

# MUSICMAP NOTES

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## **Beethoven's Piano Trio in G Major, Op. 1, No. 2 – 1795**

“In some ways, the G major is the most elusive and hardest to categorize of the Opus 1 trios. At times it adheres closely to eighteenth-century compositional strictures, including the emotional restraint, while at other times it anticipates the freer and more obviously expressive nineteenth-century style.” (Melvin Berger)

“...the most relaxed and spacious of the set, compared to the taut and bristly No. 1 and the explosive, highly charged No. 3. Beethoven here masks and economy of means with a semblance of thematic fecundity.” (Lois Shapiro)

### **Movement I – Sonata form, Adagio; Allegro vivace, 3/4; then 2/4, G major**

#### *Slow Introduction:*

At close to 3 minutes, this is a substantial and warmly lyrical preparation for the coming sonata form. At the same time it is characterized by theatrical rhythmic pauses, as well as the dotted rhythms and sweeping scales inherited from the earlier French overture style.

Part I: Opening phrase, 4 bars. After a loud *tutti* tonic chord seizes our attention, the dynamic level drops to *p*, and the R.H. plays an ascending dotted rhythm arpeggio (a stately version of the popular ‘rocket’ idea). The piano then continues in a more melodic vein, which is soon companionably imitated by the violin. As we will learn later, the violin’s varied response is actually a slowed-down anticipation of the main theme’s basic motive.

Parallel second phrase, 4 bars. This time the loud chord is a dominant-7<sup>th</sup>, and the familiar R.H./violin collaboration is intensified through an expressive alteration of the piano’s material.

Free extension & elaboration, 9 bars. Now, instead of a single loud chord, a new accompanimental texture of softly throbbing harmony is established. Set against this, the R.H. indulges in a poetic succession of 32<sup>nd</sup>-note scales and runs, while the cello for the first time asserts more of an individual presence. The second half of this passage blossoms into particularly tender expression, practically a brief love duet between R.H. and violin.

Part II: Setup & tease, 11 bars. Once again a loud ‘call to order’ signals a new beginning, but this time instead of a chord, the ensemble plays a brief *ff* unison passage that gives greater weight to the dotted rhythm side of things. From this grows a new 2-bar lyrical phrase, heard first in the R.H. and then immediately repeated by the left. Meanwhile, the violin continues to make its presence known with contrasting material. From here on, Beethoven indulges in a

wonderfully protracted and playful teasing session, presenting the rising opening of the new melodic idea in a succession of imaginatively varied treatments. Eventually, this turns into staccato anticipatory rising scales that provide the final lead-in to the start of the...

*Exposition:*

The music switches to the faster *allegro vivace* tempo and also to 2/4 meter.

“What a surprise, then, especially after a long, drawn-out dominant pedal raises expectations for an aristocratic entrance - a definitive no-nonsense kind of theme, *and* an harmonic resolution - when the *allegro vivace* begins with a beguilingly ingenuous, ‘country bumpkinish’ little theme instead! Not only does it sneak in unceremoniously, without the fanfare of a real resolution, but Beethoven also has the fun of transforming a softly magisterial thematic idea from the introduction into a musing, impish question, merely by enlivening the rhythm. This is just one of the many instances in this piece where Beethoven sets up our expectation for a grand, regal gesture, and gives us instead a disarmingly modest little tune, Papageno-like in its innocent charm.” (Shapiro)

Main theme: Phrase *a*, R.H. lead, 4(2+2)+12 bars – There is a very attractive continuity between the piano’s anticipatory gestures and its actual presentation of the theme, especially as a brief *tenuto* temporarily softens the change in tempo. It is almost as if it takes us a moment to process that the main theme itself is truly underway and not just more piano build-up. The first 4 bars give us two immediate helpings of the crucial main theme motive that was delicately foreshadowed earlier. This consists of a crisp long-short-short repeated-note rhythm, followed by a distinctive turn-like ornament. (As this motive is developed, the repeated note can take on other rhythmic configurations while still maintaining the idea’s essential identity.) The following 12 bars are mildly contrasting and continue at unexpected length, while cleverly resisting division into shorter units. Though the piano has the melody throughout phrase *a*, the violin soon joins in with a fairly active complementary line.

Phrase *b*, piano solo, 8 bars – This offers greater contrast and introduces some triplet rhythm, but it also seems to derive from an inversion of the basic motive’s ornament bit.

Phrase *a'*, 4(2+2)+11 bars, rounds off the main theme with a satisfying *f*, *tutti* scoring of the basic motive, this time with violin lead. However, we have shifted away from the original key, and the continuation after the first 4 bars is now new material that grows more directly from the rhythmic motive and gives the violin an exciting workout while initiating movement towards the...

Bridge: Part I starts with a rather abrasive *tutti* version of the basic motive that is then spun out into softer, modulatory material featuring graceful, *legato* 16<sup>th</sup>-note runs in the R.H.

Part II – This is considerably shorter and marked by a drop in dynamic level. The striking new element is some violin exploration of the basic motive’s “turn” idea, while the piano continues its 16<sup>th</sup>-note momentum. Then, as we near arrival at the new key, the volume swells and an exciting, pounding rhythm is briefly asserted in preparation for the...

Subordinate theme: D major, the expected dominant. Statement, violin lead, 8(4+4)+6 bars – This is a very catchy and dance-like melody that starts with a regular-sounding phrase structure consisting of a 4-bar idea that is immediately sequenced down a step. The essential element here

has a captivating rhythmic momentum that suggests a miniature version of the ‘ready, set, go’ strategy. Following this, the continuation is more unpredictable and fragmentary in character, leading after just 6 bars to the disguised start of a...

Counter-statement (varied) – This time the 8-bar phrase is played by the R.H., but recasting the melody into chromatic, flowing 16<sup>th</sup>s so that it requires the periodic short-short-short-long *tutti* landmarks to reassure us that we are really still hearing the same theme. Afterward we get a new continuation featuring a lyrical R.H. idea over cello reminders of the characteristic rhythm. However, this soon transitions into a virtuoso R.H. extension that charges ahead at some length before eventually leading to the closing material. Towards the end, the violin is unwilling to be taken for granted and asserts itself with some exciting leaping gestures.

Closing material: Part I – This is relatively brief and playfully gestural in style without introducing strongly characterized new thematic material. The most distinctive element is the clear reminder of the main theme motive after its absence throughout the sub-theme. Things get started with an almost 8-bar stretch featuring soft, tiptoeing stepwise movement leading to the main theme motive in the piano. This chain of events is then given a varied reprise, but now the main theme motive is cut short to make way for a free extension and development of the ideas in play.

Part II is much briefer and serves to provide a strong, clear close in the key of D major. As an effective anticipation of the exposition repeat, this passage contains overlapping references to the main theme motive.

#### *Development:*

Throughout this section, Beethoven focuses attention on the main theme motive without introducing references to the sub-theme or other material from the exposition.

Part I: From the optimistic mood at the end of the exposition, we are plunged immediately into the minor mode as Beethoven subjects the main theme motive to an austere and energetic fugato treatment marked by dynamic contrasts, rhythmic variation, and “some highly advanced harmonies” (Berger). Starting in G minor (the parallel minor), the motive is presented as a fugal subject in successive voices, always juxtaposed with a new ‘antique’-sounding half-note idea. Eventually, after 4 very regular cycles through this combination, the pattern becomes more irregular and is intensified by the addition of bustling 16<sup>th</sup>-notes.

Part II: A coy, cadenza-like *pp* R.H. solo that gradually accelerates into trilling figures serves as transition into this longest passage of the development. Once again, the main theme motive is front-and-center, but now the bright sound of major creates a fresh, ‘open-air’ mood. Over 12 bars, a dialogue is established from violin to cello and back to violin. Underlying much of this is a L.H. ostinato treatment of the main theme motive ornament. This clever new application of that distinctive cluster of notes is first briefly suggested by part of the violin’s opening phrase. The entire 12-bar dialogue is then repeated, but sequenced to new and intensified harmonic effect. The 16 bars following are a freer elaboration of the material, including the eventual introduction of some disruptive and destabilizing dynamic shocks.

Part III: This brief (10 bars), quiet passage grows smoothly from the preceding, but is marked off by the final cessation of that rumbling L.H. ostinato. Shifting rapidly from voice to voice, the

main theme's ornament is now elongated into a series of quicksilver ascending runs, following which, tentative piano chords set up...

Part IV: Retransition. These 7 bars are even more concise, with a little imitative dialogue between the violin and piano that teasingly stretches out the motive ornament. This is followed by a sweeping triplet chromatic run in the R.H. that satisfyingly elaborates the equivalent lead-in from the end of the slow introduction.

#### *Recapitulation:*

Main theme: One of the most attractive features of this movement is how inventively Beethoven modifies and enhances his original material. Phrase *a* – Here the melody is as before, but with scoring that makes it seem brighter and more vivacious. The first 4 bars are moved up an octave higher (both R.H. & violin), and during the 12-bar continuation the sound is further enriched as the violin takes on a more assertively imitative role. Instead of phrase *b*, the music continues straight into the first 4 bars of *a'*, loud and lusty with violin lead as before, though otherwise rescored. This time, however, in continuation of the phrase Beethoven springs his biggest surprise of the recapitulation: a catchy new folk song idea that is sung with gusto by R.H. and violin in octave unison. The last part of this tune, marked by leaping gestures and *sf* accents, is given an immediate varied repeat featuring decorative trills. This entire novel interpolation lasts 12 bars, and thus, as far as phrase structure, makes this version of *a'* more parallel to phrase *a*, almost like an actual counter-statement now except for the way that it still starts in a different key. We next learn that phrase *b* has not been forgotten, but merely deferred, as it crops up here (at least the first 4 bars of it) before gradually morphing into an expressive new string dialogue that serves as a revised initiation of the...

Bridge: Part II – At 24 bars, this passage is expanded to twice its original length and thus acquires considerable additional expressive and structural weight. The way this works is to go through it once, seemingly as before, but leading to a deceptive cadence that sets up a major extension and amplification of the familiar material.

Sub-theme, etc.: All of this through Part I of the closing material hews very closely to the original, except for the expected transposition to the tonic key, generally favoring the brighter upper octave. However, instead of proceeding to the closing material's Part II, the music smoothly segues into a long and ambitious...

#### *Coda:*

Part I: This emerges seamlessly from the end of the closing material's Part I and serves as an extension of it, making much more of the piano's triplet figuration and further exploring the main theme motive. Everything builds up to a big, emphatic cadence...but one that still does not feel properly conclusive, necessitating continuation into...

Part II: After a brief, suspenseful moment of silence, Beethoven initiates an extensive new catalogue of ideas, all based on the seminal main theme motive. This mostly hushed section is the longest part of the coda, and it is wonderfully protean and flexible. Growing out of some quiet, imitative entries, we soon recognize what is a quotation from the minor mode *fugato* that initiated the development section. The music doesn't linger long there, however, and soon we

are off to other derivations of the basic motive. For a moment, we hear what sounds like the transition into Part II of the development, but this is redirected into new and freely evolving variations.

Part III: The switch here to *f* dynamics signals that Beethoven is finally ready to wrap things up, which he does with bustling and brilliant excitement. A marvelously gruff-sounding cello launches into a new, climactic version of the main theme motive that is then enthusiastically taken up by the other voices, carrying the momentum through to the loud concluding chords. Interestingly, these are the exact same chords that sounded incomplete at the end of the coda's Part I, but now with proper preparation they do the job just fine.

**Movement II – Sonata form, Largo con espressione (very slowly with expression), 6/8, E major (flat submediant, an exotically distant key and perhaps allied to Haydn's occasional practice at this time)**

“The gravitational center of the trio is the Largo. The expressivity and perfection of the line of the two main melodies, the richness of the textures, the harmonic freedom - all combine to produce a profoundly moving movement.” (Berger)

“...a gloriously inspired and luminous Mozartean aria in the surprising key of E Major. It is the emotional center of the trio, with some particularly magical and moving transformations of its opening theme.” (Shapiro)

“...Beethoven strikes a note with already points towards the magical romantic mood of Schubertian lyricism.” (Hans Christoph Worbs)

*Exposition:*

Main theme: Statement 8 bars, 4(2+2)+4, contrasting period, piano solo – This is among the earliest examples of the sort of characteristic, noble hymn-like melodies that form the basis of many a Beethoven slow movement. Both hands start out playing in 3<sup>rd</sup>s, the R.H. harmonizing the tune as the L.H. sounds a complementary line in synchronized motion. The first two bars constitute a crucially important motive (*a*), which Beethoven will explore extensively. It is characterized by a distinctive dotted rhythm, mostly stepwise motion, and a narrow compass. Motive *a* is then immediately repeated and sequenced up a step to form the balance of the antecedent. The consequent follows with a distinctly contrasting motive of its own (*b*) based on flowing stepwise 16<sup>th</sup>-notes over a more independent L.H. off-beat accompaniment. The final two bars round off the melody with a new idea that seems to return to some of the simple dignity of motive *a*.

Counter-statement: Violin lead in upper octave. After the austerity of the statement, this treats us to considerably richer scoring with the piano contributing a steady 16<sup>th</sup>-note pulse, compliments of a murmuring broken-chord pattern, while the cello sings its own version of the original bassline. This time the consequent introduces some new variety as the R.H. switches to distinctive sighing figures against the violin's motive *b*. Then, instead of giving us the earlier rounding-off close, the melody continues into a free extension, making further use of motive *b*

with the violin and piano swapping their previous material. The new passage starts the process of modulation in anticipation of the bridge and lasts a bar longer than the original consequent.

Bridge: Part I – Flirting with minor, the violin sings a romantically expressive melody over a vocal-style accompaniment of throbbing 16<sup>th</sup>-note R.H. chords. This new idea lasts for 2 bars and incorporates dotted rhythms that may relate to motive *a*. The next 2 bars sequence the melody up a 5<sup>th</sup>, switching it to the R.H. in freely elaborated form, while the L.H. takes over the pulsing accompaniment and the violin contributes a new counter-melody.

Part II is another 2-bar segment, but thinned out to a sparser texture with just the strings and piano trading short, plaintive, sighing figures.

Part III – Piano solo. Again 2 bars, this serves as a final, slow settling that gradually points us toward the new key. It has the feeling of a soft cadenza with the R.H. spinning out a steady succession of flowing 16<sup>th</sup>s.

Subordinate theme: B major, the expected dominant. Statement starts *pp* with piano lead and music-box scoring. This exquisite 6-bar theme resists easy parsing when it comes to phrase structure. A tinkly 1-bar motive is repeated, sequenced up a 3<sup>rd</sup> and then further elaborated. Everything grows seamlessly from the previous piano solo, but this time the violin punctuates with discrete comments of its own. Over the course of the remaining bars, the cello assumes some unusual prominence and a 16<sup>th</sup>-note motive passes from L.H. to violin to R.H. Finally, a rising sweep of 32<sup>nd</sup>-notes in the violin acts as a pickup to the counter-statement. So far, the sub-theme possesses a tantalizingly elusive quality...it starts off with such crystalline clarity, a focused melody in one instrument, but then gradually it seemingly dissipates into a mystifying series of overlapping gestures. Let's also pause a moment to note that while the new theme provides admirable contrast to the main theme, it also shares a subtle affinity with it. Once again we start with a distinctive motive that may not sound like motive *a* but which also has a narrow compass, dotted rhythm, and is immediately sequenced upwards.

Counter-statement – While it is normal for a counter-statement to be rescored and often varied in other ways, in this instance the theme is at the same time dramatically truncated and intensified. What originally lasted 6 bars is now compressed into 3 and contains a rather startling crescendo up to *ff* that then dies away as suddenly as it emerged. As we might expect, the start of the theme is the most regular, with the violin now faithfully reproducing the twice-sounded motive in the same octave as before.

Closing theme: 5 bars (2+2+1). The exposition concludes with a gracious and elegant theme that seems to restore the emotional equilibrium after the briefly disorienting effect of the counter-statement. For 2 bars, the R.H. spins out a suave melody and then repeats it, reinterpreted into mostly 32<sup>nd</sup>-notes. The lead then briefly passes to the violin for a gentle cadential bar. The steady 16<sup>th</sup>-note accompaniment pulsing under most of this reinforces the vocal character of this movement's material.

#### *Development:*

The brevity of this section (only 7 bars) raises the question of whether it constitutes a true development or merely the sort of transitional passage that often links the exposition and recapitulation in a slow movement sonatina design. A case could be made either way, but it seems just long and developmental enough to tip it towards the former. We are strongly

reminded of the main theme as a moodily modulating dialogue based on motive *a* is conducted between the strings, with the deep voice of the cello contributing a touch of portentous solemnity. Eventually, things break down into more fragmentary and expressively heightened material. Throughout, the R.H. maintains a steady, unifying insistence on its 16<sup>th</sup>-note rhythm.

*Recapitulation:*

Main theme: Statement – While the lead is still given to the piano, otherwise this rendition of the theme is considerably more showy than its original plain presentation. We now hear both hands high on the keyboard in music-box scoring (shades of the sub-theme?), while the R.H. considerably ornaments the melody's original contours. Also, the strings are no longer silent but provide an actively caressing commentary of their own.

Counter-statement – For the antecedent, as in the exposition, the lead now switches to a string instrument, but this time it is the cello singing high in its register and enjoying another fleeting moment in the spotlight. The total effect is enhanced by more striking scoring, here a steady accompaniment pattern in the violin against staccato 32<sup>nd</sup>-note scales that rise from the depths of the keyboard. When the theme arrives at the consequent and motive *b*, the melody transfers to the piano and we hear a new take on the complementary sighing figures that were introduced at this point in the exposition, rescored as a string dialogue. As before, the melody is extended an extra bar, and this time the piano gives us another rising sweep of staccato 32<sup>nd</sup>-notes, acting as a lead-in to the...

Bridge & Sub-theme: Abbreviating now, Beethoven dispenses entirely with the lyrical first part of the bridge and gives us only a touch of the signing motives characteristic of Part II. However, from this point through the entire subordinate theme, he is generally quite faithful to the original material, except for transposition to the tonic key. Still, he can't resist the subtle touch of ornamenting the violin's little commentaries during the sub-theme's statement.

Closing theme: Aside from some adjusted scoring, this too starts out quite regularly, but then the repetition of the two-bar idea is less elaborately decorated and is instead extended into a graceful and dreamy new ending.

*Grand Coda:*

At about four minutes in length, this massive coda represents roughly a third of the entire movement and seems to belatedly compensate for any earlier skimping on the development section, as Beethoven embarks on a prolonged, ruminative meditation of the essence of the main theme.

Part I sounds like a free improvisation on motive *a*, with harmony and dynamics used to create an effect of heightened expressivity. This starts out as a piano solo that translates the motive into minor and includes a dramatic *ff* chord. Then the violin joins in as the new treatment is extended through repetition and fragmentation. Finally, a brief turn to major signals the end of this opening paragraph.

Part II switches to the low register of the cello and what sounds almost like a quotation of the development's string dialoging of motive *a*. However, though the backwards reference is

unmistakable, the interchange between the instruments is different here, with less feeling of regular imitation back and forth.

Part III grows as a natural climax from the foregoing, but its material is actually an intensified return to Part I. The same improvisation' on motive *a* is significantly rescored and enlivened by febrile-sounding 32<sup>nd</sup>-note figuration from the piano. Once again, this shifts to major at the end, but this time what follows is a new departure.

Part IV – We are now able to stay in the major mode, and a much more optimistic mood takes hold as motive *a* is temporarily set aside. For 3 bars, the R.H. plays a new 16<sup>th</sup>-note idea that loosely hints at motive *b*. The connection is reinforced by the violin decorating with the recapitulation's version of the sighing figures from the counter-statement consequent. This short chunk of music is then immediately repeated in an effervescently ornamented guise that extends an extra bar and ends *ff*, followed by an expectant pause.

Part V – With wonderful simplicity, the piano now plays motive *b* itself and spins it out at some length as the violin joins in with caressing encouragement.

Part VI smoothly follows with a second helping of Part IV, combining and compressing both the original and ornamented material down to 4 bars.

Part VII – With this last part of the coda motive *a* returns, and in a guise based on its treatment in Part I. Still, the radiant cheer of Parts IV-VI has done its work, and now minor-key *schmerz* has mellowed into peaceful serenity. We are given two mildly contrasting takes on the transfigured *a* idea, and then Beethoven extends and fragments for a surprising length of time, as if he can't quite bear to actually finish. The last 4 bars of tender cadential gestures are marked "dying away."

### **Movement III – Scherzo & Trio design, Allegro, 3/4, G major**

After two movements of over 12 minutes in duration each and extensive use of slow tempos (the adagio introduction to movement I and the largo pace of movement II), Beethoven is careful here to keep his dance movement short, light, and fresh.

"...jaunty [and] Haydnesque in its wit: beginning with an ending gesture, playing with surprising accentuations, throwing in some quirky little horn calls and asymmetries of phrase lengths to keep us 'on our toes,' aurally!" (Shapiro)

*Scherzo*: Expected rounded binary form.

Part I: Phrase *a* – 16 bars (12+4). Beethoven constructs a graceful, continuously flowing 12-bar phrase from a basic motive that is first heard low in the range of the solo cello. Set to a simple, caressing rhythm, this motive rises the distance of a 4<sup>th</sup> from the dominant to the tonic, two repeated notes followed by a stepwise ascent. Once heard, the motive proliferates in other voices, including inversion with the effect of contrary motion. The later progress of the phrase

treats the prevailing motive with still greater freedom and emphasizes descending rather than rising lines.

Codetta – These additional 4 bars are set off by a strongly contrasting staccato opening, but soon we get a varied return of the basic motive.

Part II is considerably longer. Phrase *b* – 20 bars. Thematically, this is only a mild contrast because it too is spun out of the essential motive but manipulated in fresh and creative ways. The overall effect is more developmental in style, with a thicker and more imitative texture. As it proceeds, there are also some references to the heavier rhythmic motion of the codetta. Phrase *a'* is greatly expanded beyond the original dimensions of *a* at 34 bars (10+16+8). The first 10 bars are close to the original, though still interestingly varied and retaining some of the new complexity from *b*. What follows sounds like a new interpolation, featuring scurrying 8<sup>th</sup>-note runs leading to a nice burst of virtuoso display for the piano. Even here, though, the basic motive is present in disguised form (inverted and rhythmically elaborated) as the basis of the subject. After this lively excursion, the familiar codetta helps restore our bearings, though it too is intensified and doubled in length, ending with a more emphatic sense of finality.

#### *Trio:*

Rather than using the standard rounded binary form phrase structure here, Beethoven constructs his trio in simple binary form. Unusually, both halves are of almost equal length, with Part I consisting of phrase *c* while Part II is also just a single phrase so parallel to Part I that we may designate it *c'*. The sound of this trio is immediately set off by a shift to the minor mode (B minor, the relative minor of the dominant). Still, this is music of great verve and sparkle, conveying an effect more reminiscent of Eastern European or gypsy dance-music than any of the usual somber connotations of minor.

Part I (phrase *c*): 22 bars. Aside from soft bass notes in the cello, the piano is featured here for more than two thirds of the phrase, presenting an extroverted dance that starts with propulsive repeated notes and continues into other lively rhythmic effects. Finally, over a sustained trill in the R.H., the violin enters for the last 8 bars to extend what the piano has introduced.

Part II (*c'*): At 20 bars, this is actually shorter than Part I, an unusual reversal of the typical relative dimensions. Otherwise, this is very parallel to Part I with the notable change that now the phrase starts off in major.

(It's worth noting that even though the trio provides such marked contrast to the scherzo, it still subtly relates to the original scherzo motive by expanding its essence over the course of an entire phrase. Where that motive started with a repeated note, here this is elaborated into a burst of repeated notes and an octave drop. Also, the continuation of the motive as a short stepwise ascent now becomes a longer staccato stepwise ascent, displaced to later in the phrase.)

After the conventional *da capo* repeat, Beethoven appends a new 18-bar coda. This is still preoccupied with exploration of the scherzo's basic motive, in particular its potential for exploitation in contrary motion. The last few bars are marked *calando*, meaning a gradual decrease in tempo and volume, and this lends the coda an effect of winding down and dissipating all the previous accumulated rhythmic energy.

## **Movement IV – Sonata form, Finale: Presto, 2/4, G major**

This closing movement is a fast, high-spirited romp displaying infectious good humor. Also, to some listeners it may suggest a certain kinship with Rossini's decades-later William Tell Overture. The motivic prevalence of repeated notes links it strongly with movement I and the just-heard scherzo, especially its trio section.

"...ebullient and highly-charged... All in all, a joyous comic opera, requiring virtuosity and musical *chutzpah* from all three players." (Shapiro)

### *Exposition:*

Main theme: Instead of a conventional statement & counter-statement phrase structure, this theme is presented through successive entries in different voices sort of like a fugal exposition, but without the inherent contrapuntal texture. Over a simple block-chord keyboard accompaniment, the violin is first out of the gate, launching a rhythmically exciting 8-bar (4+4) subject. The first part of this consists of motive *a*, which will provide basic material for much of the movement: a chattering flurry of repeated-note 16<sup>th</sup>s on the tonic, leading to a simple, staccato 8<sup>th</sup>-note rising tonic arpeggio. Both elements of this - the repeated-note opening and the 3-note arpeggio - will also be important in their own rights as independent building blocks. Thus it will be convenient to designate them as sub-motives *a1* and *a2*. The whole of motive *a* is 2 bars long, and it is immediately repeated with *a2* now spelling out the subdominant chord. The remaining 4 bars continue into a contrasting consequent that grows naturally from the basic material. Particularly noteworthy is the staccato 3-note ending, essentially an inversion of the motive's arpeggio, but now compressed into a stepwise descent (we'll call this *a2'*). Like a fugue, the next statement moves to the dominant and is performed by the R.H., translating the repeated 16<sup>th</sup>s into a trill that is more idiomatic to the keyboard. While the L.H. takes over the familiar block chords, the violin basically drops out except for some brief embellishments. These first 16 bars have been very regular, and it seems that the established pattern is set to continue as the patiently waiting cello is now finally heard from, returning the antecedent to the tonic in the instrument's lower octave. However after only these first 4 bars, the piano and violin noisily intervene with a contrary-motion variant of motive *a*, and we are off into a free extension for the remainder of the theme. This is all derived from motive *a* through a process of repetition and development. Throughout, sub-motive *a2'* is now the established ending.

Bridge: Part I – 12 bars (4+8). This grows very smoothly from the previous extension, and it's almost a toss-up whether to consider it a final part of the main theme or the start of the bridge; it really serves both functions. In any case, it sounds like transitional music dominated by rising 16<sup>th</sup>-note R.H. runs. Motive *a* finally seems to be taking a break, though a legato version of *a2* subtly persists in the cello.

Part II – 20 bars (8+12). With a sudden shift to more troubled-sounding minor key harmony, this dramatic passage stands out more clearly as the bridge proper. While the L.H. maintains a nervous 16<sup>th</sup>-note oscillation and the violin harps on sub-motive *a1*, the R.H. holds our attention with a flamboyant new idea that seems clearly derived from *a2*. What Beethoven does is augment the rising arpeggio so that it lasts twice as long while ornamenting each note with flashy grace-notes. The first 8 bars constitute a coherent unit that is then sequenced and extended through fragmentation.

Part III – After all this busy excitement, the arrival at the dominant is heralded by a radical simplification in texture as the solo R.H. plays a cadenza-like 16<sup>th</sup>-note lead-in.

Subordinate theme group: D major. Sub-theme 1, 18 bars (4+4+10) and marked *dolce* and ***p***, is a delightfully catchy dance-like tune duetted in shared lead by the R.H. and violin. Structurally it works on the ‘ready-set-go’ principle, with a 4-bar unit that is repeated twice and then serves to launch a free expansion and extension. The first two times, the R.H.’s opening melody elicits a short contrasting violin response, but then the third time through both instruments pair up in rhythmic sync for a new continuation. All of this is supported by a vigorously rhythmic accompaniment that clearly conjures up the dance hall. Integral to this theme is a short little motive that we’ll designate *b* consisting of four staccato 8<sup>th</sup>-notes, the first three on the same pitch, while the fourth rises a variable amount. During the opening 8 bars most of the R.H. part is derived from this little melodic cell, though it is not always especially noticeable when the attention shifts to the violin’s part. Then, during the following 10 bars, motive *b* forms the basis of most of the extension.

Sub-theme 2, 14 bars (6+8), follows close on the heels of its predecessor, but is marked off by louder dynamics, continuous oscillating R.H. octaves, and a tendency for voices to join together in unison melody. This theme repeats clear, short cadential-sounding material in a manner that effectively rounds off the sub-theme group and provides a strong foil to the following...

Closing material: Part I starts off with the character of a true closing theme, with a marked contrast to the breakneck pace of the rest of the exposition. Finally we have a brief respite from 16<sup>th</sup>-notes as the violin and piano trade a gentle 4-bar idea that emphasizes repeated notes to new effect. The regular opening 8-bar phrase is partially repeated, but then turned into a free extension that progressively fragments and extrapolates the melody until it is playfully reduced to the simplest and sparest cadential gestures.

Part II is only 8 bars and acts as a tease to set up the repeat of the exposition. Sub-motive *a1* is repeated several times with portentous harmonies over the course of a combined decrescendo and diminuendo. The violin is most prominent here, and at the end it breaks off into a tiny solo cadenza that stalls in a fermata on an unresolved harmony. All of this is well calculated to give fresh excitement to the main theme’s *presto* opening. Then the second time around, part II of the cadence material is subtly rewritten with a new ascending motion. Also, the violin solo and fermata are omitted to allow for an unbroken plunge into the...

#### *Development:*

Part I throws what sounds like some completely new material at us, a strategic break from all the prevalence of motive *a*. For 8 bars, the piano is given a chance to show off in a stormy toccata-like passage that trades clusters of 16<sup>th</sup>-notes from hand to hand against sustained string harmonies. For the following 4 bars, the turbulence settles into a solo R.H. cadenza that is modeled on the lead-in passage from the end of the bridge.

Part II: Just as the bridge cadenza gracefully ushered in sub-theme 1, that same theme follows logically here, but in the colorfully distant key of E (the major sub-median). Otherwise, this is a surprisingly normal-sounding rendition of the melody to encounter in a development. The phrase structure and scoring are much as before, though the second little string response is this

time claimed by the cello. Also, the extension of the theme is here limited to 6 bars before Beethoven wrenches it into...

Part III: Now the sunny mood is suddenly shattered as an intense and concentrated modulatory passage combines the furious repeated-note 16<sup>th</sup>s of *aI* with rising trills in a manner that may draw inspiration from bridge Part II. After 16 bars of this (4+4+4+4), things smoothly revert to 6 bars based on Part I of the development, but now recast as a R.H./violin dialogue. Likewise, just as Part I concluded with a R.H. cadenza lead-in, the same concept is used here, though with considerably altered detail.

Part IV: Lo and behold, we are smoothly back to sub-theme 1 again...another faithful rendition, but now in C major, the subdominant key. As before the extension is developed in a modulatory passage, but this time its evolution is more smooth and seamless, based as it is on the expected motive *b*. It therefore does not constitute a new part, but just a freer continuation. The style is also markedly different here, with a more spare and concentrated texture unlike the earlier intense commotion.

Part V: Retransition. After a development that has mostly ignored motive *a* (aside from a brief suggestion of *aI*), this pivotal idea now makes a major reappearance in anticipation of the recapitulation. Finally, Beethoven unleashes his powerful developmental abilities on *a* itself as we hear it busily dialogued between the violin and piano, while the L.H. and cello provide a steady pulse of rhythmic momentum. As this proceeds *a* is intermittently subjected to inversion and the violin also briefly tries out what, until now, has been exclusively the piano's trilling version of the motive. Eventually the dialogue becomes more free and fragmentary, and then the retransition concludes with solo piano breaking out into a teasing pattern of legato 8<sup>th</sup>-notes played in octaves. It turns out that this is actually the basis of an accompanimental pattern that will persist into the first part of the...

#### *Recapitulation:*

Main theme: This is almost a disguised recapitulation at first, because even though the violin plays its opening 8 bars just as it did before, the new, deliberately distracting piano counterpoint seems to obscure the sense of harmonic arrival. Once again, the theme then moves to the R.H. in the dominant, but this time the violin takes over the persistent legato 8<sup>th</sup>-note element, and we also have to contend with additional rising 16<sup>th</sup>-note runs contributed by the L.H. The cello's brief turn at the theme is similarly enhanced with the rising runs now jumping to the R.H. Everything so far has essentially been a decorated version of the original theme, but from here on the phrase structure and actual musical substance are more freely reinterpreted. Instead of the big tutti at this point, leading to a prolonged developmental extension, Beethoven sets up a considerable abbreviation by providing a new shorter and much lighter-textured exploration of the basic material. In this way, Part I of the bridge is dispensed with entirely and practically before we know it, we are ushered directly into...

Bridge: Part II – Aside from being transposed lower, this main portion of the bridge is much the same in length and scoring, while the following R.H. solo (Part III) now extends an extra 2 bars. Note how without fail Beethoven has always subtly reinterpreted this lead-in gesture, taking care to simulate the freedom of actual improvised cadenzas.

Subordinate theme group: Sub-theme 1 – Having focused so much attention on this merry dance music during the development, Beethoven is not content to merely give us the orthodox transposition we would generally expect here. Instead, he uses this as an opportunity for further exploration and actually doubles the length of the original theme. At first, things start out quite regularly, though in a nice touch, the cello still clings to the second response that it appropriated during the development. However, after 14 bars the extension material is redirected and soon sets up a new reprise of the theme with string lead. Playing in octave unison, the violin and cello faithfully reproduce the R.H.'s original part, which we hear now with new continuity. This is because Beethoven forgoes the previous duet effect of short contrasting responses, so that our attention is newly directed toward the underlying prevalence of motive *b*. The strings maintain the melodic lead at the start of the extension phrase, and as this progresses things actually revert to an expanded version of the original ending that sets up...

Sub-theme 2 – After all the freedom that the recapitulation has exhibited so far, this theme now restores a welcome sense of order with its sturdy orthodoxy.

Closing material: We only get Part I, and this cadence theme also starts out very normal-sounding. But then towards the end, it begins to sequence in new ways and serves to launch the...

#### *Coda:*

Part I serves as a transitional introduction...another cadenza-like passage for piano, but using both hands now and ending with a trill straight out of the rhetoric of the concerto. This is not literally a solo, however, as there is some supporting string participation.

Part II: From here on motive *a* is in the ascendancy, finally receiving the extended development that was only hinted at during the end of the development section. In fact, this first reappearance of *a* is basically a varied reprise of its earlier treatment during the retransition.

Part III is the longest of the coda, and begins with the same sort of more fragmentary treatment of *a* that occurred at the parallel point in the retransition. But because now the material is considerably elaborated and extended, it seems to constitute an actual new, separate part. For the time being, *a1* is set aside and the descending version of *a2* (*a2'*) is playfully insisted on, interspersed with new contrasting legato material.

Part IV: Now both of *a*'s sub-motives are delicately pitted against each other as the piano reintroduces *a1* while *a2*, ascending and descending, is dialogued back and forth between the strings.

Part V: This final wind-up is an early specimen of one of Beethoven's favorites ruses: pretending he is opting for a subdued, peaceful ending, then startling and delighting us with a furious closing volley. Motive *a* is paraded for a last bow, but very sparsely now without any accompanimental momentum. It alternates from violin to piano to violin while a *calando* seems to bring any sense of progress to a temporary halt...the perfect setup for Beethoven's witty 'gotcha!' conclusion.