
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

SYMPHONY No. 9

for 4 Solo Voices, Chorus and Orchestra
für 4 Solostimmen, Chor und Orchester

D minor/d-Moll/Ré mineur
Op. 125

Edited by / Herausgegeben von
Richard C.

PREVIEW
Low Resolution



Ernst Eulenburg Ltd

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Revised edition
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First performance (all in Vienna)/Erstaussage (alle in Wien)

First edition/Erstausgabe

Principal/

Version

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Heft 298									
	Symphonic Cello Concerto (Melancholic-Festum)	1823	Hoffmeister, Vienna/ Wien, December 1801	Freiherr Gottfried van Swieten					
Op. 21	Symphony, C	1805	Bureau of Arts and Industry, Vienna/Kunst- und Industrie-Kommission	Fürst Carl von Lichnowsky					
Op. 36	Symphony No. 2, D	1805	Wien, March/März 1804	Fürst Franz Joseph von Lobkowitz					
Op. 55	Symphony No. 3, E \flat (<i>Sinfonia erotica</i>)	1805	Bureau of Arts and Industry, Vienna/Kunst und Industrie-Kommission, Wien, October 1806	Graf Franz von Oppersdorff					
Op. 60	Symphony No. 4, E \flat	1806	Bureau of Arts and Industry, Vienna/Kunst und Industrie-Kommission, Wien, 1808	Fürst Lobkowitz und Graf Andreas von Rasumovsky					
Op. 67	Symphony No. 5, C minor/Moll	1808	1808	Fürst Lobkowitz und Graf Rasumovsky					
Op. 68	Symphony No. 6, F (<i>Sinfonia pastorale</i>)	1808	1808	Fürst Lobkowitz und Graf Rasumovsky					
Op. 92	Symphony No. 7, A	1812	1812	Graf Moritz von Fries					
Op. 93	Symphony No. 8, F	1812	1812						
Op. 125	Symphony No. 9 D minor/ Moll ("Choral")	1824	1824	König Friedrich Iheln von Preußen					

Missa, C minor/Moll, 1823

Sinfonia, C

Symphony No. 1, C

Symphony No. 2, D

Symphony No. 3, E \flat
(*Sinfonia erotica*)Symphony No. 4, E \flat Symphony No. 5,
C minor/MollSymphony No. 6, F
(*Sinfonia pastorale*)

Symphony No. 7, A

Symphony No. 8, F

Symphony No. 9 D minor/
Moll ("Choral")

Missa, C minor/Moll, 1823

Sinfonia, C

Symphony No. 1, C

Symphony No. 2, D

Symphony No. 3, E \flat
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C minor/MollSymphony No. 6, F
(*Sinfonia pastorale*)

Symphony No. 7, A

Symphony No. 8, F

Symphony No. 9 D minor/
Moll ("Choral")

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Symphony No. 8, F

Symphony No. 9 D minor/
Moll ("Choral")

PREFACE

Despite the well-known tradition in Beethoven criticism of assigning the composer's works to one of three creative periods, the nine symphonies are perhaps best divided into four groups. The First and Second were written during the time that conventionally marks the transition between the early and middle period. The next four belong to what may be described as the 'heroic phase',¹ which begins in 1803 and is marked by a prodigious output of highly original works on a grand scale. The Seventh and Eighth, which mark the end of the middle period, show a certain retreat from the bold directions taken in the first six works. The Ninth is Beethoven's only symphony of the last 15 years of his life; and its unusual structure and unprecedented large performing forces place it in a category of its own.

In fact, Symphonies 1 and 2, like the best of 18th-century Viennese chamber music, as they foreshadow their composer's path-breaking achievements in other genres. The particular, enjoys a close relationship with the 'Prague' Symphony (K. 551), a work with which it shares a similar feel and the shape of a slow introduction and first movement. The two are, of course, very different in their tonal and stylistic colour. The First and Second were composed in the first years of Beethoven's contact with his publisher, and they go far beyond the limits of the Viennese symphonist. The next symphony, however, began composing, in C major (1804), took the genre a stage further by planning for overall planning; its four movements being 'unified' by the presence – at different levels – of the parallel triad of C major. In the *Sinfonia pastorale* (the Sixth) he solved the problem of large-scale

organisation in other ways, by joining the last three movements to one another and by drawing a dynamic curve across the entire work.

Beethoven's progress in symphonies did not pursue a single path, or a straight line. It seems to have been a series of leaps and starts. The Fourth Symphony (1806) was composed quite early in the 'heroic phase' and represents some of his most radical principles of orchestration (noted for its dramatic effect for a 200-voice symphony), may also have influenced the Fifth on account of its use of the minor mode in the *Eroica* after its first performance in 1805. It is more likely that the Fourth Symphony was a direct result of the aesthetic failure of the first concert of the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies in 1808. He may have intended to write a pair of much lighter works, or at least cooler ones, in 1808. It is also possible that the Fourth Symphony, the only one to return to 18th-century symphonic traditions.

While the Ninth, of course, Beethoven recognised his pioneering role as a symphonist, maintaining a supreme command of sonata structures and orchestral technique with masterly control of the additional forces of chorus and solo voices to shape a type of composition hitherto unknown in serious concert music. This fusion of symphony and oratorio was by no means quickly realized. The intention to write a symphony in D minor was first expressed during the composition of the Eighth; the theme of the Scherzo was first sketched a few years later in 1815; the first sketchleaf entry describing a symphony with chorus dates from 1818.² By the time the Ninth was completed 12 years had elapsed since the previous symphonies; only the composition of a still more innovative set of works, the late string quartets, remained to be achieved.

¹ The expression was coined by Alan Tyson (in his essay 'Beethoven's Heroic Phase', *The Musical Times*, CX (1969), 139–41) in connection with the years 1803–5, which saw the composition of the *Eroica*, the oratorio *Christus am Ölberge* ('The Mount of Olives'), and the opera *Leonore*; but the period may be extended to include the major instrumental works that followed in their wake.

² For a full account of the early plans for Beethoven's last symphony, see Sieghard Brandenburg, 'Die Skizzen zur Neunten Symphonie', *Zu Beethoven 2*, ed. H. Goldschmidt (Berlin, 1984), 88–129.

Towards the end of his life Beethoven expressed the desire to write one more symphony. Two of his companions from the late years, Anton Schindler and Karl Holz, claimed that large sections of a 'Tenth Symphony' had been sketched and that the work was complete in the composer's mind; but from the evidence of the surviving manuscripts, it appears that little, if any, progress was made on a new work in the genre.³

From the point of view of performance and early reception, it is not the year 1803, but 1807 that marks the dividing line in Beethoven's symphonic output. The first four symphonies were originally intended more for private consumption, being written for and dedicated to their patrons and played mainly in aristocratic circles. The last five symphonies were written specifically for public concerts. The Fifth and Sixth, composed in 1807-8, were heard for the first time in December 1808; the Seventh and Eighth (also composed in rapid succession) followed a series of concerts in the winter of 1809-10.

Each pair of works, Beethoven claimed, was nearer the date of the premiere – an indication of a piece that would prove to be musically and physically arduous programmes. In 1808, the Third Symphony (Eroica/Sieg) in B-flat major, Op. 55, was first performed in the concert hall that included the dedication to Napoleon.

The Ninth Symphony is commonly said to have begun in 1793, when Bartholomäus Süssmilch, a friend and disciple of the philosopher Immanuel Kant, wrote to Schiller's wife that the young Beethoven 'promised [...] to set Schiller's "Freude", and indeed complete by strophe'.⁴ But only a handful of

sketches for a verse from the 'Ode to Joy' (*An die Freude*) are found in an early sketchbook, one that dates from the year 1798-9; and there is no way in which they can be connected with a symphonic project.⁵ Nevertheless, the genesis of Beethoven's last symphony was a long process, interrupted many times by the composition of other works.

³ The problems of the 'Tenth' are summarized and discussed by Robert Winter in an essay (in English) entitled 'Noch einmal: wo sind Beethovens Skizzen zur Zehnten Symphonie?', in *Beethoven-Jahrbuch*, X (1977), 531-2.

⁴ The text of the relevant passage from Fischenich's letter is given in A. W. Thayer, *Thayer's Life of Beethoven*, rev. and ed. Elliot Forbes (Princeton, 1964), 120-1.

sketches for a verse from the 'Ode to Joy' (*An die Freude*) are found in an early sketchbook, one that dates from the year 1798-9; and there is no way in which they can be connected with a symphonic project.⁵ Nevertheless, the genesis of Beethoven's last symphony was a long process, interrupted many times by the composition of other works.

Though the Ninth Symphony was not completed until 1824, and the composer's death, the sketching of the D minor material dated from the Seventh and Eighth. In sketching the first symphony in 1800, Beethoven also contains for a sketch of the Ninth. In a letter of 1 June 1800 to Breitkopf & Härtel: 'I am working on the symphonies, one of which you will have heard. Yet despite two remarks in the sketch of the Seventh and Eighth, "Sinfonia in Bb" and "Sinfonia in Bb"'. The sketch also contains the actual musical ideas for the Ninth.

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But as Sieghard Brandenburg has shown, there are other fragmentary notations in the sketchbook which may plausibly be designated as efforts to shape thematic material for the symphony.

Work on the symphony began to intensify in 1817, probably in response to an invitation from the Philharmonic Society of London to visit England and to compose two symphonies for the Society. The main theme of the first

⁵ A transcription of two of these is given by Robert Winter in 'The Sketches for the "Ode to Joy"', *Beethoven, Performers, Critics*, ed. R. Winter and B. Carr (Detroit, 1980), 176-8. See also Maynard Solomon, 'Beethoven and Schiller', *ibid.*, 162-75.

⁶ Gustav Nottbohm, 'Skizzen zur 7. und 8. Symphonie', *Zweite Beethoveniana* (Leipzig, 1887), III-18, especially 111.

⁷ This sketch was transcribed by Nottbohm in the first of a series of articles for the *Musikalisches Wochenblatt* in 1876, which were reissued posthumously as 'Skizzen zur neunten Symphonie' in *Zweite Beethoveniana*, 157-92.

movement received a near-definitive formulation that year, and some substantial work on the first two movements took place during and after the sketching of the 'Hammerklavier' Sonata Op. 106 in 1818.⁸ Also from 1818 is the often quoted remark on a single sketchleaf, which shows Beethoven thinking about two symphonies, as well as formulating a plan for the inclusion of a chorus in one of them:⁹

Adagio cantique. Pious song in a symphony in the old church modes – Lord God, we praise Thee – Alleluia either by itself or as an introduction to a fugue. Perhaps the entire second symphony might be characterized in this way, whereby the voices would enter in the last movement or even in the Adagio. The orchestral violins etc. are increased tenfold in the last movement. Or some sort of repeat of the Adagio would be incorporated into the last movement, whereby the vocal parts would enter gradually. The text of the Adagio would be taken from Greek mythology: a cantique ecclesiastic like the Allegro, a celebration of Bacchus.

During the next four years Beethoven's creative spirit found renewed energy, and he worked vigorously on what are now known as the *Missa Solemnis*, the Ninth Symphony, and the last three piano sonatas. Further important work was done again from 1822 onwards, in the form of sketches for a new symphony, which was completed by Beethoven in the latter part of 1824.

The preceding sketches show further that the new symphony would have had an A-B-A form, with an expanded middle section. (The thematic kinship between the slow movements of the symphony and the *Sonata pastorale* of 1795, which has

often been noted, was even more pronounced at this stage.)

⁸ Brandenburg, op. cit., 101-3

⁹ First transcribed by Nottebohm, see *Zweite Beethoveniana*, 163

¹⁰ Transcribed from p123 of muz.ms.autogr. Beethoven Artaria 201, a sketchbook in the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin

often been noted, was even more pronounced at this stage.)

With the completion of the Mass early in 1823, and the Diabelli Variations by the spring of that year, Beethoven was able to work virtually without interruption on the Ninth Symphony. During this time, the familiar four-movement plan was worked out, though the exact sequence seems to have been somewhat haphazard. As regards the practicality of the plan, Beethoven worked out the sketching of the first movement as an entry for the finale in the sketchbook by Nottebohm:



...one of our sketches from the winter of 1823 that sketches this theme,¹¹ which was ultimately mentioned for the finale of the String Quartet in A minor, Op. 123.

The first performance of the symphony took place on 7 May 1824 and was a resounding artistic success. Several witnesses recall how Beethoven stood turning the pages of his score after the music had stopped, oblivious to the tumultuous applause (there were demands for a repetition of the Scherzo) until turned round by the contralto soloist Caroline Unger to face the audience. Further performances were given in Vienna later that month, and in London and Aachen the following year (for which extra copies of the score were prepared).

The Ninth Symphony was first offered to H. A. Probst of Leipzig in February 1824, and a month later to B. Schott's Söhne in Mainz, who published the score and parts in August 1826. The metronome marks were sent to the publisher in October of that year.

William Drabkin

¹¹ *Zweite Beethoveniana*, 180-1

¹² Brandenburg, op. cit., 128-9

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