

# MUSICMAP NOTES

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## **Beethoven's Piano Trio in D Major, Op. 70, No. 1 ('Ghost') – 1808**

Beethoven wrote both trios of Opus 70 in 1808, the same year as the 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Symphonies and the Choral Fantasy. Opus 70 is dedicated to his hostess during the period of composition, Countess Maria Von Erdödy. The 'Ghost' trio is the only one of Beethoven's six official piano trios to be in 3 rather than 4 movements.

### **Movement I – Sonata form, Allegro vivace e con brio (vivaciously fast and with gusto), 3/4, D major**

Even though this movement lasts about 10 minutes in performance, it is in fact surprisingly dense and concise, with for example an exposition of less than 1.5 minutes in duration. The length of the movement is actually a result of the whole second half of the sonata form being repeated.

#### *Exposition:*

The brief exposition is notably quirky, and Beethoven does not make it easy for us to follow its structure. Instead of a clear progression of themes, elements seem to blend and overlap, leaving more of an impression of concentration and organic flow than an orderly contrasting of thematic material.

**Main Theme:** This is a startlingly eccentric theme with a powerfully dual nature. It is fused from two remarkably contrasting elements: the first wild and energetically propulsive; the second delicately lyrical. Both parts are linked together by an aggressively long-held “wrong” note. The thematic material associated with both parts of the theme will be of paramount importance through most of the movement. (As an interesting comparison, the main theme of the last movement of the companion trio, Op. 70 #2, provides a gentler version of the same sort of dual-natured theme.)

**Part I –** This tightly-wound opening explodes in a *ff* flurry of unison staccato 8<sup>th</sup>-notes, played by the entire trio over 4 octaves. The very start is also given extra rhythmic character by the inclusion of two 16<sup>th</sup>-notes. The shape is made up of descending scale fragments, interspersed with bold leaps of 7<sup>th</sup>s or 6<sup>th</sup>s. After this furious wind-up, the 5-bar phrase is somewhat slowed by some rests before coming to a pause on a boldly-sustained F-natural, the aforementioned “wrong” note that has seemingly no business appearing here at the start of a piece in D major. Technically this is a flat mediant, and Beethoven will duly explain its odd presence by spending a more extended period in the key of F major later in the exposition. This dynamic and assertive music returns often over the course of the movement (especially taking into account the repeats of both halves), and always it conveys a bracing sense of new beginning. Before the strange F-

natural, the outline of Part I has clearly established the tonic D major key. (It is interesting to compare all of this with the striking opening of Beethoven's string quartet No. 11 in F minor, 'Serioso', from two years later.)

Part II – Now, as if nothing is wrong, the cello's F-natural slips smoothly to F-sharp, nudged by a low B-flat in the piano (another odd note, technically the flat submediant, which will also prove important as the movement progresses). Back on course, the cello launches into the gently melodic continuation of the main theme, the key securely back in D major. The music seems blithely unaware of the furious commotion just ended. There is still a steady 8<sup>th</sup>-note rhythm, but now in a softly throbbing piano accompaniment to the *dolce* new theme in the strings. Instead of conventional phrase structure, we are offered a melody in subtly imitative style, with a basic lyrical motive passing from voice to voice in suavely overlapping entries. The motive lasts roughly 2 bars and starts with a long, singing half-note, followed by a graceful string of shorter notes, featuring an expressive drop of a 6<sup>th</sup> (or later, 5<sup>th</sup>). With the cello's initial presentation, the most prominent pitches spell out the tonic D triad. The violin then enters up a 5<sup>th</sup> and offers the dominant triad version of the motive. Following this, the motive moves back to the tonic, now sung by both strings in octave unison. These successive entries that alternate between the tonic and dominant are vaguely suggestive of a fugal exposition. But this pattern is now varied, and a climax is reached, when the R.H. shifts the motive to the subdominant, and at the highest pitch-level yet reached. This sense of culmination is affirmed as the R.H. freely extends the motive an extra 2 bars, and then continues further with a graceful flight of flowing triplets. Through much of this the strings, still in octave unison, have maintained a lyrical counterpoint. With the end of the piano's extension, this extraordinary two-part theme finally comes to an end.

Bridge: Part I – Or does it? At one level, this is the start of a new paragraph continuing the main theme, with the lyric motive back in the cello and the tonic, though now louder and in the gruffer-sounding lower octave. Yet while we will hear plenty more of the main theme's Part II motive, the mood has clearly shifted to something more assertive and tense, and soon a process of modulation signals that the bridge is in fact underway. The cello's entrance is *f*, and it is followed by the violin, also *f*, asserting the subdominant with a vigorous quadruple-stop that commences its version of the motive. At the higher dynamic level, the steady 8<sup>th</sup>-note accompaniment now has a more insistent quality. After 6 bars...

Part II – ...a somewhat new-sounding 8-bar passage takes over in *ff* F major (this was mentioned earlier in relationship to the F-natural in the main theme group). While the strings make more freely-shaped reference to the lyrical motive, the piano's rhythm of pounding, off-beat chords over a pattern of rippling 16<sup>th</sup>-notes in the bass particularly distinguishes this material. Starting with this second half of the bridge, most of the balance of the exposition proceeds in 8-bar phrases, with reduced contrast from phrase to phrase. Themes seem more like busy patterns than traditional melodies, and the subtlety of the transitions makes an interesting follow-up to the blatant contrast within the main theme itself. This second part of the bridge being in F major makes for an unusual and effective harmonic setup for the following...

Subordinate theme group: Arriving in A major, the expected dominant.

Intro – 8 bars. Still *ff*, this seems to grow quite organically out of the preceding, but a distinguishing new element is steady waves of 8<sup>th</sup>-notes. These are played in octaves by the strings and are clearly a transformation of the main theme opening, a relationship emphasized by the return here of the little rhythmic motive that launched it. Now, however, the 8<sup>th</sup>-notes move

stepwise both up and down and are legato rather than staccato. Even though the dynamic is at first still loud, this is a very gentle and almost soothing transformation of the explosive opening. Through this, the piano has continued its active chordal presence with a more sophisticated evolution from the previous off-beat rhythm.

Sub-theme – This is set off most noticeably by a sudden drop to *p*. 8-bar statement. This theme has the character of non-imitative counterpoint, with two overlapping, contrasting elements. One is the continuing waves of rising and falling 8<sup>th</sup>-notes, still in the strings in octaves. The other is a distinctive repeating rhythmic idea, played by the piano.

Counter-statement – 8 bars, plus extension. Contrast is provided by switching the 8<sup>th</sup>-notes to the piano and the rhythmic bit to the strings, along with adding a new pattern of crescendos and decrescendos. This is then lengthened by an extra 5 bars with more expressive dynamics and harmony, including prominent piano trills. (As we've seen, the 8<sup>th</sup>-note pattern derived from the main theme's Part I has persisted throughout the sub-theme group. We could view this as compensation for the extensive use of the theme's lyrical motive earlier.)

Closing material: 10 bars. This is surprisingly minimalistic for Beethoven closing material. A subtle string reference is followed by an impressionistic flurry of piano 16<sup>th</sup>-notes, ending in a drawn-out series of *ppp* chords. The effect is almost that of a breathing space before the headlong onslaught of the exposition repeat (or the start of the development). Maybe there is so little cadence material because the sub-theme group itself has acted rather like a typical closing passage, with its repetitive patterns and low melodic profile.

#### *Development:*

Not surprisingly, the entire development will limit its focus to the all-important contrasting main theme motives.

Part I: Based on the first part of the main theme, this brief passage is a *pp* and almost scherzando treatment of the motive, playfully overlapped from voice to voice in a pattern that rises up from the bass.

Part II is launched by a gruff, loud and minor statement of the entire main theme, and then continues by spinning out the lyrical motive at a *p* dynamic, but with a tense, ominous mood. This is subtly enhanced by 16<sup>th</sup>-note octave trills, rumbling low in the background on the piano.

Part III continues to develop the lyrical motive, now obsessively and combatively repeating a fragment of it with alternating *f* and *sf* dynamics, while trading it rapidly between the piano and the strings. Adding further complexity and atmosphere are more fully-scored 16<sup>th</sup>-note trills from the piano, countered by new triplets in the strings.

Part IV: The mounting tension now finds release in a *ff* fugato outburst, launched by the violin still using the same melodic fragment, but soon the main theme's Part I idea is added to the contrapuntal turmoil and comes to dominate this passage, sustaining an exciting, animated, and heroic mood. The strong dynamic level diminuendos at the end to bring us to...

Part V: Retransition. This is brief, and after 4 bars of *pp* harmonic uncertainty, a second 4 bars make loud, assertive use of the main theme's Part I in a teasing way to summons back both the home key and the main theme itself for the start of the...

*Recapitulation:*

Main theme: Aside from the additional heft of a launching violin triple-stop, Part I of the main theme is a literal repeat of the original. The transition to Part II and the cello's presentation of the lyrical phrase are also unchanged. The subsequent repetition up a 5<sup>th</sup> is the same as well, except now it is sung by the R.H. instead of the violin. Surprisingly, the theme stops short here, and from now on Beethoven will treat the main theme and bridge material with great new freedom. Without a pause, the interrupted theme reverts to Part I, but now in the parallel minor, and this time the F-natural leads to the lyrical theme sung by the cello in B-flat (the flat sub-mediante). The subsequent entries of the theme in other voices roughly follow the pattern from the exposition, but with new harmony and some rescoring. Once again, the piano has the role of extending the phrase and then continuing in triplet rhythm. However, this time this marks the beginning of a major new passage which will substitute completely for the bridge. What was originally 4 bars of triplet extension now grows into a 16-bar episode, still dominated by triplets (though sometimes broken up with quintuplets). This creates a marvelous mood of hushed mystery, with delicate harmonic shifts and almost cadenza-like *pp* virtuosity for the R.H. There is a brief crescendo at the end to prepare the arrival of the...

Sub-theme group:

Intro – This is now twice as long, because after the initial 8 bars, which closely resemble the original, he gives us a new additional 8 bars with somewhat gentler dynamics and a changed scoring that anticipates the approaching...

Sub-theme – The principle interest in the reappearance of this material is the scoring, which more subtly intermixes the piano and the strings in presenting the two contrasting elements of the theme, while in the exposition the strings and piano were kept clearly separate and just switched parts for the counter-statement. Statement has 8<sup>th</sup>-note waves in R.H., rhythmic counter-melody in L.H. and strings. Counter-statement switches 8<sup>th</sup>-note waves to the L.H. and cello, rhythmic counter-melody to R.H. and violin. The expected extension follows, but is given additional weight by an extra 3 bars, which lend further prominence to the piano's trills.

Closing material: This follows the earlier pattern, but then the soft closing chords are repeated with a more surprising harmony in what constitutes a first ending, leading to the repeat of the second half of the sonata form (development and recapitulation). Beethoven calling for this old-fashioned repeat is most unusual, and only one of four examples in his heroic middle period (the others being the second 'Rasumovsky' quartet and the piano sonatas Op. 78 in F-sharp major and Op. 79 in G major).

*Coda:*

This relatively short coda emphasizes the dominance of both contrasting parts of the main theme by giving us a final further exploration of each in the reverse of their normal order.

Part I: Beethoven extracts yet more gentle poetry from repeated entries of this lyrical motive before it gathers strength in a 4-bar crescendo, closing with a crisp cadence.

Part II: This is very brief, and the perfect conclusion... a literal repeat of the first part of the main theme's Part I, ending in an unequivocal closed cadence.

Serious students of harmony will find this quote from Basil Smallman sheds further light on Beethoven's adventurous use of keys in this movement (others beware!): "In the outer movements particular stress is laid on two distantly related keys – the flat submediant (B flat major) and the flat mediant (F major). The intention to explore these key areas is announced at the opening of the work where, after the initial D major scale flourish has ended unexpectedly on an F natural (sustained by the cello), the piano left hand introduces a soft octave B flat, implying an incomplete B flat triad; this immediately falls a semitone to A, providing a VI-flat/V 6/4 progression which ushers in the second segment of the principal theme. The harmonic procedure is similar to that used in the 'Emperor' Concerto to link the slow movement to the finale, where the bass falls from B (= C flat) on the bassoons to B flat (dominant of E flat) on the horns; in that case, however, the chordal implication, though perfectly clear, is left entirely to the listener's imagination. Later in the trio's first movement, preceding the start of the second subject group, F major (the flat mediant) is emphasized in a powerful eight-bar passage based on the second segment of the principal theme. Matching this, after the start of the recapitulation, there is a new minor version of the opening scalic flourish, out of which the equivocal F natural emerges simply as the dominant of B flat, and introduces in that key some entirely new developments, decorating the main theme's second phrase. Thus a symmetrical pattern is established whereby each appearance of the second subject group is prefaced by a passage bearing a flat submediant relationship to its key (F major preceding A major in the exposition, and B flat major preceding D major in the recapitulation), and whereby the contrasted key-colours, in both exposition and recapitulation, are related to episodes exploring a single theme-segment in a process of continuous development and expansion."

### **Movement II – Sonata form, Largo assai ed espressivo (very, very slow and expressive), 2/4, D-minor (parallel minor)**

"The work's mysterious slow movement, from which it has gained its 'Geister' (ghost) sobriquet, is as remarkable for its key scheme as for its novelties of scoring. Set in D minor (and thus preserving a single tonic throughout the whole work) it is based on two tiny melodic ideas, stated consecutively in opening bars... Both motifs are frequently presented in new scoring but, interestingly, never occur in sequence in the same instrumental part." (Smallman)

"...there is little which is unusual about the string writing; it is left to the piano to underline the prevailing air of gloom and mystery, partly by emphasizing the lowest part of its register and partly by cultivating a texture with unusually wide spacing between the hands. The Gothic effects - shuddering diminished sevenths and rumbling figures deep in the bass (pointing forward to Weber's 'Der Freischütz') - are sufficiently unusual in Beethoven to suggest that he may have been attempting to portray some specific dramatic or pictorial scene. It is known that in 1807/8 he was considering writing an opera on the subject of Macbeth, using as a libretto a play by Heinrich Joseph von Collin, based on Shakespeare. Indeed, before abandoning the idea as 'too gloomy' he had already made some preliminary sketches which are said to relate to the witches' incantation and Macbeth's first entry. These, according to Nottebohm, not only occupy part of the pages used for sketches of the Largo of the 'Geister' Trio, but also share the same, D minor,

tonality. It seems therefore very possible that the famous slow movement may have been associated in some way with the Macbeth project. Whether in its final form the movement relates best to the weird sisters, the midnight murder of Duncan, the appearance of Banquo's ghost, or none of these, the listener must decide for himself." (Smallman)

"With its trills and tremolando in the piano part, and the fragmentary nature of the thematic material, one can well believe that it was conceived in an operatic frame of mind, possibly in the form of a 'melodrama', spoken words accompanied by orchestral music." (Denis Arnold)

"...explores realms of sound unheard of before in chamber music." (J.Y. Song)

#### *Exposition:*

Main theme: Part I – 8 bars, very regular antiphonal dialogue between strings and piano. Each exchange 2 bars long with 1 bar of strings in octaves answered by 1 bar for piano. (It should be noted that each time the strings slightly overlap the piano's material by continuing their strange utterances one more note into the following bar.) The slow, eerie notes from the strings lead off with the root and 5<sup>th</sup> of D. The pace of this movement is so slow that even though this is just one bar, it leaves us hanging as to whether D major or D minor is being established. Bar 2 for piano unambiguously answers this question with D minor, both in throbbing repeated chords and a beautifully expressive motive ('X') of lyrical character. This short idea will be repeated countless times and compulsively dominate almost the entire movement. Motive 'X' also spells out the tonic triad with its key notes and incorporates a rhythmically ear-catching triplet. As the back-and-forth pattern continues, the efforts of the piano to create a coherent lyrical theme seem to be consistently thwarted by the non-sequitur character of the strings' responses. Harmonic interest is added to the theme by a diminished 7<sup>th</sup> chord and later a switch to major.

Part II – 5 bars. This has been set up at the end of the preceding measure by a crescendo in the piano's throbbing chords, which have also switched to staccato. The effect is of building to a climax and a seamless transition. After the rigidity of Part I's dialogue, we are now offered new *cantabile* material that has a welcome sense of freedom and irregularity, providing a release of the accumulated tension. The strings and later the piano present a new lyrical idea in imitative counterpoint, led off by the cello in its poignant upper range. After three bars of dramatic crescendo dynamics, the theme continues softly in preparation of the...

Bridge: Part I is spooky "shock" music, *ff* with diminished chords and aggressive rising gestures. The pattern is repeated twice over the course of 2 bars.

Part II, in marked contrast, is a quiet 2-bar transition. A cadenza-like piano solo of rippling 64<sup>th</sup>-notes leads us gracefully to...

Subordinate theme: Part I – 8 bars. Rather than offering a contrasting theme here, Beethoven hews closely to the original main theme material. This would be a common practice in the earlier classical style, especially with Haydn, but for Beethoven it's quite unusual. Then again, almost everything about this movement is strange and unexpected. This time, the dialogue material is carried on by the strings, while the piano adds a distinctive new texture and rhythmic element by providing a bed of sustained 64<sup>th</sup>-note sextuplets in both hands. We might naively expect to be in F major here (the orthodox relative major), but the theme starts out now as it did originally, in D minor. Instead of giving us the traditional respite in major, we appear to be

plunged right back into the same claustrophobic minor mess. However, before long the harmonies go in new directions, and our destination is the “strikingly irregular key of C major, the flat leading-note in relation to the basic tonic.” (Smallman) The first 4 bars follow the original pattern most faithfully, with the cello offering the uncanny long notes and the violin responding with motive ‘X’. After this, ‘X’ refuses to patiently await its turn, encroaching prematurely on the cello’s sustained notes before building to a fine new dramatic climax. This is a high point of romantic lyricism, but it cannot be sustained.

Part II – 5 bars. This starts with a disheartening deceptive cadence that seems to undermine the passionate release we have just experienced, while coinciding with a sudden drop in dynamics to *pp*. What we realize we have is a free new extension of the sub-theme material, this time presented as a regular dialogue of ‘X’ back and forth between the cello and violin. The major tonality and gradual crescendo lend this an increasingly optimistic mood, enhanced by the animated piano accompaniment of rippling 64<sup>th</sup> notes. This ends with a climax of extroverted lyricism, reminiscent of the previous one, and also cut short by another deceptive cadence. Closing material: 7 bars. This passage has such an extraordinarily bleak and murky sonority that it may be almost hard to believe that, structurally, this deeply disturbing music is simply cadence material in C major. At the darkest, lowest depths of the keyboard the L.H. rumbles softly on with a part that emphasizes slowed-down, minor-2nd trills, while above the strings carry on a demoralized discussion based on motive ‘X’. The exposition is not repeated.

#### *Development:*

This relatively brief section is only 8 bars long.

Part I: After the preceding cadence material, our ears are relieved by the relative clarity and movement of the polyphonic music from the main theme’s Part II. This begins gently, but several crescendos lead to a stressful peak that transitions without pause into...

Part II, a *ff* development of motive ‘X’ with great power and primal energy. The cello and R.H. carry on a completely regular alternation of the motive against a pulse of slashing 16<sup>th</sup>-note double-stops from the violin, all over thunderous rumbling in the L.H. This builds and builds to a mighty peak that is immediately cut off, save for a high sustained A in the cello...the dominant pedal that constitutes our foreshortened retransition. A soft pizzicato cadence then signals the return to D minor and the...

#### *Recapitulation:*

Main theme: Part I is rescored and decorated, but still quite a faithful return of the original theme. Now the long octave string notes that initiated the odd dialogue are cello above and L.H. below, while motive ‘X’ is given to the violin over throbbing chords more fully scored for both hands of the piano. The biggest change is new R.H. decoration of the ponderous opening utterances. This is the well-honored practice of ornamenting the return of a slow movement’s principal theme, especially if it seems particularly leisurely in its pace, by adding busy new figuration in other voices. In this case, given the seriousness of mood, this is not taken too far, and limited to only modest R.H. phrases derived once more from motive ‘X’.

Part II is much as before, but enhanced by fuller scoring that lends yet more power to the familiar dynamic shifts.

Bridge: Unusually, this is a literal repeat, which works well since we recall that the subordinate theme oddly started on the tonic back in the exposition.

Sub-theme: Part I – This time, however, instead of transitioning to C major, “...the original second subject ‘area’ is simply raised a whole tone in pitch to D minor.” (Smallman) But, in other respects, this is very much as before, only shortened by one bar.

Part II – Again close to the original, but the feeling is vastly different, with tortured minor harmonies instead of the more optimistic original mood. Also an extra bar is added to the build-up.

Closing material: Back into this sonic hellhole, just in D minor this time.

*Coda:*

Part I: This is a very explicit reminiscence of the first part of the development, but instead of building to a harsh climax, it instead settles into soft, tentative chords.

Part II: This hurls us into high drama with rapid dynamic shifts, climactic string utterances of ‘X’ and long, ominous chromatic descents for the piano. Rhythmically, Beethoven creates a sense of dislocation and disintegration by unusual (and technically difficult) subdivisions of the beat.

Part III: After this shock treatment, there is no easy out, as Beethoven prolongs the final cadence chords with a suspenseful *pp* passage ripe with pauses, one surprise *f*, and a sequence of pizzicato footsteps off into the dark.

### **Movement III – Sonata form, Presto, Common-time, D major**

A light-hearted and frisky movement which, though in sonata form, is almost exclusively preoccupied with one basic thematic idea. Though Beethoven’s harmonic scheme is far more adventurous and cutting-edge, this is clearly in the tradition of many lively and essentially monothematic finales by Haydn and Mozart. It should also be noted that in this movement, to an unusual degree, deciding where to start and end structural elements is challenging and perhaps a bit arbitrary. Beethoven consistently (and deliberately) seems to be blurring and overlapping these junctures, so that convincing arguments could be made for alternative points of transition. In fact, this ambiguity is a significant part of the charm and aesthetic effect achieved.

“Following the dark despair of the Largo, the last movement projects a most welcome warmth and brightness. The music evokes the same sense of relief and recovered self-composure that one feels after having survived a trying experience or near disaster.” (Berger)

“Hardly less Shakespearean in manner, though not in intent, is the humorous, quirky, eccentric even, finale to the trio, which releases the tension engendered by its predecessor much as the bibulous porter does after the murder scene in Macbeth.” (Smallman)



*Exposition:*

Main theme, Part I: Motto – “...opening phrase, which leads to an abrupt halt on the dominant of the submediant (an F sharp major chord) and then returns to the tonic with no intervening ‘resolution’...” (Smallman) 4 bars piano solo until strings enter just before ending fermata. This continuous opening phrase contains two motives that will recur throughout the movement. The first, motive ‘X’, has a graceful shape characterized by rising and falling leaps. Immediately continuing from this is motive ‘Y’, a steadily rising stepwise motion, ending with a long-held note (chord). (Motive ‘X’ will prove particularly malleable, with the leaps often contracting to stepwise motion, but still preserving an identifying rhythm and basic character.) Together ‘X’ and ‘Y’ give the effect of posing a question. 4 bars follow this suspension of progress with what feels like an extension of the motto, though instead of answering said question, this continuation leaves it unresolved and still hanging. The added passage features more stepwise lines for piano and strings, inspired by motive ‘Y’, including contrary motion, and hence inversion of the original rise. Again this ends with a fermata on a long-held chord.

Main theme, Part II: Statement – A *dolce* 10-bar melody crafted from motive ‘X’, sung by the strings in 3<sup>rd</sup>s with enlivening rhythmic punctuation low in the piano.

Counter-statement – Rescored with melody up an octave, piano lead, but now the harmonizing 3<sup>rd</sup>s have been separated into 10<sup>th</sup>s (an octave and a 3<sup>rd</sup>), while the strings provide the rhythmic interjections. Instead of 10 bars, this is cut short at 9 by the...

Bridge: Because what follows is a continuous paragraph, it makes sense to consider it as the modulating bridge, but it starts with a *f*, climactic full statement of the motto with both ‘X’ and ‘Y’. This is still in the original key and richly scored for the entire ensemble, but now no fermatas disturb the rush of forward momentum as it continues directly into bridge-sounding material. The violin and then the cello each play a stepwise rising line in half-notes, leading to an even longer-held note (‘Y’ augmented), while both hands of the piano in octaves dash off a continuous series of rising and falling 8<sup>th</sup>-note runs. It is only during the following 4 bars with slightly different material that the actual process of modulation occurs.

Subordinate theme group:

Intro – 8 bars (4+4). We are now hit by a particularly startling-sounding key change (F major) that could easily seem like part of the bridge, but in fact is the unconventional opening salvo of the subordinate theme. This 4-bar idea starts *ff* and projects a markedly new rhythmic identity.

The basic shape is a long-held note followed by an arpeggiated descent, then contrasting *p* material rhythmically repeats the bottom note. (Is it too fanciful to see this as a radical, retrograde transformation of ‘Y’?) Violin sings this to the accompaniment of more busy piano 8<sup>th</sup>-notes, including a R.H. part in contrary motion to the melody's descent. With slight variations, the pattern then recurs in the second 4 bars.

Sub-theme – Statement 8 bars (4+4), parallel period, now in the expected dominant A major. A catchy, dancy tune emerges from the preceding, with a string antecedent answered by piano in the consequent. After the wild contrasts of the intro, this sounds reassuringly regular and amiable, its charm enhanced by the first use of pizzicato in the movement. Still, even though this is a new theme, motive ‘X’ is fluidly integrated into the melody.

Counter-statement – 8 bars(?), plus extension. This offers new scoring, with a cello antecedent and violin consequent against a bustling new 8<sup>th</sup>-note piano accompaniment. This time the end smoothly morphs into a free extension which continues the piano's 8<sup>th</sup>-notes while the strings

trade an attractive new fragment. The extension is prolonged with greater intensity when a new motive enters – a long note followed by a descending arpeggio – and an increase to *f* dynamics. (This seems to derive from the sub-theme intro motive.) This idea is also presented in dialogue, but now the strings in octaves alternate with the R.H. in octaves, while the L.H. maintains the continuity of pulsating 8<sup>th</sup>-notes. After a peak of *ff* is reached, the prevailing sense of descending motion transitions seamlessly to the emphatic rise of motive ‘Y’ in octaves, including its original ending fermata. This is actually an expanded and supercharged version of the original ‘Y’. Before, the stepwise rise consisted of just about an octave in mostly quarter-note rhythm, while in this case the piano’s stepwise 8<sup>th</sup>-notes rise through several octaves over more bars. Also, the piano’s ascent seems to start early, while the strings are still completing their descending line. Without pause the strings then join the rising momentum of ‘Y’ but, in their case, still moving by 3<sup>rd</sup>s.

Closing material: Part I – Motive ‘X’ returns with a gentle and graceful presentation that briefly flirts with minor.

Part II – In strong contrast, this is followed by a repetition of motive ‘Y’ in the *ff* scoring that just ended the sub-theme extension. This coming back here provides yet another example of the ambiguity one encounters in separating one section from another. This time the terminating sustained note shifts to a new harmony that launches...

Part III – A delicate and, in this context, long R.H. cadenza that wanders freely over the upper part of the keyboard.

Part IV – Now the strings rejoin the piano and ‘X’-derived material is recognizable as it subtly shifts and evolves upward with growing intensity, stronger dynamics, and displaced rhythms. The balance of this actually parallels most directly the final bar of the continuation of the main theme motto.

Part V – Seamlessly reached, this appears to be the destination and climax of the preceding, but marked off by now-descending motion and strong regular rhythms that recall the sub-theme.

Part VI – A final, brief bit of cadence material characterized by chords in short-long rhythm against waves of 8<sup>th</sup>-notes. Before we know it, this has fluidly brought us to the start of the exposition repeat (another instance of blurring).

#### *Development:*

Now the exposition concludes with a second ending that commences the development just as seamlessly.

Part I: This provides a series of modulations on repetitions of the closing material’s Part VI, gradually decreasing in volume and ending in a fermata.

Part II: This is the longest section and is all based on motive ‘X’. This starts with wistful groping and exploration, then builds to greater intensity as the material is fragmented. Throughout, the strings are in dialogue with the piano, until finally all the instruments come together *ff* to crown this passage before diminuendoing in preparation for...

Part III: Retransition. Over a steady, dominant A pedal, the cello launches a new and graceful 8-bar tune inspired by motive ‘X’ and incorporating progressively more triplet rhythm. The violin clearly likes the cello’s suggestion and starts its own triplet sequencing of the melody, but

before it can get very far the piano impatiently barges in with the same material as well. This then turns into a powerful rising 8<sup>th</sup>-note motion that delivers us without warning or pause into the...

*Recapitulation:*

Beethoven presents all of his original material with unusual fidelity in this recap. This is most striking with the main theme and bridge, because of his frequent tendency to rework these, even sometimes quite radically.

Main theme, Part I: Motto – This is all very recognizable, but the big change here is in scoring and dynamics. What earlier started as a soft piano solo now commences *ff* with all voices present. Beethoven is quite fond of doing this when the opening of a movement was originally spare and subdued. However, within a few bars the dynamics are back to their original indications.

Main theme, Part II: This is as before, except that now the statement is given to the piano and the counter-statement to the strings.

Bridge: The long opening part of this in the tonic is a literal repeat of the original, but the final 4 bars which actually accomplished the modulation have now grown to 14. This elaboration features ear-catching new harmonies, especially when the minor mode is touched on.

Sub-theme group:

Intro – The sense of harmonic shock is preserved here by this time using the distant key of B-flat.

Sub-theme – Harmonic normalcy is restored by shifting to the expected D major, but an attractive new brightness is imparted by choosing the upper octave.

Closing material: All very regular.

*Coda:*

Characteristically, this grows from the end of the closing material without any break or special fanfare.

Part I: Brief new extension of closing material.

Part II: Starts with the main theme motto ('X' & 'Y', but not the continuation) *f* in the strings, followed by a surprising and delightful "strange passage...involving high pizzicatos and a distant (B flat minor) tonality." (Smallman) A brief sweep of rising 8<sup>th</sup>-notes leads us to...

Part III: This final section succinctly and perfectly sums up so much of the preceding movement. First we hear the complete motto, including its continuation, but with picturesque new scoring that breaks up the melody between the strings against tinkling R.H. 8<sup>th</sup>-notes. Then, instead of the fermata that left us hanging, the long-unanswered question is finally and most satisfyingly resolved by continuing with the closing material's elaboration of the last part of the motto. Thus key moments from the beginning and the end of the exposition, always long-separated, are now juxtaposed to make a deft and graceful fit. This understated feat

accomplished, the movement ends joyfully with a final upward chromatic sweep (suggestive again of motive ‘Y’) and *ff* cadence chords.

“Serving both as a scherzo and a sonata-form finale, the last movement provides a key scheme which ingeniously mirrors that of the first movement. Again it is the keys of F major and B flat major which are emphasized, in D major or A major contexts, twice each during the exposition and recapitulation. As in the first movement they are used partly to provide an oblique approach to the second subject group and partly to enrich each section with additional developments... Beethoven, it is said, completed this movement, and indeed the whole D major trio, with unusual speed and fluency. Certainly the finale shows every sign of having sprung from a single impetus, as if it had entered his mind whole and unified from the start – though this did not eliminate, as the surviving sketches show, the customary need for much revision and recasting of detail.” (Smallman)

“The concluding movement... has a short, original theme, which continually reappears in many variations and meaningful allusions throughout the entire piece while a variety of figures are interchanged... Just as the storm wind drives away the clouds, with light and shadow alternating in a moment, as forms then appear in the restless pursuit and commotion, disappear and reappear again, just so does the music rush continuously onward... Beethoven’s style... shows itself in final movements primarily through continuous, ever mounting bustle and commotion. Regardless of the good nature that prevails in the entire trio, with the exception of the melancholy Largo, Beethoven’s genius still remains serious and solemn. It is as though the master believed that deep, secret things can never be discussed in commonplace terms, but only in sublime, magnificent ones, even when the spirit, which is intimately familiar with them, feels joyously and happily uplifted.” (E.T.A. Hoffmann)