

Rudolph Reti: o plano temático da Nona Sinfonia

*Rudolph Reti*

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**THE  
THEMATIC PROCESS  
IN MUSIC**



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## THE THEMATIC PLAN OF THE NINTH SYMPHONY

After an introductory group of sixteen bars (harmonically a long extended dominant), the first theme enters (*a* in the following example). To obtain a basis for later reference, we divide this shape into its four motivic<sup>1</sup> elements (*b*):

Allegro

*a*

Ex. 1

*b*

I

II

III

1

2

3

4

I

II

III

II (inversion)

II (transposed)

IV

5

6

7

8

9

10

II (inversion)

IV

<sup>1</sup> We call *motif* any musical element, be it a melodic phrase or fragment or even only a rhythmical or dynamic feature which, by being constantly repeated and varied throughout a work or a section, assumes a role in the

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We notice that motif II, after its first occurrence in bar 3 of the theme, reappears in bars 5 and 6, and a third time in bars 7 and 8, here transposed to a higher pitch.

Turning to the theme of the next movement, the Scherzo, we become aware that its shape surprisingly constitutes an almost perfect replica of the Allegro theme's <sup>2</sup> design. This becomes apparent once we extract, as in the following example, the four motivic parts from the Scherzo theme:

Molto vivace

Ex. 2

The example shows four musical motifs labeled I, II, III, and IV. Motif I is a single note. Motif II is a two-note interval. Motif III is a four-note sequence. Motif IV is a four-note sequence. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a tempo marking of 'Molto vivace'.

compositional design somewhat similar to that of a motif in the fine arts.

A *theme*, then, could be defined as a fuller group or "period" which acquires a "motivic" function in a composition's course. Since, however, as this study is about to demonstrate, in a work of higher structural form no group can be entirely outside the motivic unity, the whole conception of a "theme" becomes somewhat problematical. We shall elaborate on this more specifically.

In general, the author does not believe in the possibility or even desirability of enforcing strict musical definitions. Musical phenomena come to existence in the constant fluency and motion of compositional creation. Therefore any descriptions of them must finally prove but approximations. It is for this very reason that in the course of this analysis it was considered more useful to cling as far as possible to the familiar expressions, and to apply them even in instances when their accuracy could be debated, rather than to invent new terms.

<sup>2</sup> For abbreviation's sake the four movements may henceforth be referred to as Allegro, Scherzo, Adagio, and Finale. In this sense the themes also may be quoted as first Allegro theme, second Allegro theme, Scherzo theme, and so on.

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Thus we see that all four motivic characters of the Allegro not only reappear but even succeed each other in *exactly the same order as in the Allegro theme*. In other words, not only the motivic fragments but the image of the Allegro's *full theme* are reiterated in the Scherzo.

Specifically speaking, the kernel of motif I reappears almost unchanged, and so does motif II. However, of this latter motif the particles are exchanged: while in the Allegro the first occurrence F, E, D, is later followed by its inversion D, E, F, in the Scherzo the inversion is first and the original shape comes after it.

Motif III has undergone the most visible change: it simply reads E, F, G instead of A, G, E, A, thus assuming simultaneously the shape of a transposed motif II. However, its appearance exactly between the two occurrences of motif II makes it certain that this E, F, G, is nevertheless meant as a corresponding substitute for motif III. For the kernel of these bars reads, as is easily seen,



and the identity is obvious. But in the speed and concentration which the composer wished for the Scherzo, the leap to the A would have *torn* the design.

The analogy of motif IV (apart from its transposition to another pitch) is complete.

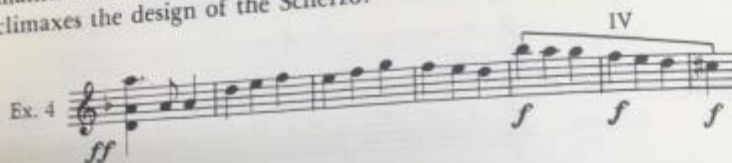
Let us dwell for a moment on the meaning of the features just described. They represent a first illustration of the fact, indicated in our introductory remarks, that the different movements of a classical symphony are built from one identical thought.

However, to comprehend this phenomenon in its true sense, the following should also be understood. It is by no means alleged that this identity implies that a theme from one movement is literally, or even almost literally, repeated in the next. Naturally, such a procedure would be nonsensical and would never lead to any compositional form of higher structure. The composer's endeavor is just the opposite. He strives toward *homogeneity in the inner essence* but at the same time toward *variety in the outer appearance*. Therefore he changes the surface but maintains the substance of his shapes.

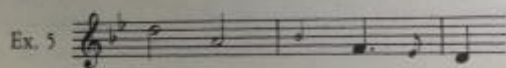
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Accordingly, we see the Allegro theme transformed in the Scherzo into quite a different theme. Tempo, rhythm, melodic detail, in fact the whole character and mood are altered and adjusted to the form in which the composer conceived them fitting to the new movement. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt, as the examples clearly prove, that it is one common musical idea, *one basic pattern*, from which both themes have been formed.

As for the individual motifs, I, II, and III are even audible at the same pitch in the Scherzo as in the Allegro. Only motif IV appears transposed. However, as the Scherzo develops into a fugato, it is interesting to note that when the theme is taken over by the violas (and later by the first violins), this motif too is heard in the Scherzo at the same pitch as in the Allegro. And this original pitch is maintained when the definitive statement of the theme in fortissimo climaxes the design of the Scherzo:



Proceeding to the following movement, the Adagio, we realize, incredible as it may seem considering the entirely different picture which this movement presents at first glance, that here again the similarity of the basic substance is not to be questioned. After two introductory bars the main theme of the Adagio enters:



There is no doubt that the kernel of motif I from the Allegro theme, the descending triad D, A, F, D, also speaks clearly from the Adagio theme. Of course, tempo, rhythm, and the whole character are again changed. Also, in order to adjust the motif to the desired mood of the Adagio, the melodic course had to be expanded and a B-flat and an E-flat included.

Through this a particularly interesting situation arises. The Adagio theme is in B-flat. Yet the old motif from which it is derived, the D-minor triad of the Allegro theme, is not transposed according to the new key but sounds through at original pitch. We hear a

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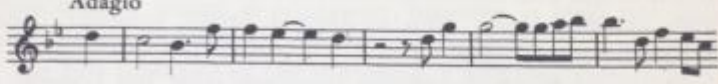
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theme in B-flat with a D-minor triad, as it were, at its base. This method of *transforming a shape from one theme to another which is in a different key, but at the same time letting it sound at original pitch*, will in many of the later examples become apparent as one of the most effective means of structural transformation.


This same phenomenon is seen immediately in the continuation of the theme. For, of course, we have so far examined only the Adagio theme's beginning. Now considering also the theme's continuation, which in example 6a is given by omitting a few repetitions, and comparing it to the corresponding continuation of the Allegro theme (example 6b),

Ex. 6

*Adagio*



*Allegro*



it is not difficult to trace the identity in the outline, the contour, of these two groups, in spite of their contrasting surface and key.

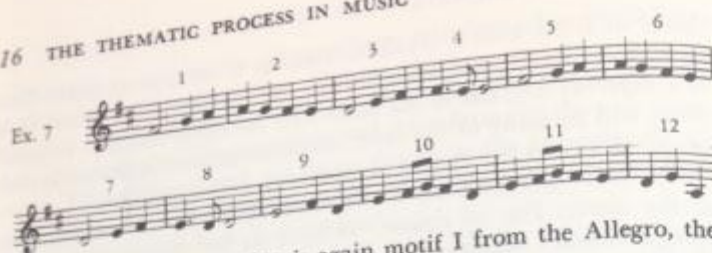
Note how motif II plus its inversion (D to F, up and down) is again clearly spelled in the beginning of the Adagio group. Motif III may not seem as obviously identifiable in the Adagio, but the transposition of motif II (up to the B-flat) and the following motif IV are recognizable in full transparency, completing the familiar design.

Thus we have arrived at the symphony's Finale.

After a gigantic introduction, in which fragments of the former movements' openings reappear in striking flashes,<sup>3</sup> the Finale's first theme, the "Ode to Joy," enters:

<sup>3</sup> This feature alone, so well known to every musician—that in the Ninth Symphony bits of the preceding movements are quoted in the Finale—should have sufficed to evoke an inquiry among analysts as to whether the different movements of a Beethoven symphony are not, indeed, thematically united. Naturally, the feature is also intended to convey a programmatic idea. Nevertheless, seen from the technical point of view, how could a mind of a structural, a "symphonic," intensity such as Beethoven's ever have thought to include in his work an effect tending seemingly to the sphere of the potpourri rather than to serious music, unless he were convinced that these themes represented three different expressions of one identical idea.



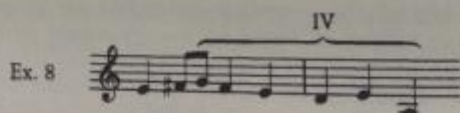


The kernel of its opening is again motif I from the Allegro, the triad in D, though here transposed to major.

But while in the preceding movements the original triad was still more or less verbally preserved, in the Finale, where the work's architectural and emotional drama drives to its solution, it is filled with bridging notes, thus making it fluent, songlike. The theme has changed to a tune.

Through this, however, the transformation has gone so far that on the surface it is no longer discernible as such. But recognizing the unquestionable analogy in all themes, in the secondary themes no less than in the first ones (as shall presently be demonstrated), and, moreover, adding innumerable proofs of a similar ceaseless homogeneity in all the other works of Beethoven—indeed, of almost all great composers—we must conclude that in this instance, too, the identity of the *underlying* triad suffices to assure us of the basic homogeneity.

The following motifs are easily recognized in the theme of this movement also. The ascending and descending thirds of motif II appear as interwoven subphrases in the melodic course. In fact, they form, transposed and at original pitch, the very bridging notes by which the triad is filled to produce the tune of the "Ode." Motif III is indicated by lifting the theme from D, E, F-sharp (bars 8 and 9) to E, F-sharp, G (bars 10 and 11).<sup>4</sup> Motif IV, finally, the descending seventh, is expressed through bars 11 and 12:



<sup>4</sup> After this chapter was written, the author looked once more through Beethoven's sketches to the Ninth Symphony. He was rewarded by a striking confirmation of his analytic deductions. In our motivic specification above, bars 9 and following of the "Ode" are introduced as repre-

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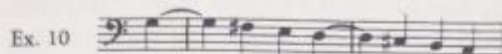
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Ex. 9

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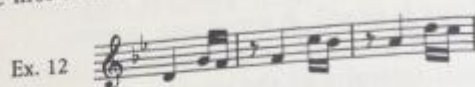
That motif IV is really meant becomes evident when, as the first counterpoint in the following repetition (variation) of the "Ode," the phrase just quoted is immediately imitated, but appears now in the following version, clearly mirroring the motif's appearance in the Allegro:



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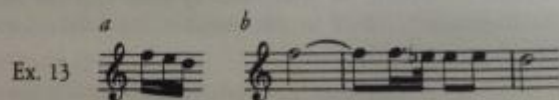
At first glance one would think this shape quite different from the previous ones. And the difference would seem logical, for this is, after all, the movement's second subject, and as such, according to all accepted conceptions, it must not resemble but contrast with the first theme. Yet looking at it closely, we discover that its kernel, the ascending triad D, F, A, is identical with that of the first theme, or, to be precise, it is its inversion.

This fact becomes still more apparent once we notice that these opening bars of the second theme are immediately repeated in a slightly varied version. This version makes the similarity to the triad kernel of the first theme still more obvious, as it begins:



However, to avoid any misconception, it must be emphasized: It is not averred that this beginning of the second Allegro theme is just a "variant" of the first theme. It should not even be termed a "transformation," such as we would consider the Scherzo theme. No, this opening of the second theme is a new musical idea, with every appearance of a "contrasting" shape. Yet a structural affinity cannot be denied.

That this affinity, although an affinity through inversion, is not merely analytic conjecture is definitely proved by the continuation of the two themes. For, as we recall, the continuation of the first theme is the little figure called motif II (*a* in the following example), to which the continuation of the second theme (*b*) must be compared:



Startled, we realize that the group from the second theme is none other than an expanded version of the little motif from the first theme. The change from E-natural to E-flat is merely due to the change of key from D to B-flat.

And in the second theme, after the phrase quoted has been repeated in transposition, a further shape follows (*a* in the following example), which—another surprise—is clearly a replica of the subsequent group (motif IV) in the first theme (*b*):

THE

Ex. 14



Thus in its outline, this second theme, though different from the first, yet is not without a certain similarity to the first.

Now the significance of the first theme is apparent. The first theme is the kernel of the first theme.

This would be the case in the Scherzo, is correct. The first theme. Never. And the Trio theme, as shown.

As mentioned in the first example, the Trio's opening is a short intrad.

Ex. 15

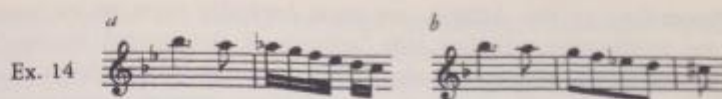


it is obvious that the first theme is taken from the group quoted.

In the first theme (*a* in the following example), to the group the contour here too is the same.



Ex. 16

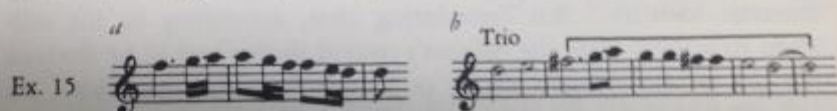


Thus in its outer appearance, in the gentle mood of its curved line, this second Allegro theme indeed "contrasts" with the energetic first, yet it is a complete reiteration of the latter's inner content and design.

Now the significant question arises: Can an image of this second Allegro theme be discovered in the second themes of the following movements, just as the first theme of the Allegro was mirrored in the first themes of the other movements?

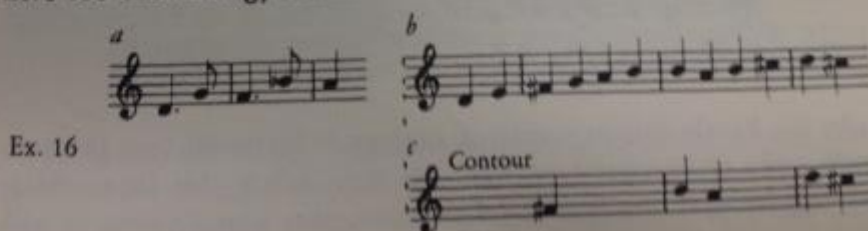
This would seem unlikely as far as the next movement, the Scherzo, is concerned, since scherzos usually lack an actual second theme. Nevertheless, if it has no second theme, a scherzo has a trio. And the Trio of the Ninth mirrors the design of the second Allegro theme, as shown in the following examples.

As mentioned above, the second Allegro theme was preceded by a short intrada. Comparing this intrada group, which in the following example is quoted in a transposed key (example 15a), with the Trio's opening (example 15b),



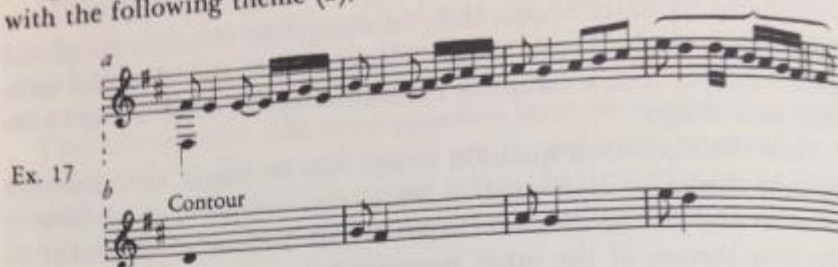
it is obvious that the Trio group (b), though it is said to have been taken from a Russian folk tune, nevertheless clearly echoes the group quoted above as a.

In the first movement the group that follows is the actual second theme (a in the following example), which thus should correspond to the group that now enters in the Trio (b). Etching out the corners, the contour, from the Trio group (given under c), we realize that here too the analogy continues:



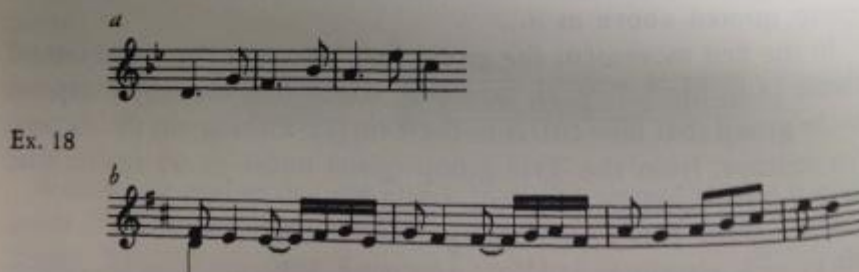


Proceeding to the Adagio, we must logically turn to its second section to discover whether this "affinity of the second themes" is integrated in this movement also. This second Adagio section enters with the following theme (*a*), from which we extract a contour (*b*):



Again the analogy to the second Allegro theme cannot be mistaken. Note, by the way, motif IV at the end of the theme (see bracket in the example). Yet with regard to this last example, one might perhaps argue: In this contour, why was D notated as the first note, while in Beethoven's text the soprano clearly shows F-sharp, the D being confined to the bass?

Therefore, at the risk of being repetitious, it must be emphasized again and again that naturally the composer did not feel the slightest compulsion to produce a textbook example for the sake of "thematic identity." But considering that, according to his self-chosen structural plan, the Adagio's second theme had to be derived from the second Allegro theme (*a* in the following example), we must admit that a more transparent transformation than the shape quoted as *b* could hardly be imagined:



In the Finale this principle of analogy is increased to a fascinatingly wide architectural pattern. We may follow this far-reaching analogy between the first and last movements step by step. It will

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Ex. 19

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Ex. 20

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be seen that in the Finale the single sections are expanded to much larger proportions, but that apart from this, the analogy and symmetry not only of the themes but of the whole architectural plan are indeed astounding.

The Allegro commences with an introductory group of sixteen bars, after which the first theme enters. In the Finale the introduction is extended to a huge section of improvisational passages, after which the "Ode to Joy," as the Finale's first theme, is sounded. The structural analogy of the first Allegro theme to the "Ode" has already been pointed out. In the Finale, however, the design is still further enlarged by expanding the "Ode" to a cycle of variations and by repeating this whole section (Introduction and "Ode") with solo voices and choir.

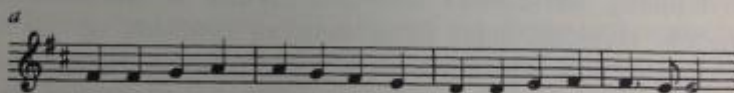
What comes next?

In the first movement, after the group of the first theme has been developed and before the second theme follows, a second statement of the first theme is introduced. While the original statement was in D-minor, this second statement is in B-flat major:

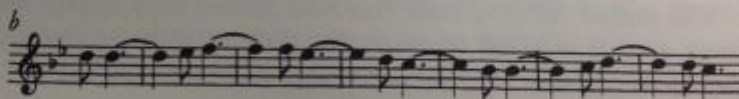


Does the Finale also carry such a second statement?

In the Finale the group which follows is the section of the tenor solo (*b* in the following example), which at first glance would hardly appear to be a second statement of the "Ode" (*a*). But comparing the two thoroughly,

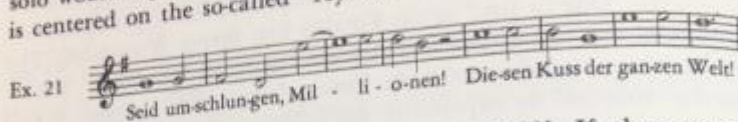


Ex. 20



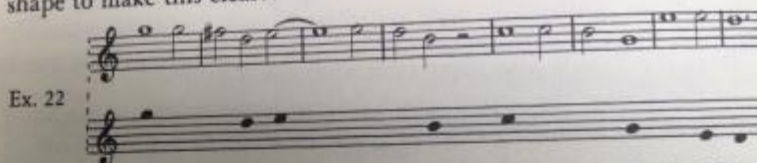
we recognize the second example as literally identical to the first, merely with changed rhythm and transposed to B-flat. Thus the section of the tenor solo proves to be a repetition in B-flat (the

"seventh variation" of the "Ode"), or, viewed from a wider architectural angle, truly the "Ode's" second statement, to which the later following tenor voice merely forms a contrapuntal enrichment (though naturally from a programmatic view a most important one). Therefore, only the section which follows after that of the tenor solo would represent the Finale's second theme. This next section is centered on the so-called "Hymn":



Here, then, a crucial question presents itself. If the averred architectural analogy is a fact and not merely a casual similarity in the movements' beginnings, this "Hymn" must definitely prove a derivative of the second Allegro theme. However, in this case it would seem no affinity were to be traced.

Yet, probing more deeply into this melodic line, a striking realization emerges. This theme, though not a direct reiteration of the second Allegro theme's idea, is an inversion of it. We must only, as in previous instances, extract a kind of melodic contour from its shape to make this clear:



It becomes obvious that the second Finale theme of the Ninth Symphony, Beethoven's venerated "Hymn to Mankind," is, technically speaking, none other than an inversion of the Allegro's second subject. This certainly is a structural realization of the first magnitude, and we should investigate the compositional core of the phenomenon.

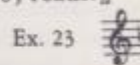
The author harbors some fear that readers may oppose his deductions, even if at a loss to contradict their validity concretely, for the simple reason that they seem contrary to cherished illusions. "If the shaping of a musical work," they might argue, "really evolves according to the preceding explanations, composing must be regarded as a kind of musical engineering rather than as an emotional art—which we refuse to believe."

Such objection to the harmonic certain basic idiosyncrasies constantly posing the harmonic that reason according to fo

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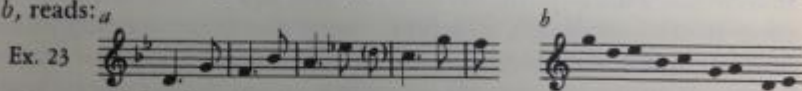


Such objections, however, are not founded on reality. With regard to the *harmonic* sphere, for instance, we all know that there are certain basic ideas and cadential progressions that classical composers constantly apply in ever varying combinations when forming the harmonic structure of their works. Yet would anyone for that reason accuse Mozart, Beethoven, or Brahms of composing according to formulas?

In the same way *thematic* shaping evolves from some basic structural methods, even though these have not yet been comprehended in our theoretical system. But creative inspiration and emotional power are by no means hindered by these structural principles directing them—as the great compositional literature proves. For the creative mind structure is a means, not an obstacle, to the manifestation of its inspiration.

Let us try to envision the process of musical formation through which the last example from the Ninth may have evolved. The composer, having in the course of the work reached the point where the last movement's second subject had to be shaped, was aware that according to his own architectural plan this theme somehow had to be built as a kind of structural offspring of the second Allegro theme. However, he seems to have felt that any shape derived from the direct form of this theme would not agree with the concept of character and mood which he wished for the section in question. But the inversion seemed the right thing.

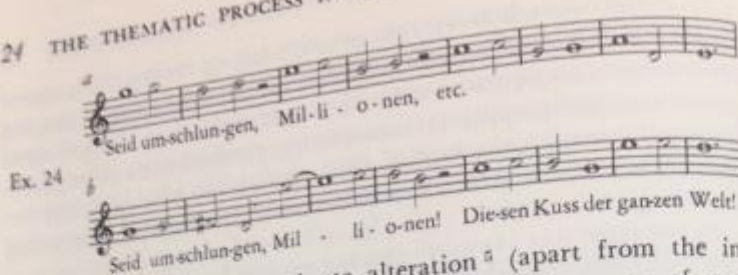
The second Allegro theme (*a*), to which the inversion is added as *b*, reads: *a*



In modeling the inversion, the E-flat of the theme was replaced by a D (added in parenthesis). This D was inserted as a variant by Beethoven himself in the theme's repetition. (See example 12.)

Adjusting the inversion to the rhythm and spirit of the text as the composer conceived it, it would have appeared in the version quoted below as example 24*a*, which in its melodic course is still the literal inversion.

But we can easily understand that this somewhat dry utterance did not yet please the composer. Hence he inserts some slight changes through which the final form of the theme, as we find it in the score of the symphony, comes to life (example 24*b*):

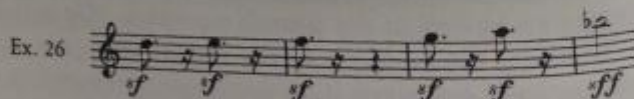


In this inconspicuous, minute alteration<sup>a</sup> (apart from the ingenious rhythmical shaping) is centered the actual process of creation. Whether the composer came to it in the flash of a momentary vision or in a lengthy creative struggle, we do not know. We only know the result, which tells us that inspirational and structural forces—nobody can deny that it really is an inversion which lies here at the base—must have combined to bring this theme about.

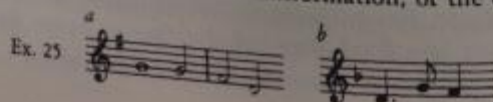
Having thus outlined the architectural affinities of the symphony's main themes, this description would have to be complemented by much further detail if a full insight into this great work's structure were our immediate goal. This, however, would require a separate analytic study which is beyond our present purpose.

Only one specific feature shall be briefly elaborated upon, as it forms a decisive element, a central pillar, as it were, in the work's admirable architectural edifice. It is that *progression from D to B-flat* in which, as demonstrated above, the two statements of the opening theme present themselves both in the first and in the last movement. This step from D to B-flat develops to an ever recurring effect in the symphony's structural course and correspondingly also in its dramatic and emotional evolution.

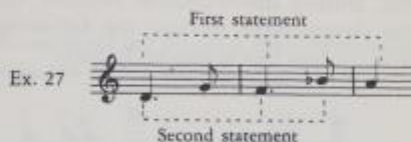
Already in the opening theme, which climbs from D to its peak on the B-flat, this motivic progression forms its emphatic melodic contour:



<sup>a</sup> From a subtler structural view it will of course be realized that the "change" itself is also a motivic feature, as the phrase thus brought about (a) is, as such, a kind of inversion, or transformation, of the original (b):

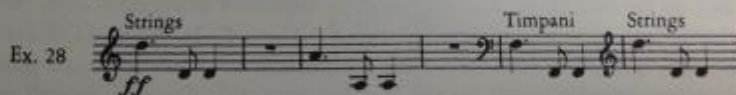


This motif is still more profoundly rooted in the second Allegro theme. For here it represents the innermost structural idea. It has already been pointed out how the essence of the first theme, the D-minor triad, also sounds through from the second theme. This second theme, however, is actually in the key of B-flat major. Thus, not only the D-minor triad, which is the Allegro theme's first statement, but at the same time the B-flat-major triad, meaning the second statement, is audible from its shape:



In fact, the combining of the two statements of the first theme is the motivic idea from which the structure of the second theme came to life. Such a procedure, the building of a thematic shape from a blending of two previous ones, is one of the favorite means in the technique of classical composers, one which endows their creations with such astounding logic and consistency. In this instance the motivic progression from D to B-flat, as manifested through the Allegro theme's two statements, forms the core of this impressive structural feature.

This step is also heard in the opening of the Scherzo. Here D to B-flat is transposed to A to F. True, one could say that A to F is in itself a part of the D-minor triad and, therefore, naturally included in any occurrence of the first theme, and in this connection hardly to be understood as a separate feature. Yet in the Scherzo it grows to particular emphasis by means of the instrumentation. For, thus sculptured by a stroke of genius into singular transparency, the step A to F becomes a powerful expression of the described motivic progression:



No more effective way could have been found to impress this A to F on the listener than thus lifting it from the regular course of the instrumentation by letting the F sound in a melodic thunder



from the timpani. Indeed, it is this motivic relation which, once established, echoes in the listener's ear through the whole movement, rendering the later recurrences of these timpani F's (no matter where the soprano has wandered in the meantime) one of the most mysterious effects in all music.

This fundamental motivic third is, in the further course of the Scherzo, reiterated with such almost overemphatic vigor that the composer's conscious intention to impose this effect on the listener cannot be doubted. During the transition between the Scherzo's exposition and the development section, the following group is heard (of which only the bass line is quoted in full):

Ex. 29

sempre *pp*

sempre *pp*

*cresc.*

*f* *ff* *ff*

In seemingly endless succession the motivic thirds march by. Though harmonic logic compelled the composer in some cases to change major thirds to minor, the continuity of the phenomenon is not to be mistaken. Bar by bar, the harmony progresses over the thirds into new and unknown regions: C, A, F, D, B-flat, G, E-flat, on and on. With each bar, each "modulation," there is a new and exciting surprise, until, in the last few bars, this dynamic as well as thematic crescendo reaches its peak.

It has already been demonstrated how this same relation from D to B-flat emerges in the opening theme of the Adagio, this

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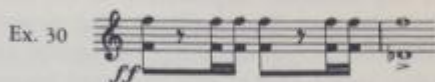
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"D-minor theme in B-flat" (see example 5).

In the Adagio it is also audible as a concrete utterance, precisely at the summit of the movement's structural and dramatic development, when the horns and trumpets in utter fortissimo fall from the F to the D-flat of the full orchestra:

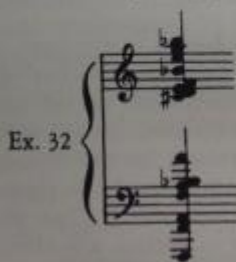


However, not until the Finale is this phenomenon led to a climax. The Finale opens with a particular harmony:



This multiple unprepared suspension, which, moreover, abruptly opens a movement, this combination—in fact, collision—of a D-minor and B-flat-major triad, so often in floundering attempts at explanation quoted as a proof of Beethoven's revolutionary style if not, stupidly, of his deafness, can be understood only from a thematic angle. For it is none other than an explosive expression of the D to B-flat motif compressed into a harmony, into one chord.

When later, before the entrance of the human voice, the opening section of the Finale is repeated, the chord is sounded once more, now increased to an utterance of apocalyptic power:



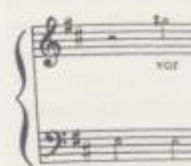
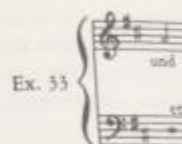
Again we hear the collision of the D and B-flat harmonies, to which the dominant seventh of D (A, C-sharp, E, G) is added. Here the note B-flat need not even be interpreted as denoting a separate harmony, but it can be regarded as a part of the dominant harmony of D-minor; namely, the dominant ninth, A, C-sharp, E, G, B-flat. Thus any harmonic explanation of the chord must necessarily remain ambiguous and artificial. But from a thematic angle the feature assumes real meaning. For besides the basic motivic step D to B-flat, latent also in this increased harmony, the present chord discloses in its thematic sum total an expression, or rather a compression into one chord, of the full line of the work's main theme. The notes of this second chord read: D, E, F, G, A, B-flat, C-sharp. In other words, the chord consists of the notes of the D-minor scale. The very notes from which the Allegro's main theme (example 1) is formed, which is in turn the source for all the themes of the symphony.

Admittedly, it was a programmatic idea that led the composer to this feature. For the work's dramatic course had reached such a degree of overconcentrated intensity that the composer, wrestling for adequate expression, attempted to force, as it were, the entire thematic content into one chord. But through this the boundaries of the rational were almost burst asunder. Therefore the human voice is introduced, entering with the words, "O friends, no more of these sad tones, but let us intone more pleasant and more joyous ones." The stimulus for this feature was indeed based on a programmatic vision. But this vision was materialized through musical, that is, structural and, in particular, thematic means.<sup>6</sup>

Through all this the dramatic function of the basic step D to B-flat gained greatly in power. For only when the listener has become accustomed to accepting this step as a fundamental motif, a symbol of one of the work's strongest impulses—no matter whether he

<sup>6</sup> The reaction of Hector Berlioz to this feature, which strongly attracted his attention, is extremely interesting. In one of his essays on Beethoven, after having convincingly elaborated on the programmatic idea and the harmonic problem of these discords, Berlioz confesses that though he had searched for Beethoven's reason for introducing them, it remained unknown to him. ("J'ai beaucoup cherché la raison de cette idée, et je suis forcé d'avouer qu'elle m'est inconnue.") Thus, since the programmatic and harmonic function was clear to Berlioz, it is obvious that what puzzled him was the thematic mystery.

knows the theoretical instinct—only then, in the context of the subsequent progression at the climax, in the group



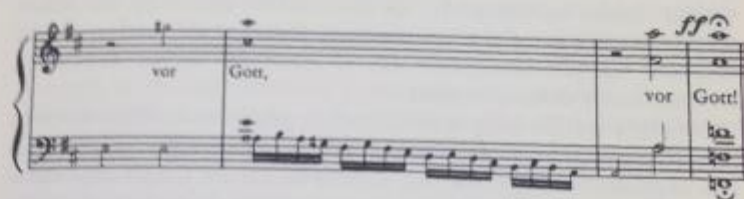
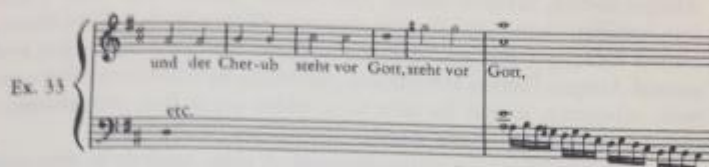
Seldom in the found striking chords.

Through an how great an i a step from D t that ordinarily role that it gra element in th relations betw high points c instrumentati masses; and, text—only th and instinct simple step and open th

Thus, as i



knows the theoretical implications or grasps the phenomenon by instinct—only then will his ear and mind be responsive to the impact of the subsequent overwhelming appearance of this motivic progression at the peak of the work's architectural and dramatic climax, in the group, "Doch der Cherub steht vor Gott—vor Gott!":



Seldom in the whole musical literature is a harmonic step to be found striking with a power comparable to that of these last two chords.

Through an example like this, a realization may dawn on us of how great an influence the thematic idea in music can exert. Such a step from D to B-flat (or A to F) is an almost neutral musical event that ordinarily would scarcely be noticed. Only through the motivic role that it gradually assumes in the course of the work as a regular element in the forming of the themes and in the establishing of relations between the themes; only through introducing it at the high points of expression, underlined by the effects of a striking instrumentation, as in the Scherzo or in the fortissimo of the choir masses; and, finally, through its connection with the stimulating text—only through all this, and through the whole web of conscious and instinctive conceptions which the structure spins, does this simple step from D to B-flat assume an almost magical importance and open the door to the highest spiritual and emotional spheres.

Thus, as a result of the symphony's thematic analysis, a picture of

the most manifold, most effective, and most logical architectural interconnections has unfolded itself, far beyond that hitherto ascribed to a classical symphony.

Specifically, a far-reaching analogy, in fact a full identity in pattern, was seen between the first themes of the four movements (first Allegro theme, Scherzo theme, first Adagio theme, and "Ode") and also between the second themes (second Allegro theme, Trio theme, second Adagio theme, and "Hymn"). Since, in addition, the first and second Allegro themes themselves proved to be built from one common substance, it can be said in a wider sense that one thematic idea permeates the whole work.

This last must not be misunderstood. A close analogy is seen only between the four first themes on the one side, and between the four second themes on the other. In this twofold symmetry the actual architectural idea of the symphony is centered. Moreover, in the first and last movement this idea is intensified to an impressive, architecturally developed plan.

Finally, a specific architectural feature presented itself in this ever recurring thematic progression from D to B-flat. This motivic step, first expressed through the two statements of the symphony's opening theme, reappeared invariably at the high points of the work's evolution. Now attention may be directed to a most interesting fact. This same motivic progression also forms the keys of the work's movements, which are D, D, B-flat, D. This question of a thematic key relationship between the movements of a musical composition, on which we merely touch at this time, will become the subject of a more detailed investigation in a later section of this study.