

rhythmic motive that pervades the entire work in various forms. The traditional sonata form is adhered to, however it is thought that the repetitive rhythms and chromatic bass line found in the coda may have led to Carl Maria von Weber's claim that this was evidence that the composer was "ripe for the madhouse."

The *Allegretto* title may seem misleading at first for the so-called slow movement, however it seemed Beethoven wanted to be sure this section was not played as slow as previous 'adagio' movements. This movement came to be extremely popular with its extended version of the 'long-short-short' rhythmic motive over an intriguing A-minor melody, gradually building in intensity, to the extent that the entire movement was often repeated as an encore.

The third movement's scherzo and trio extends the usual ABA form, so that one hears the trio an additional time. The trio utilizes yet another version of the long-short-short rhythmic pattern in its main theme, the melody of which is apparently taken from an Austrian Pilgrim's hymn

Robert Schumann (1810-1856) Piano Concerto in A minor, op. 54

- I **Allegro affetuoso** (ca. 15 min.)
- II **Andantino grazioso** (ca. 5 min.)
- III **Allegro vivace** (ca. 11 min.)

While Robert Schumann was perhaps

heard when the composer was in Teplitz.

The final movement is also in the traditional sonata form and brilliantly develops the seminal rhythmic motive even further, leading to two immense 'tutti' climaxes at the previously unheard of extreme dynamic of *fff*. The composer himself conducted the highly successful premiere in 1813 in Vienna, at a benefit concert for Austrian and Bavarian soldiers who had been wounded in the Napoleonic Wars.

With as much, if not more emphasis on the rhythmic versus the melodic motives, the dance-like feeling found throughout the work perhaps led to Wagner's famous quote: "This symphony is the very apotheosis of the dance." He went on to say: "If anyone plays the Seventh, tables and benches, cans and cups, the grandmother, the blind and the lame, aye, the children in the cradle fall to dancing."

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, strings

known best as a music critic in his own day, his recognition as a composer of a great variety of genre, eventually came about as well, and influenced many European composers of following generations. He is most recognized for

his works for piano, the focus of which came not only from his own ability to play the instrument, but also in composing works for his wife, Clara, to perform.

This piano concerto was originally written in 1841 as a piece for piano and orchestra entitled: *Phantasie in A minor*. Schumann acknowledged his own limitations when he stated "I realize I cannot write a concerto for a virtuoso, so I must think up something else." He went on to describe the initial work as "something between a symphony, a concerto and a large sonata... a self-contained movement."

Schumann had attempted to write several piano concertos previously, but all remained unfinished. It was when he had difficulty finding a publisher for the *Phantasie* that he resorted to approaching this genre again and composed the additional two movements in 1845. The finale was composed first, followed by the slow second movement, in June and July of that year.

While it is recognized that this work may not have matched the Lisztian virtuosity of other piano concertos of the time, it has become a favorite by many, primarily due to Schumann's adeptness at lyricism and development of one primary theme, which unites all three movements. The piano opens in a flourish, before the woodwinds introduce the *motto* in a pseudo-chamber ensemble, echoed by the soloist. In the cadenza of this first movement, (perhaps

appropriately labeled by the composer as *Allegretto affetuoso*, with his affection for Clara presumably at its height), one can hear both the improvisatory nature of Schumann's writings as well as a mysterious march passage before the trills signal a return to the *motto* and closing minor-mode march with the orchestra, based on this main theme.

The second movement opens with a conversation of sorts between the strings and the piano, using a four-note motif that is taken from the original *motto*. One can also enjoy the lyricism of the cellos and violas, which Schumann highlights in the middle section of the sonata form. As this movement comes to a close, one can hear the woodwinds again reminisce on the original *motto* before the orchestra swells into a *forte* to lead us without pause into the final movement.

The *Allegro vivace* takes the original theme and places it in a major mode, as well as transforming it into a triple meter. Schumann's use of the rondo form here again highlights the monothematic lyrical melody, never tiring of exploring the *motto* in a new light. Even the extended coda seems to have Schumann lingering, not quite ready to let go of the endless possibilities for this theme.

The premiere of the Piano Concerto was given by Clara Schumann on December 4th, 1845, in a private performance in Dresden at the Hotel de Saxe, and conducted by pianist-composer Ferdinand Hiller, to whom

the piece is dedicated. And although this work may not have displayed the same level of virtuous pianistic writing of the time, it can be said that perhaps it anticipated later 20th century piano concerto tendencies to give the orchestra

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Symphony No. 6 in F major "Pastorale", op. 68

Orchard

- I Allegro ma non troppo**
(ca. 9 min.)
- II Andante molto mosso**
(ca. 12 min.)
- III Allegro** (ca. 5 min.)
- IV Allegro** (ca. 4 min.)
- V Allegretto** (ca. 9 min.)

*‘Sinfonia caratteristica—*or memories of country life.... *Sinfonia pastorella....* Anyone who has experienced country life can determine the intentions of the composer even without titles.... The listener should be allowed to discover the situation.... All painting in music is a failure if it is pushed too far.... Instead the music is more an expression of feelings rather than a painting in sounds....’

These various comments were written by Beethoven in his sketches for the Sixth Symphony and reveal that although he did in fact give titles, not only to each movement of the work, but also to the work as a whole, that his focus was more on expressing the emotional reactions to nature rather than presenting a programmatic piece.

as important a role as the pianist.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, strings, solo piano

Beethoven’s love for nature, in fact his need to be in constant connection with nature, is well known. But the fact that, of all of his works, he felt it important to entitle each movement of his *Pastoral Symphony*, emphasizes even more his strong feelings associated with his relationship with nature. The first movement, ‘Awakening of cheerful feelings upon arrival in the country’, may be an expression of his own personal feelings whenever he would leave the city to take time out in the countryside, such as he often did. In fact when he composed this and his Fifth Symphony, among other works, during the summers of 1807 and 1808, he was on retreat in the rural town, Heiligenstadt.

The second movement, ‘Scene by the brook’, perhaps comes close to painting a picture of nature with the timbres of the orchestra aptly imitating the sound of the babbling brook as well as mimicking particular bird songs. Beethoven even indicated in the score the bird song each instrument was playing in the closing woodwind cadenza, with the flute playing the part of the nightingale, the oboe as

a quail, and the clarinet a cuckoo. But again it seems it was Beethoven’s intent to create a serene atmosphere with these sounds rather than a sound painting.

The remaining three movements are performed without pause, almost creating the effect of a three-movement work, rather than the five indicated in the score. In fact, many have commented that the fourth movement ‘Thunderstorm’, in all of its brevity, acts more as an introduction for the final movement, ‘Shepherd’s song. Happy and thankful feelings after the storm.’ The third movement, ‘Merry gathering of country folk’ is a fairly traditional scherzo/trio form with abrupt interruptions in even rhythms, almost as a foreshadowing of the storm to come. And again, though the fourth movement clearly depicts a scene during a sudden rainstorm, Beethoven’s hope was that the audience would experience the emotions at hand, beyond the inevitable sound painting.

Symphony No. 6 was premiered in December of 1808 at the massive concert at the Theatre an der Wien where Beethoven introduced his Fifth Symphony along with his Fourth Piano Concerto, two sections of the Mass in C major, the concert aria *Ah! Perfido*, the Fantasia in G major for piano, as well as the Fantasia in C minor for piano,

chorus and orchestra. Needless to say it was somewhat overwhelming for the audience to sit through such a full program. And given that both the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies were composed about the same time, their numbers were mistakenly reversed on the program for this premiere.

As the final movement expresses pure thanksgiving in an exultant hymn, one can’t help but hear Beethoven’s own words describe his joy at being surrounded by nature as he wrote in a letter to a friend: “How glad I am to be able to roam in wood and thicket, among the trees and flowers and rocks. No one can love the country as I do.... In the country, every tree seems to speak to me.... In the woods, there is enchantment, which expresses all things.... For surely woods, trees, and rocks produce the echo that man desires to hear.”

Instrumentation: 1 piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, timpani, strings

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