenden 'Tema' folgt in Bars 76-107. Anstelle der Kette von fünfzehn Variationen in den wichtigsten Schlüssel, der es unmöglich wäre, zu übersetzen in ein Orchester-Arbeit – und sicher nicht in eine Symphonie – es erscheint an ihrer Stelle ein fugal Passage, die, wie die der 'Finale alla fuga' in Opus 35, hat die Funktion, die so viele gegensätzliche anderen Klängen der Es-Dur wichtigsten Klangfülle wie möglich." Heinrich Schenker, *Das Meisterwerk der Musik*, vol. 3 (Vienna: Drei Masken Verlag, 1930), 75.

⁷⁰ Georg Kinsky, "Opus 34, *Sechs Variationen (F-dur) für Klavier*," and "Opus 35, *Fünfzehn Variationen (Es-dur) mit einer Fuge für Klavier*," in *Das Werke Beethovens thematisch-bibliographisches Verzeichnis seiner sämtlichen vollendeten Kompositionen* completed and ed. by Hans Halm (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 1955), 87-8.

14) Sechs Variationen für das Pianoforte, Opus 34, Tema: mm. 1 – 4⁷¹

Adagio
Cantabile

15) Sechs Variationen für das Pianoforte, Opus 34, Var. II: mm. 48 – 51⁷²

Allegro, ma non troppo

⁷¹ Ludwig van Beethoven, “Sechs Variationen für das Pianoforte, Opus 34,” in *Ludwig van Beethovens Werke: Vollständige kritisch durchgesehene überall berechnigte Ausgabe*, Serie 17, no.162 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1862); repr., *Series A: Complete Works and Monumenta No. 2 Ludwig van Beethoven’s Werke*, vol. 17 (Ann Arbor: J.W. Edwards, 1949), 1.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 4.

16) Fünfzehn Variationen mit Fuge für das Pianoforte, Opus 35, Tema: mm. 68 – 75⁷³

The image displays three systems of musical notation for the first three systems of the 'Fünfzehn Variationen mit Fuge' by Beethoven, Opus 35. The score is in G minor, 2/4 time, and consists of three systems of two staves each. The first system starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *dolce* marking. The second system features a forte (*sf*) dynamic followed by a *decresc.* marking and then a piano (*p*) dynamic. The third system begins with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic and a *decresc.* marking, followed by a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *dolce* marking. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

⁷³ Ludwig van Beethoven, "Fünfzehn Variationen mit Fuge für das Pianoforte, Opus 35", in *Ludwig van Beethovens Werke: Vollständige kritisch durchgesehene überall berechnigte Ausgabe*, Serie 17, no.163 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1862); repr., *Series A: Complete Works and Monumenta No. 2 Ludwig van Beethoven's Werke*, vol. 17 (Ann Arbor: J.W. Edwards, 1949), 12.

17) Fünfzehn Variationen mit Fuge für das Pianoforte, Op. 35, Var. VI: mm. 167 – 174⁷⁴

The image shows two systems of musical notation for Variation VI of Op. 35. The first system is marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and features a treble clef with chords and a bass clef with a rhythmic accompaniment. The second system is marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic and features a treble clef with chords and a bass clef with a rhythmic accompaniment. The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat).

Much of the importance of Op. 35 is that it appears to serve as a thematic sketch for the finale of Symphony No. 3, Op. 55. An in-depth analysis of the Op. 35 piano variations forecasts many of the innovations that are present in the *Eroica* finale.⁷⁵ One example of this influence can be seen in the alteration of the key of the *Eroica* Theme in one of its repetitions:

18) Dritte Symphonie (*Eroica*), Op. 55, oboe: mm. 78 – 85⁷⁶

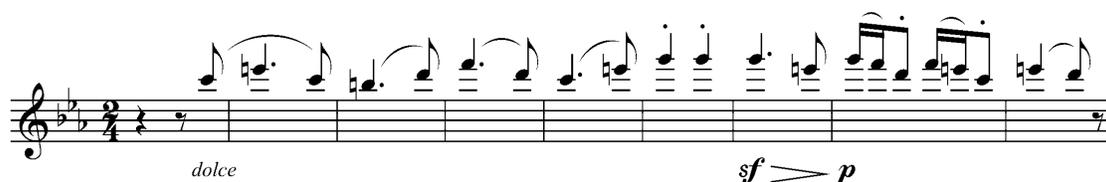
The image shows a single system of musical notation for the oboe part of the third movement of the *Eroica* Symphony. The music is in 2/4 time and features a melodic line with various dynamics: *dol.* (dolce), *cresc.* (crescendo), *sf* (sforzando), *decresc.* (decrescendo), and *p* (piano). The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat).

⁷⁴ Ibid., 15.

⁷⁵ Lockwood, *Studies*, 147.

⁷⁶ Ludwig van Beethoven, "Dritte Symphonie (*Eroica*), Opus 55", in *Ludwig van Beethovens Werke: Vollständige kritisch durchgesehene überall berechtigte Ausgabe*, Serie 1, no.3 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1862); repr., *Series A: Complete Works and Monumenta No. 2 Ludwig van Beethoven's Werke*, vol. 17 (Ann Arbor: J.W. Edwards, 1949), 184.

19) Dritte Symphonie (Eroica), Opus 55, flute: mm. 260 – 267⁷⁷



This modulation in the key of the melody from one variation to another in the *Eroica* Symphony is one of Beethoven's experimental ideas that appears in both Opp. 34 and 35.

Discussions of *Fünfzehn Variationen mit einer Fuge*, Op. 35, often address the question of whether the Eroica Theme (in this piece, referred to as the *tema*) or the bass (*basso del tema*) is the main thematic material of the work. Op. 35 adheres to the conventional practice of constructing variations based on the structure of the Eroica Theme. It states this material in its most basic and straightforward form, and then varies the rhythmic structure, dynamics, tempo, texture, and key of the material. Based on these facts, one might come to the conclusion that the Eroica Theme comprises the main theme of Op. 35. Schenker, however, highlights the importance of the large-movement form rather than of the structural role of the theme. In doing so he places less importance on the *tema* and more on the *basso del tema*.

In his analysis of Op. 35, Donald Francis Tovey also focuses on the bass as the theme of the work. Although the *tema* (the Eroica Theme) is an important structural element of Op. 35, Tovey believes (and I agree with him) that Beethoven considered the

⁷⁷ Ibid., 194.

basso del tema to be the main thematic material of the work.⁷⁸ Tovey discusses each variation and describes how the material is transformed and developed. Further exploration of each variation of this work leads to an appreciation of how fully Beethoven expanded upon the relatively simple Eroica Theme through the various permutations of the *tema* of Op. 35.

After an initial introductory presentation of the *basso del tema* in double octaves in the middle and low registers, there is a series of statements of the *basso del tema* in different textures. At measure 19, the *basso del tema* can be found in the bass-clef line of a duet; a trio begins at measure 35 and finds the bass theme in the middle of a dialogue that exists in the left hand as it moves between notes in the treble and bass registers; and a march-like presentation for four voices, labeled *a quattro* occurs at measure 51, in which the *basso del tema* moves to the uppermost voice. The *tema* is finally stated in its most basic version beginning at measure 68:

⁷⁸ Donald Francis Tovey, *Essays in Musical Analysis*, vol. VI, *Supplementary Essays, Glossary, and Index* (New York: Oxford, 1957), 32.

20) Fünfzehn Variationen mit Fuge für das Pianoforte, Opus 35, *Tema*: mm. 68 – 75⁷⁹

In the first eight variations, Beethoven focuses on applying various treatments to the *tema*. Variation I begins at measure 85; in it, the *tema* is ornamented in a fanciful way, staying true to the rounded binary form, complete with dramatic pause at the beginning of the fourth measure of the b section (measure twelve of the Eroica Theme). The flexibility of the second half of the *tema* allows Beethoven creative license to introduce new harmonic and melodic ideas later in the piece, but in this first variation, he

⁷⁹ Beethoven, “Fünfzehn Variationen mit Fuge für das Pianoforte, Opus 35,” *Beethoven Ausgabe*, 12.

conforms strictly to the pre-existing design of the *tema*. The version of the *tema* in Variation II takes the form of arpeggiated passages in triplet rhythmic figures. If the *tema* was not plainly stated in the introductory material, it would be difficult for a listener to recognize it in this form. Variation III (measures 117 to 132) is a fast-paced section in which neither the theme nor its bass is easily distinguishable, but in which the harmonic scheme remains intact. Leaps between high and low register notes in both hands give it a whimsical, lighthearted quality.

According to Tovey, Variation IV is “a running etude for the left hand” that contains a skeleton of the *tema* played by the right hand in short, soft notes, so as not to distract from the virtuosic display by the left hand.⁸⁰ The graceful statement of the *tema* in a cantabile style that occurs in Variation V stands in stark contrast to the energetic, racing figures in Variation IV. Although the upper line contributes the main substance of the melody, the left hand line plays an important part in adding to the melodic material in this variation. The *basso del tema* is absent from this variation, and Beethoven explores the ambiguity of whether the *tema* or the *basso del tema* is the true theme of the work. This ambiguity is yet another innovation in this ground-breaking set of variations.

In keeping with Beethoven’s usual practice of surprising his audience with unexpected twists, the key of Variation VI shifts from E flat major into the relative key of C minor through an alteration of harmonies. This is the first variation in which the *tema* is clearly heard – it is reharmonized in C minor without being transposed. The change of key lasts for 30 measures before returning to the tonic in the last two measures of the

⁸⁰ Tovey, *Essays*, 32.

variation. This leads into Variation VII (m. 191), a two-part canon at the octave. Beethoven's use of such a supposedly archaic form in a new work with so many novel techniques and ideas brings with it an element of wit through irony. In contrast to the structure and strict order of the previous section, Variation VIII is one of the most Romantic moments in the piece. This section serves as a precursor to the free and singing style of piano writing found in the Romantic era in which liberal use of the pedal extends and blurs notes.

The previous eight variations deal with the modification of the *tema*, but in Variation IX Beethoven shifts the focus back to the *basso del tema*. This variation, which begins at measure 228 and lasts through measure 247, returns to the bold and brilliant style of piano writing that was first introduced in Variation II. Beethoven's manner of incorporating the *basso del tema* into this variation is subtle. A series of repeated B-flats (a dominant pedal point) are set in the rhythm of the *basso del tema* without adhering to its original contour. Each repeated B-flat is preceded by a grace note, all of which, taken together, present the pitches of the *basso del tema*.

The *tema*, hardly recognizable since the sixth variation, remains obscure in Variation X, which provides only its basic binary structure. While sections a¹ and a² of the *tema* are simple and straightforward, the interest in the b section lies in its flexibility. Beethoven further alters the melody in this variation, using a pianissimo dynamic with a light, playful texture. The b section of the *tema* begins at measure 257; and in a more conventional piece, the melody would move to the dominant, from E-flat to B-flat. Instead, Beethoven shifts the pitch up a half-step from B-flat to C-flat in an abrupt change

of character. A lighthearted melodic idea is introduced in Variation XI, and, although the contour differs from the original *tema*, the basic rounded binary structure is retained.

Both Variations XII and XIII are further examples of Beethoven's playful side. Variation XII features a dialogue in contrary motion between the right and left hands, together with extreme changes in dynamics. The contrast of pitch and dynamics between the two voices gives the impression of an argument. In Variation XIII (beginning at measure 301), Beethoven uses intervals of seconds to contrast the basic tonic and dominant chords in a jarring and raucous manner.

The character of the music shifts again at the start of Variation XIV, and, along with the sudden change of tonality to E-flat minor, there is a reversal of role for the *basso del tema*. In the initial statement of this variation, the *basso del tema* appears as a melody played by the right hand, and thematic material appears below it. In the repetition, the *basso del tema* returns to its position in the bass clef staff, and melodic material derived from the *tema* is heard above. When the movement of the variation slows down at measure 350, an ascending run leads back into the major tonality at the beginning of Variation XV. This last variation before the fugue is set in an extremely slow 6/8, and the broad tempo allows room for ornamentation of the *tema*. Although Beethoven does nothing to alter the original framework of the melody, his ornamentation and its significant expansion make the *tema* almost unrecognizable in this last variation. Below is an example of the *tema* as compared with the version presented in Variation XV to show the relationship between them:

21)

The image shows two staves of music. The top staff is labeled 'Tune' and is in 2/4 time, featuring a simple melody with quarter and eighth notes. The bottom staff is labeled 'Var. 15' and is in 6/8 time, showing a more complex and ornamented version of the melody with sixteenth notes, trills, and a 'etc.' marking at the end.

The expanded version of the *tema* lasts for 33 measures, with the ornamentation becoming more and more complex. The principal interest lies in Beethoven's treatment of the second half of the melody beginning at measure 377, where he is less constrained than in the first half of the *tema* and exercises greater harmonic and melodic freedom. In the coda of Variation XV, Beethoven reintroduces the statement of the theme in C minor, similar to the way it appeared in Variation VI. Therefore, Variations VI and XV are linked harmonically by the fact that they are both in C minor. Rhythmically they differ, as the presentation of the *tema* has been altered from the form in which it appears in Variation VI to sound as follows:

22) Fünfzehn Variationen mit Fuge für das Pianoforte, Opus 35, Var. VI: mm. 167 – 174 ⁸¹

The image shows two staves of music. The top staff is labeled 'Tune' and is in 2/4 time, featuring a simple melody with quarter and eighth notes. The bottom staff is labeled 'Var. VI' and is in 2/4 time, showing a more complex and ornamented version of the melody with sixteenth notes, trills, and a 'etc.' marking at the end.

⁸¹ Beethoven, "Fünfzehn Variationen mit Fuge für das Pianoforte, Opus 35", *Beethoven Ausgabe*, 15.

23) Fünfzehn Variationen mit Fuge für das Pianoforte, Opus 35, Var. XV, Coda: mm. 393 – 395 ⁸²

The musical score for Variation XV, Coda, measures 393-395, is presented in two staves. The key signature is C minor (three flats) and the time signature is 6/8. The first staff (treble clef) begins with a piano (*p*) and expressive (*espressivo*) section, characterized by a melodic line with grace notes and a supporting bass line. The second staff (bass clef) provides harmonic support. A crescendo leads to a fortissimo (*sf*) section, followed by a piano (*p*) section with the word "etc." written below the staff.

In this variation, sections a^1 and a^2 of the *tema* fit into two measures rather than the standard eight, and the harmony hovers around the dominant of C minor until a dramatic pause leads into the start of the fugue.

The fugue is founded on the first four notes of the *basso del tema*:

24) Fünfzehn Variationen mit Fuge für das Pianoforte, Opus 35: mm. 402 – 406 ⁸³:

The musical score for Variation XV, measures 402-406, is presented in a single staff with a treble clef. The key signature is C minor (three flats) and the time signature is 2/4. The tempo marking is "Allegro con brio" and the dynamic marking is piano (*p*). The melody begins on the second half of the first beat of the measure.

A foreshadowing of the finale of the *Eroica* Symphony occurs at measure 463 of the fugue through the reversal of the normal accent structure of the a^1 section of the *tema*. The melody begins on the second half of the first beat of the measure rather than on an anacrusis (which also occurs at its appearance at measure 294 of the *Eroica* Symphony finale):

⁸² Ibid., 23.

⁸³ Ibid., 24.

25) Fünfzehn Variationen mit Fuge für das Pianoforte, Op. 35: mm. 463 – 465 ⁸⁴

Schenker considered the fugue in Opus 35 to correspond with the “free” section in measures 107 – 277 of the *Eroica* finale. Although the fugue of Op. 35 does not have the extensive episodes found in the finale of the symphony, it is possible to see that this work served as more or less a preliminary sketch of ideas used in the later work. Op. 35 does not end with the fugue; the expected cadential tonic of the finale is delayed in measures 581 – 604 by means of a thematic reprise variation.

Neither Schenker nor Tovey devotes much attention to the relationships among variations, since the main concern of both lies in the relationship of each variation to the original versions of the *tema* and the *basso del tema*. Schenker and Tovey maintain that the *tema* should be regarded as secondary in importance to the *basso del tema* in the variations of Op. 35, and I agree with this conclusion.⁸⁵ Beethoven approached the simple and straightforward *Eroica* Theme in a variety of ways, and his readiness to modify all aspects of a musical theme in realizing the potential of that idea allowed his compositional style to evolve into what would become known as heroic.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 25.

⁸⁵ Marston, *19th Century Piano*, 21.

Part IV: Op. 55, *Symphonie Nr. 3* (“*Sinfonia eroica*,” *Es-dur*)

In Op. 35, Beethoven modified and varied the Eroica Theme in an extensive but comparatively superficial way. He altered many aspects of the melody: tempo, rhythm, timbre, register, dynamics, and mode. The theme of the Opus 55 finale was built upon the ideas of Opus 35, and Beethoven pushed the melodic material to the limits of its potential in the *Eroica* symphony. In this final incarnation of the borrowed Eroica Theme, Beethoven experimented with form and structure. Through these experiments, Beethoven’s heroic style came to fruition.

The familiar history of the *Eroica* symphony has been retold in numerous sources.⁸⁶ Beethoven originally dedicated it to Napoleon Bonaparte, but when the general proclaimed himself emperor, Beethoven became angry and excised the dedication to Napoleon from the title page of the work. He then added a new subtitle reading, “Composta per festeggiare il sovvenire d’un grand’uomo” (“composed to celebrate the memory of a great man”). The symphony celebrated the abstract concept of the ideal hero, rather than a specific person. The composer strove to depict selfless heroes in several of his other works as well, individuals like Egmont and Leonore who were willing to risk their lives to overthrow tyrants. The same principles and ideals that helped nurture the French Revolution motivated these champions, as well as the heroic spirit of the young Beethoven.

Even more so than his previous works, this piece is viewed as a declaration of Beethoven’s personal and political independence. Largely through the *Eroica*,

⁸⁶ Kinsky, “*Opus 55 Symphonie Nr. 3* (“*Sinfonia eroica*”, *Es-dur*),” in *Das Werk Beethoven*, 128-31.

Beethoven distanced himself from the attitude of the previous century, in which composers were considered to be on almost the same level as servants. While the *Eroica* was not an overt political statement, it embodied significant political views prominent at the turn of the nineteenth century, the ideals with which Beethoven sympathized. With this work, Beethoven the republican asserted his belief in liberty.

The culmination of Beethoven's experiments with the *Eroica* Theme occurs in the finale of Op. 55, which represents a breakthrough in Beethoven's ideas about form. It is a complex blend of variations and developmental structures that had no precedent or contemporary formal analogue. The movement is atypical in formal organization, incorporating elements of sonata form as well as theme and variations. Determining the form of the finale of the *Eroica* Symphony has been a point of discussion among Beethoven scholars. Lockwood argues for sonata form, suggesting that the three phases of the finale he discerns can be labeled: thematic creation, elaboration, and conclusion.⁸⁷ In Lockwood's "elaboration" section, unrealized facets of the theme are developed, similar to the development of thematic material in a sonata-form movement. Broyles believes the underlying formal organization is theme and variations, although it includes fugal segments and other interpolations, but he also makes a reasoned argument for considering it a hybrid of sonata form and theme and variations. According to Broyles,

The question of structural identification of the last movement of the *Eroica* is important, because of all forms used by the Classical composer, sonata form and theme and variations are aesthetically the most remote, and it is in this chasm itself, rather than the nature of one form or the

⁸⁷ Lockwood, *Studies*, 165.

other, that the key to understanding the finale of the *Eroica* may be found.⁸⁸

This innovative fusion of two firmly established Classical paradigms indicates that Beethoven was developing a new style of composition, a new phase of his career.

The finale begins with an introduction of eleven measures. The first three measures are rooted firmly in G minor, a foreign key that Beethoven initially alludes to in the seventh measure of the *Eroica* Symphony's first movement. The key of E-flat major is foreshadowed in the fourth measure of the finale and by the sixth measure is firmly established. A fermata appears over the dominant-seventh chord of E-flat in measure 11. Following this, the strings present a bass melody in pizzicato octaves. Although Beethoven does not designate it as such, this bass melody is the *basso del tema* of Op. 35.

In Variation I (measure 44), the second violins state the *basso del tema*, accompanied by first violins and violoncelli. In Variation II (measure 60) the second violins pass the *basso del tema* to the first violins, where it is accompanied by triplet figures in the rest of the strings. The melody itself, the *Eroica* Theme, appears in four to one counterpoint in Variation III at measure 76, a contrast to the mere scaffolding provided by the *basso del tema* in the first two variations. Beethoven assigns this melodic material to the oboe, and its harmonic support is provided by the other woodwinds and lower strings, together with sixteenth-note runs in the first violins. Measures 107 through 116 comprise a transition that distinctly breaks from the variation form and modulates away from E-flat major. If the finale were in traditional sonata form,

⁸⁸ Michael Broyles, *Beethoven: The Emergence and Evolution of Beethoven's Heroic Style* (New York: Excelsior, 1987), 89.

this section would provide a link from the exposition to the development section.

Because the finale is an amalgam of theme and variations and sonata form, it simply serves as a smooth transition into a new variation (IV) at measure 117.⁸⁹

Variation IV begins with a fugue in C minor based on the *basso del tema*.

Beginning at this point, the rounded binary form of the theme is abandoned, the original version of the *basso del tema* is used sparingly, and there are modulations to various keys; all of these factors indicate that this section is developmental. The British use the term *fantasy* for the middle portion of a sonata form movement, and this term aptly describes Variation IV. Beethoven spent his first ten years in Vienna participating in piano competitions in which the challenge was to improvise sets of theme and variations, and this section of Op. 35 showcases Beethoven's dexterity in the development of a theme.

At measure 175, Variation V begins as a double variation (one in which the repeats are themselves varied), and commences with a restatement of the Eroica Theme in B minor by the introduction of an F-sharp in the flute and the first violins, quickly leading into D major at measure 180. This restatement of the Eroica Theme in B minor is reminiscent of the sixth variation of Opus 35, which restates the Eroica Theme (there referred to as the *tema*) in C minor. Variation VI begins at measure 211 with a march-like variation of the Eroica Theme in G minor. The G-minor tonality links this section to

⁸⁹ Beethoven used transitions in a different way than did Haydn and Mozart. Where the latter two would place a repeat sign at the end of an exposition, the former wrote out a first and second ending, the second of which serving as a transitory segue into the development of a sonata form piece (the first movement of the *Eroica* symphony is an excellent example of such an occasion.) In this respect, Beethoven moves beyond the tonal structure used by Mozart and Haydn. A study of Beethoven's use of transitions will be undertaken in a later paper.

the beginning and end of this movement, as well as to the opening theme of the first movement (measure 7) of the symphony. A cadential extension occurs between measures 242 and 256, emphasizing a G minor cadence and ending with an abrupt modulation to C major at measure 257. Both the Eroica Theme and the *basso del tema* appear at the start of Variation VII (measure 257) in the key of C major, and then the Eroica Theme is restated in the minor by the second violin, violas, celli, and basses.

Beethoven applies some elements of double counterpoint between the melody and the bass theme as a segue into the fugue of Variation VIII. This fugue (beginning at measure 277) incorporates syncopation and employs the *basso del tema*, stated in its original form and contrasted with its inversion. This variation contributes to the case for a pseudo-development section in its large-scale fugal treatment of the *basso del tema* and the buildup of fugal entrances in stretto to a climax at measure 348.

In a traditional sonata-form movement, a lengthy passage supported by a pedal point on a dominant seventh chord would signal the end of the retransition section.⁹⁰ In this hybrid form, a B-flat dominant pedal heralds a restatement of the original melody in E-flat major in a hymn-like manner by the woodwinds at the *poco andante* of Variation IX. This variation begins what is most analogous to a recapitulation section in a traditional sonata form movement. Variation IX (beginning at measure 349) is a double

⁹⁰ Beth Shamgar, "On Locating the Retransition in Classic Sonata Form," *The Music Review* 42 (1981): 130-43. Shamgar's use of the term "retransition" refers to a segue to the first theme of the exposition in a transition between the development and recapitulation sections, also referred to as an "altered transition," "new transition," or "lead back." My use of the term "retransition" is in reference to the transition at the end of what roughly translates to the development section of this movement, and I use the term in the same way as Shamgar.

variation in which the repeat is varied. A syncopated version of the melody is introduced at measure 365 in four-against-six counterpoint in the oboes, clarinets, and bassoons.

The Eroica Theme appears in the bass of the tenth and final variation, which is marked *fortissimo* and begins at measure 381. Another transition begins at measure 396, beginning in E-flat major, but then modulating to A-flat major and leading up through rising chromatic bass motion (E-flat minor) to a G minor tonic pedal point at measure 420.

The movement is brought to a close with a coda (measure 431) marked *presto*. Measure 431 marks a full return of the foreign key of G minor, as well as of the running sixteenth notes that open the movement. The tonic key of E-flat major is then reestablished, and a suspenseful series of scales and arpeggios leads to tonic chords that bring the entire symphony to an end.

Although Op. 35 and Op. 55 have many characteristics in common, the first was conceived for piano, while Beethoven composed the second with the orchestra in mind. The material that follows the introductory section in Op. 35 consists of fifteen variations, most of which are not appropriate for orchestral transcription owing to their pianistic characteristics. Beethoven reshapes material originally presented in Op. 35 in his symphonic finale by presenting the theme in different ways, orchestrating the material, and incorporating fugue-like elements to ensure the suitability of the variations to the symphonic medium.

A detailed comparison of the two works illustrates the way in which Beethoven used the basic *tema* and *basso del tema* from the Op. 35 piano variations to sketch out the

plan for the *Eroica* finale. The entries in the Landsberg 6 sketchbook illustrate the process by which Beethoven elaborated on the material.⁹¹ The following chart provides details concerning the relationship between the *Eroica* Theme and the *basso del tema* in each variation of the finale of Op. 55:

Measure	Segment	Function	Tonal Center
1-11	Introduction	Introduction – provides material to lead into the first statement of the <i>Basso del Tema</i> – same material opens the coda	g – E-flat
12-43	“Basso del Tema” (BdT)	Pseudo-Exposition begins: (a) BdT – 4 4 + 4 4 a ¹ a ² b a ³ (rounded binary form)	E-flat
44-59	Variation I	(b) BdT “A tre” BdT in mid-register; strings only; 8 th note motion	E-flat
60-75	Variation II	(c) BdT “A quattro” BdT in upper register; strings only; note values in triplet motion	E-flat
76-beat 1 of 107	Variation III	(d) “Eroica Theme” (ET) - Upper line theme emerges over BdT ; repeats now written out and reorchestrated; winds first time, strings/tutti second time – double variation	E-flat
Anacrusis to beat 2 of 107-16	Transition	Transition to pseudo-development section with modulation to V of c minor	E-flat – V/c
117-74	Variation IV	Beginning of development section - Fugato I on BdT incipit	c – f – b-flat – A-flat – b
175-206	Variation V	ET in flute and oboe	b – D

⁹¹ Lockwood, *Studies*, 155.

Beat 2 of 206-10	Transition	Transition	D – g
211-42	Variation VI	March-like theme; Upper line march theme in dotted rhythm with BdT in bass register	G
242-56	Cadential extension	Emphasis of a g cadence ending with an abrupt modulation to C	G
257-76	Variation VII	Further development of ET (in flute) and BdT ; then ET in viola with its inversion in violin II	C – c – F
277-348	Variation VIII	Fugato II on two subjects: inversion of BdT incipit & rhythmic diminution of ET with extension on a lengthy V pedal point (beginning in m. 328)	E-flat – A-flat – E-flat (V pedal)
349-80	Variation IX	Pseudo-recapitulation section begins - Poco Andante, ET is reharmonized and reorchestrated (woodwinds predominate), then builds to Variation 10	E-flat
381-95	Variation X	Climactic statement of ET in bass register;	E-flat
396-430	Transition	New elaboration in A-flat (mm. 403ff.) leads through rising chromatic bass motion to G minor (420-430)	E-flat – A-flat – e-flat – g
431-73	Coda	Presto. Re-elaborates Introduction and brings fragments of ET as closing figures	G – E-flat

Among Beethoven's heroic works, the *Eroica* Symphony was a crowning achievement. This symphony codified the sentiments the composer harbored at the time: a belief in heroism, social equality, and freedom from political and social oppression. His use of the *Eroica* Theme in such a monumental work can be interpreted as indicating that there is a programmatic connection between Prometheus the mythic hero and the memory of hero in the *Eroica* symphony. The simple *Eroica* Theme and *basso del tema*

became the foundation on which Beethoven built the conclusion of one of the greatest works of his middle period, a symphony that powerfully evokes the enduring symbol of the prolix Promethean struggle for individual self expression and freedom.

Beethoven's unusual gesture of borrowing a single theme from himself so often in so short a period of time draws specific attention to this group of four pieces. From a simple approach to an innovative and complex formal structure, the Eroica Theme lends itself well to different settings. An understanding of the reasons behind this stylistic shift helps explain why Beethoven was so interested in the simple Eroica Theme. As Broyles says, "Beethoven's incredible tenacity, the same force that compelled him to work and rework the same composition, is also present on a larger scale, as, either dissatisfied with a fit or sensing that the same resources could yield more fruit, he often attacked the same compositional problem more than once."⁹²

⁹² Broyles, *Beethoven*, 3.

CONCLUSION

Beethoven continued to adhere to Classical principles in the developmental stage of the heroic style, but his many experiments with formal structure pointed toward a new compositional approach. An illustration of such tendencies is found in a variety of works of this period besides those that feature the Eroica Theme. Beethoven demonstrated his independence of thought in the three sonatas of Op. 2 by including a minuet and trio as the third movement of these four-movement piano sonatas, an idea more common to the string quartets of the Classical era. Another instance occurs in his second symphony, Op. 36. As Broyles points out, “The Second Symphony, not the *Eroica*, is the piece in which Beethoven challenged Classical procedures by reserving the denouement of the coda, and Beethoven’s unorthodox approach to the recapitulation suggests that this challenge was direct and calculated.”⁹³

Other examples of experimentation occur in the piano sonatas that make up Opp. 26, 27, and 31, as well as in the three violin sonatas of Op. 30 and the *Kreutzer* Sonata, all of which represent deviations from established musical forms and structures.⁹⁴ The character of his melodies, his rhetorical emphasis, and his poetic tone remain well within Classical criteria, but these works also represent some of the purest manifestations of the late 18th century sonata style in his works.⁹⁵ Beethoven’s approach toward composition in the experimental stage discussed above is a synthesis of two stylistic currents of melodic expression that emerged in the late 1700s, the sonata style and the symphonic

⁹³ Broyles, *Beethoven*, 70.

⁹⁴ Lockwood, *Studies*, 148.

⁹⁵ Broyles, *Beethoven*, 62.

style. Broyles defines the sonata style as being more intimate and detailed, as well as having a vocal character, expressive flexibility and potential for varied expression; the symphonic style, on the other hand, has a clearly defined, exalted character, expresses grandeur, and is brilliant and majestic.⁹⁶ Classical and modern theorists alike have acknowledged these two styles as steadfast characteristics of Classicism, and their use was not determined by genre.⁹⁷ According to Broyles, “Not only were the two styles mixed in the same genre but frequently even in the same piece and in the same movement.”⁹⁸ By the 1790s, however, the symphonic style became more prevalent, possibly because of the enhanced position of the symphony as it became more clearly defined stylistically and as a genre. The symphonic style was so predominant at that time that composers such as Haydn and Clementi were writing with increasing frequency in this style. The sonata style had not disappeared however, and through Beethoven’s strong adherence to it, his new heroic approach began to emerge. His effort to embrace the sonata style suggests that even before Opus 35, Beethoven employed original treatments within the prescribed structures of Classicism. Despite the grandiose quality of Beethoven’s music from the early 1800s, the degree to which he maintained the balance of the symphonic and sonata styles in these works is a crucial element in defining his evolving heroic style.

The music of the French Revolution also had an important influence on Beethoven’s emergent compositional approach. One can trace Beethoven’s fascination

⁹⁶ Broyles, *Beethoven*, 10-11.

⁹⁷ See William S. Newman, *The Sonata in the Classic Era* (New York: Norton, 1983) for a discussion of the sonata and symphonic styles.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

with French music back to the year 1798, when he was introduced to the music of the Parisian festivals of the 1790s by fellow composer Rodolphe Kreutzer.⁹⁹ One should note that not all French music at this time was revolutionary. The music of the *Fêtes* served a celebratory function. It was, however, the revolutionary spirit permeating most French music of this time that truly captured the young Beethoven's attention. French revolutionary music is characterized by its tone of seriousness and grandeur, a militaristic quality that reflected the national revolutionary attitude, an emphasis on vocal melody, and a predisposition toward massive sonorities. These elements can certainly be found in many of Beethoven's heroic works, although they can also be understood as descending from Classicism.¹⁰⁰

The seriousness of his middle period works and the overall theme of struggle and heroism are also elements that Beethoven derived from the ideas of the revolution. *Fidelio*, for example, was a rescue opera in which the heroine must extricate her husband from prison and a death sentence. Evidence also exists for specific motivic relationships between the works of the heroic period and French revolutionary music. The most obvious example is that of the first four notes of the Fifth Symphony. Similar rhythms can be found not only in the works of Cherubini and Méhul, but also in French revolutionary songs.¹⁰¹ The massive sonorities and structures that characterized the

⁹⁹ The music for these open-air festivals, or *Fêtes*, involved thousands of performers, sometimes even the citizens of Paris who would sing the vocal parts. The most well-known of these events was the *Fête de l'Être Suprême* of 6-8 June 1794; this event featured an oversized orchestra and a chorus of 2,400 singers. The music for these festivals reflected the tone and spirit of the revolution, and was often serious, pompous, and grandiose. The massive, simple sonorities of this music ensured that it remained accessible to the people. Broyles, *Beethoven*, 124-5.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 123.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

middle period appeared to have been inspired by the monumental operas and overtures of late 18th-century French origin, such as Cherubini's *Démophon* (1788) and Méhul's *Euphrosine, ou Le tyran corrigé* (1790) and *Horatius Cocclès* (1794).¹⁰² A performance of Cherubini's opera *Lodoïska* (1791) in Vienna, the first of many operas by Cherubini and several other French composers in the early nineteenth century had a marked influence on Beethoven's music as well.

To summarize, Beethoven shaped, altered, and otherwise refined the Eroica Theme in multiple ways during the early part of his heroic period, thereby developing the language of his heroic style. In Op. 43, *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus*, and WoO 14, *Zwölf Contretänze für Orchester*, one can see the basic elements of the theme. In Op. 35, *Fünfzehn Variationen (Es-dur) mit einer Fuge für Klavier*, and Op. 55, *Symphonie Nr. 3, "Sinfonia eroica,"* Beethoven built upon and expanded the Eroica Theme, ultimately realizing its symphonic potential. The version of the Eroica Theme that appears in the finale of *Prometheus* can hardly be called heroic. The ballet is based on the story of a mythic hero, but the music does not yet represent Beethoven's heroic style of composition. The heroic element of the work is limited to its subject matter, inasmuch as the prescribed dance forms that make up the majority of the piece did not allow Beethoven to develop a new style. The fusion of the composer's emerging heroic style with his desire to compose in a new way may have been ignited by the idea of Prometheus, the ideal hero. Perhaps his persistent treatment of the Eroica Theme can be thought of as part of a quest to portray Prometheus musically in a more heroic fashion.

¹⁰² Winton Dean, "Opera under the French Revolution," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 94 (1967-68): 81.

Beethoven's manipulation of the Eroica Theme was a pivotal point in the maturation of his signature style, and his reuse of this specific melodic idea provides us with insight into how this style evolved.

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