

Knowledge Organiser

Beethoven's Symphony No.1 Movement 1: Adagio molto - Allegro con brio

MELODY

- 1st **subject** = **Rising triadic** shape, based off a C7 chord:
 - Quite **disjunct** as far as melodies go, it feels like it's dancing around!
 - 1ST subject is **sequenced** up a tone from C to D
 - 1st subject becomes increasingly 'shrunk'; it is halved and by bar 144, only the first 3 notes are used
- 2nd **subject** = **Falling scalic** shape, **shared** between the flute and oboe
 - Quite **conjunct** in terms of shape, but...
 - Because it's shared across instruments, it still **feels** jumpy
- There is heavy use of **diatonic major scales** but...
- There is also heavy use **chromatic** scales (e.g. bar 6-7) to add colour. In the recap, there is a rising chromatic **scale lasting for 8 bars**
- Melodies are often harmonised in **pleasing 3rds**, such as bars 8-10
- Use of ornamentation such as **trills and grace notes** to add tension (such as the 2-bar trill before the coda)
- Tremolos!** LOTS of tremolos in the strings and timpani to add tension/drama
- Descending sequence** at bar 82 of previous 3 bars
- Final coda features broken **triads spanning 3 octaves** to create drama and excitement



TEXTURE

- The intro is **homophonic**/chordal
- The exposition is **melody and accompaniment**
- Big finales to sections are usually **homorhythmic**
- There are moments of **monophony (b111)**, contrasted with full **chordal textures at 112**
- There is **a lot** of imitation between families, such as bars 6-7
- Unison** is used in the recapitulation; **all instruments** play the 1st subject in unison!

STRUCTURE

SONATA FORM (very typical of classical)

1. Intro = Bar 1
2. Exposition = Bar 12
3. Development = Bar 113
4. Recapitulation = Bar 178
5. Coda = Bar 271

Intro = Sets the scene/scene/scene
 Expo = Introduces 1st subject and 2nd subject
 Dev = Evolves ideas through new keys
 Recap = Literally recaps/returns ideas
 Coda = 'Tail' or ending of the music

INSTRUMENTATION/SONORITY/TIMBRE

What is the role of?

1. The **woodwind**: Plays the 2nd subject, plays countermelodies, adds harmonic colour by playing harmonies of 3rds or chromatic notes
2. The **strings**: Use of pizzicato (plucking) and arco (bowed)
3. The **timpani**: emphasises the harmonic progressions, often plays basic tonic or dominant notes, plays tremolos at 'big' moments in the music
4. **Cello + bassoon**: plays the tonic, plays tonic pedals, reinforces the harmonic progressions

DYNAMICS

Sometimes taken for granted, but here they are everywhere and central to the story!

1. Use of '**fp**' adds further confusion to the opening 'joke' of the intro

fp

2. Use of '**p**' on the 1st subject seems comedic as it's the main melody being timid or shy!

3. Use of **sfz** (sforzando/forced) on big musical moments

sfz

4. Lots of **crescendos** to ff for drama

5. **Extreme dynamic contrasts**, such as bar 76 where it goes from ff to pp

HARMONY + TONALITY

- Key of **C major** overall
- Opening 12 bars are confusing because we hear the following:
 1. Perfect cadence in F major (C7 to F)
 2. Interrupted cadence in C major (G to Am)
 3. Perfect cadence in G major (D7 to G)

These 3 progressions break the rules of C major and create a comedic 'joke'

- Dominant 7th chords are everywhere: the 1st subject is even built on a C7 chord!
- Moves to keys such as G major (dominant), A minor (relative minor) and C minor (tonic AKA parallel minor)
- Perfect cadences are **regular and strong**, such as the I – IV – V7- I at bar 30
 - There are perfect cadences in C major as well as G major
 - The very last perfect cadence plays 'C' for **10 bars!** Perfect cadence is very strong!
- There are examples of tonic and dominant **pedals** that go on for ages... this means that the listener is usually very clear as to what the harmony is doing
- Unexpected and sudden **V – Ib at bar 69** which is unstable and unsatisfying
- The Development features several **diminished 7ths**, adding tension and intensity

RHYTHM

- **Crotchet rests** are often used to help add drama to big chords and musical climaxes
- The 1st subject is based off a **dotted** idea, which adds liveliness and reappears everywhere as a motif in itself (such as bar 144 when it is passed around). May also be a nod to Mozart!
- The 1st subject is a perfect example of **rhythmic diminution** (dotted quaver + minim to constant quavers)
- Heavy use of **semiquaver and demisemiquaver** scales to add momentum to the music
- Most of the time, the rhythms are **simple crotchets and minims** which allows the harmony to shine through



METRE

- Remains in 4/4 throughout

TEMPO

- Adagio molto (very slow) in Bars 1-12
- Tempo change to allegro con brio (fast and bright) for rest of the piece

ARTICULATION

Purposeful use of articulation throughout:

1. **Marcato** is used everywhere (stronger sound)
2. **Legato** (smooth) is used in more delicate moments
3. 2nd subject is **accented** on **Beat 2**, which makes the pulse weaker and shows Beethoven is teasing the listener