## LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

*Born in Bonn, Germany, December 16, 1770*
*Died in Vienna, Austria, March 26, 1827*

**The Five Beethoven Piano Concertos at the Wichita Symphony Orchestra, February 21 and 23, 2020**
*By Don Reinhold, CEO, Wichita Symphony*

The five piano concertos of Ludwig van Beethoven are familiar works to regular concertgoers. Even at a regional orchestra such as Wichita's, performances of all five as individual works would be typical over a decade. Hearing them in chronological sequence over a single weekend is rare and unusual, but appropriate this year that marks the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birth on December 16. While a few other orchestras will accomplish the feat this year with a single soloist or with five different soloists, Wichita is privileged to enjoy performances by Stewart Goodyear, regarded by many as one of today's leading interpreters in the world of Beethoven's piano music.

Beethoven's catalog of works for piano and orchestra is not limited to these five familiar concertos. Also, there is the Triple Concerto, which we heard in Wichita a few seasons ago, and the Choral Fantasy for piano, vocal soloists, and chorus, which we will listen to next December. A Rondo in B-flat Major that was probably the original finale to the Second Concerto appears on recordings and might occur in concert from time to time.

There is a transcription for piano and orchestra of the famous D Major Violin Concerto that Beethoven wrote out on a commission from Muzio Clementi's London publishing house, but this work is a curiosity done without much commitment from Beethoven. A couple of juvenilia compositions exist mostly in fragments. There are even sketches from around 1816 of a first movement for what would have been the sixth concerto, but Beethoven abandoned this work.

Following in Mozart's footsteps, Beethoven wrote his concertos as vehicles to display his keyboard virtuosity, which, as we'll see, was accomplished up until his Fifth Concerto. It was only after "playing them around" a few times for personal benefit that he sent them off to publishers.

Beethoven's model and point of departure were the piano concertos of Mozart, especially those composed during Mozart's Viennese years, 1784 - 1791. They reflect the standard concerto form of the day, which started with a fast first movement in sonata-allegro form, followed by a slow movement, and concluding with another fast movement, usually in rondo form. Other nods to conventional form occur in the first movement where sections of the full orchestra, called the *tutti* or *ritornello*, alternate with sections dominated by the soloist much in the way concertos were written going back to Johann Sebastian Bach and continued by Mozart and others in the 18th century.

## THE FIRST AND SECOND PIANO CONCERTOS

### PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2 IN B-FLAT MAJOR, OP. 19

*Last performed by the Wichita Symphony February 21/22, 2015*

### PIANO CONCERTO NO. 1 IN C MINOR, OP. 15

*Last performed by the Wichita Symphony February 21/22, 2015*

In November 1792, the soon to be 22-year old Ludwig van Beethoven packed his bags, and with blessings and a small subsidy from the Elector of Bonn, set off for Vienna to pursue musical studies with the greatest composer of the day, Franz Joseph Haydn. The Vienna that Beethoven arrived in had begun to change since his first visit in 1787. It was a city of duality. With France experiencing the throes of revolution, the Austrian response under the new leadership of Emperor Franz II was to turn towards harsh repression curbing all dissension and organizing into what would become the first manifestation of the modern-day police state. For a liberal-thinking young man like Beethoven with sympathies towards democratic thought, one would think this a poor choice for career advancement.

In contrast to the oppressive political atmosphere, Vienna remained a city of carefree joy and pleasure. Coffeehouses and inns attracted people for discussions about art and philosophy that were permitted as long as one didn't venture onto subjects that would alert the secret police. Public amusements abounded with gardens and as many as five theaters that offered a fare of drama, comedy and opera, the latter being mostly Italian. When the theater season closed for the Lenten and Advent season, public concerts filled the venues. In the summers, outdoor performances were popular on the grounds of the Belvedere Palace and the Liechtenstein residence. Many of the great aristocratic houses still maintained orchestras, although this luxury would soon fade. Although Mozart, whom Beethoven met during his 1787 visit, had died the previous year, many leading composers and teachers, such as Haydn, Salieri and Albrechtsberger still taught and held musical influence. It was a city of opportunity for the young Beethoven, and he set out to conquer it as the keyboard virtuoso he had become.

Among the compositions that Beethoven brought from Bonn was a score for **the Piano Concerto in B-flat Major.** The history of this piece is somewhat obscure and even confusing. Leon Plantinga, a modern-day authority on Beethoven concertos, surmises that Beethoven may have arrived in Vienna with as many as four piano concertos in his luggage. The scores, or whatever existed of these concertos are now lost, save for some fragments, including some for the B-flat Concerto. Through paper and handwriting analysis, scholars have determined that the concerto fragments date between 1786 and 1790. Beethoven undoubtedly discarded

the other works from the Bonn period as inferior juvenilia.

Concert documentation during this period in Beethoven's life is very sparse. Beethoven almost certainly performed the B-flat Concerto for private concerts during his first two years in Vienna. However, the first evidence of Beethoven playing a concerto in public in Vienna occurred in 1795. Between 1795 and 1798, there are records of several performances in which Beethoven alternated between the B-flat Major Concerto and a newer concerto in C Major. Evidence exists that Beethoven performed both concertos in Prague in 1798.

Leading up to the 1798 performance, Plantinga cites evidence of four distinct versions of the B-flat Major Concerto. The first originates during the Bonn years. The second probably dates from 1793 with a different Rondo than what we hear today. Scholars suspect that the original finale is what is known today as the independent Rondo in B-flat Major (WoO 6, WoO means "without opus"). A third revision of the work probably occurred in 1795, and yet another before the 1798 performances. Sketches and drafts exist for all of these versions, but it is impossible to determine how the actual full scores may have looked. Only the score for the discarded Rondo of 1793 exists in autograph form. Since Beethoven used his concertos to promote his career as a pianist, he held onto his score and parts, making edits as he performed the music, instead of seeking a publisher.

After 1798 the B-flat Major Concerto resurfaces in the fall of 1801. In a letter to Franz Anton Hoffmeister, Beethoven offered his publisher scores to the First Symphony, the Septet, and a Piano Sonata in B-flat Major asking twenty ducats for each. He also mentioned that he would include the B-flat Major Concerto for ten ducats. Explaining the disparity in the fee, Beethoven wrote, "I do not consider it one of my best works… at the same time, it would not disgrace you to engrave the work." By 1801, Beethoven's growing compositional maturity had surpassed his earlier efforts. The multiple revisions to the concerto probably left him dissatisfied with the results. In preparation for the concerto's publication, Beethoven used his 1798 score, making one final effort to tighten up the first orchestral *tutti* with a few more revisions before letting the work go to his publisher.

Before dispatching the B-flat Major Concerto, Beethoven had already published his C Major Concerto as Opus 15 earlier that same year. Since numbering in Beethoven's time generally referred to publication order rather than compositional order, the C Major Concerto became the First Concerto. The B-flat Major, the earlier work, became the Second Concerto. The concertos are numbered as such to this day. We've chosen to begin the concert with the Second Concerto for this historical reason.

Even though the B-flat Major Concerto is an early work and the "weakest" of Beethoven's five piano concertos, its sunny disposition

and hints of the greatness still to come make this work a repertoire standard and audience favorite. Many scholars use this concerto to demonstrate Mozart's influence on Beethoven, and in many ways, it is Beethoven's answer to his famous predecessor. But the importance of Haydn on Beethoven's development can also be seen, as well as Muzio Clementi, who, during the decade of the 1790s, was considered Europe's most famous pianist and composer for the keyboard.

We can observe Mozart's influence in the layout of **the first movement.** Alternating orchestral tuttis (T) with sections emphasizing the piano solo (S), the structure is easily heard as T1S1T2S2T3S3T4Cad.T4 with each pairing of *tutti*-solo (TS) being the successive equivalent of exposition, development, and recapitulation of what became known as sonata-allegro form. The final tutti (T4) is interrupted by the traditional placement of the cadenza for the soloist. Typically, Beethoven improvised his cadenzas during performances, and sometime later wrote them out. In this concerto, the cadenza was probably written down around 1809 in a style that reflects Beethoven's maturity and the advancing technology of the instrument. The opening theme of the first movement is a typical classical theme containing a duality. The opening fanfare-like outline of the B-flat major tonic triad with a strong rhythmic character precedes a more graceful melodic answer. There are many examples of this thematic duality in Mozart's music that Beethoven knew, perhaps most famously in the openings of the Jupiter Symphony and the Piano Sonata in D Major, K. 576.

As Beethoven follows the concerto model laid out by Mozart, there are indications of Beethoven's youth and inexperience, such as in the abrupt stop and start of successive sections. Also, by the time of his mature Viennese piano concertos, Mozart's wind writing had taken on a remarkable degree of sophistication and independence. In Beethoven's Second Concerto, we hear the treatment of the wind section as a single choir that mostly doubles parts that already exist in the strings. Clarinets, which appear in some of Mozart's later works, are not used in this Beethoven concerto. The independence of the lines between wind instruments does not exist yet.

Similarly, in the orchestral string writing, cellos and basses provide a harmonic underpinning. The basses double the cellos an octave lower and seldom take on any melodic role except in unison with the full orchestra. The secret of a more advanced compositional style in the 18th century lay in the study of counterpoint, which was why Beethoven went to Vienna to study with Haydn and others. Counterpoint is the treatment of multiple and simultaneous melodic lines that function with linear independence but heard at the same time according to the rules of harmony. Beethoven would achieve a mature sound soon enough, but not here.

Beethoven's concerto, for the most part, is conventional and even modest. The piano writing, while written with flair, lacks the degree of virtuosity that appears in some of Beethoven's early piano sonatas.

One striking harmonic shift that comes as a surprise, and shows more of the influence of Haydn, occurs in the opening *tutti.* Having reached a dynamic level of *forte* about a minute or so into the piece, Beethoven punctuates and finishes his musical thought with three repeated C's. We expect that these C's signal the arrival of the second theme in the dominant key of F Major, but instead, Beethoven slides up a half-step, and repeats the cadence softly on three D-flats before proceeding with an extension of the first theme in the distant key of D-flat Major. While it lacks smoothness in its modulation, the surprise element is striking and is not the last time Beethoven would use this trick.

**The second movement** is a quiet, nocturnal type of piece with the most ornamental piano texture heard in this concerto. Orchestra and piano are treated as separate units with the orchestra mostly offering simple accompaniment to the piano solos.

**The rondo finale** borrows more from Haydn. It is a rollicking, cheerful piece, with elements of what was known as a Hungarian or Turkish style where piano grace notes crush two tones together to form a spicy dissonance. Beethoven uses rhythmic syncopation and accents on the "off-beat" throughout to create an almost drunken good humor that dispatches this movement with a smile.

Turning to the **First Piano Concerto in C Major,** we hear a work that maintains the basic structural design of the Second Concerto but on a grander scale. In the 18th century, composers and audiences associated the key of C Major with military music and aristocratic pomp and circumstances. As Mozart did with his C Major Concertos, Beethoven adds trumpets and timpani, as well as a pair of clarinets, that were absent in the B-flat Major Concerto. These instruments bring to the table a more brilliant and colorful sound, and the clarinets, in particular, would add to the warmth of the second movement.

Beethoven's sketchbooks offer musicologists a trove of insight into his compositional process and the arduous working out of ideas into the finished product. Early sketches for this concerto first appear around 1793. Beethoven completed the concerto without too much difficulty during 1795. Preparing the work for its premiere was another story. Not untypically, Beethoven procrastinated until the last minute, and as he copied out the orchestra parts, assistants flung the music with the ink still wet onto the music stands. Once seated at the piano for a rehearsal, Beethoven discovered his instrument was a half-step flat. While the orchestra musicians read their parts as written, Beethoven transposed his part up a half step to the key of C-sharp major, or so the story goes!

Beethoven utilized the concerto as a showpiece on his concerts for about five years. There is little evidence he made significant revisions to the music. In 1800, Beethoven sent the autograph to his publisher, who published it as the First Concerto, Opus 15.

The concerto begins with the strings quietly announcing a march-like theme. Commit to memory the first four notes, which is a short rhythmic tattoo characterized by a melodic leap of an octave. This first fragment, or motive, will generate ideas and signal structural elements later in the movement.

Imagine hearing this unassuming opening at its premiere and then experiencing an eruption of the full orchestra moments later in a fortissimo repeat of the opening but with glorious trumpets and timpani added. After the pomp of the first theme, Beethoven introduces a second theme that is quieter and marked by a lyrical descending scale. Harmonically unstable, the music repeats the theme's motive as it slides through several chord changes. The oboe and bassoon engage in some imitative writing that utilizes the opening motive before leading us back to C major and a closing theme that brings us back to parade ground music.

The piano enters gently with a new theme until the fanfare returns and sets the piano off on tumbling embellishments. When the second theme arrives, the harmony is solidly ensconced in the expected key of G major instead of the ambiguities offered in the orchestral exposition. The exposition concludes with a determined *fortissimo* cadence in G major, the dominant chord to C major, and where conventional expectations would have us expect.

But Beethoven was anything but a conventional composer. He announces the beginning of the development section with a repetition of the concerto's opening four-note motive on G and in a *pianissimo* dynamic level. Denying us further confirmation of G major, Beethoven completes another half-step to A-Flat and repeats the motive. A *fortissimo* chord progression follows and lands us in the key of E-flat from whence Beethoven launches the development of his material.

Rolling chords in the left hand accompany the flowing melody in the right hand. Several times parallel chords or octaves interrupt the texture. What's particularly noteworthy is that the entire development plays out in a soft dynamic with none of the loud and extroverted bluster typical of most development sections. The tension builds through a series of harmonies until it reaches a moment of suspension over soft chords that articulate the rhythm of the opening motive until it disintegrates into single quarter-note chords. (We'll see this technique occur again when Beethoven composes his Fifth Symphony). A *fortissimo* octave on an upper F interrupts the unresolved harmony, and a dramatic scale plunges from the high range of the piano to the bottom to announce the return to C major and the recapitulation.

The recapitulation repeats the material of the exposition. In Beethoven, this repeated material is never literal but continues to explore further development and offer up additional displays of virtuosity. The pianist's cadenza interrupts the final orchestral *tutti* at the expected moment. Beethoven would have improvised his cadenza. Later, around 1808 when he was writing out cadenzas for future pianists, Beethoven composed two for the First Concerto. Most pianists, including Mr. Goodyear, play the first and longer of the two.

**The second movement** is marked Largo (very slow), but never drags as Beethoven applies right-hand filigrees and triplet accompaniment patterns to maintain the forward motion. The key is A-flat major, the submediant of C major. The influence of Mozart's melodic writing is evident along with the high degree of florid embellishment common to both composers.

Perhaps with a bow to Haydn, **the third movement** is a rollicking, good-natured work that reflects the general 18th-century description of good rondo themes as being "gentle, sprightly, teasing, and the like." There would be no mistaking these themes as first movement material. There are many pianistic difficulties throughout with displays of one hand crossing over the other, flying octaves that require a supple wrist, and wide leaps in the left hand that exceed an octave. With more good humor, the piano exits a cadenza landing on a repetition of the main theme, but in the "wrong" key of B major, another half step from where Beethoven needs to be. He soon rights himself, and the final iteration of the theme by the full orchestra in *fortissimo* leads to a coda of great fun as the motives are tossed back and forth between the orchestra and the piano. One more brief cadenza passage in the piano and a slow, quiet turn by the oboe conveys a feeling of regret that the fun must end. But end it must, and a dash to the final cadence brings the concerto to its happy conclusion.

## PIANO CONCERTO NO. 3 IN C MINOR, OP. 37

*Last performed by the Wichita Symphony March 25/26, 2000*

Beethoven's concert on April 5, 1803, at the Theater an der Wien in Vienna is legendary. As the orchestral musicians filed into the hall for the only rehearsal at 8 a.m. on the day of the 6 p.m. concert, they confronted music on their stands that included Beethoven's First and Second Symphonies, the C Minor Piano Concerto, an entire oratorio, *Christ on the Mount of Olives,* and a few additional works. Together it probably amounted to close to three hours of music or more in a time when concerts were evening-long affairs. The oratorio, piano concerto, and the Second Symphony were premieres, and on some of the parts, the ink on the hand-copied pages was barely dry. When Ferdinand Ries called on his teacher at 5 a.m. on April 5, Beethoven was sitting up in bed, still writing out the trombone parts to the oratorio.

It is hard to imagine what the musicians faced that day. Anyone who has ever seen music in Beethoven's handwriting knows it's almost illegible, and these, in particular, seemed to be done in haste. The rehearsal went poorly. Beethoven despaired, and the musicians became increasingly grumpy. Ries related that the whole experience was "terrible." On the verge of disaster, Prince Lichnowsky, Beethoven's patron, came to the rescue with lunch and wine.

Refreshed, the musicians and Beethoven slogged on until 2:30 p.m. before adjourning until the evening after six and a half hours of rehearsal. [In comparison, today's rehearsal standard by union edict is two and a half hours. Anything over that in fifteen-minute increments earns overtime.]

When it came time for the concerto that evening, Beethoven sat down at the piano and opened his music. His page-turner, Ignaz von Seyfried, settled in next to him. As the music began, Seyfried realized he was in trouble, and tells it best in his reminiscences.

> *I saw almost nothing but empty leaves, at the most here and there a few Egyptian hieroglyphics, wholly incomprehensible to me, scribbled down to serve as clues to him. He played nearly all the solo part from memory. As was often the case, he had not had time to put it all down on paper. Whenever he reached the end of an "invisible" passage, he gave me a secret nod. My evident anxiety not to miss the decisive moment amused him greatly.*

Somehow, everyone made it through the concert. While the reviews the next morning were not terrific, Beethoven was pleased with the profit he made on his "benefit" concert. The Viennese grumbled that he had charged too much.

Eventually, Beethoven got around to writing out the keyboard part over a year later when Ferdinand Ries performed the work in July 1804. Beethoven's publisher also needed something a little more definitive than a sketch. Beethoven did not write out the cadenza until around 1809. The 1804 performance with Ries must have gone better. A reviewer called the concerto "unquestionably among Beethoven's most beautiful compositions" with "formidable difficulties" and "melodies of gripping originality and verve."

As one reflects on the premiere of the work in 1803, modern-day listeners might interpret the spontaneity of the music as an indication that the music flowed from Beethoven during the days leading up to the performance in a streak of inspiration, and that perhaps his sketchy piano score led to further inspired improvisation at the keyboard the night of the performance.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. The careful integration of the piano with the orchestra in the Third Concerto reveals a carefully thought out plan. It was Beethoven's habit to write out his concertos shortly before their premieres, but the evidence in various preserved sketchbooks shows a much more prolonged compositional period.

Stories of Beethoven's compositional style describe him wandering around the countryside, through the Vienna Woods, lingering under a tree or by a stream. Notebook in hand, Beethoven jotted down ideas as they came to him, some as brief sketches or fragments, others a little more extensive that show the compositional working out of an idea. The dating of the sketchbooks tells us that Beethoven would compose a work over several years. Such seems to be the case with this C Minor Piano Concerto.

The earliest sketches for the concerto appear in the sketchbooks of 1796-98. Beethoven may have conceived it as a counterpart to the C Major Piano Concerto. For many years, scholars placed the C Minor Concerto in 1800, with most of the work taking place between 1796 and 1800. That Beethoven would retain so much of the music and not get around to writing down the piano part before its 1803 premiere seems a little farfetched even for a genius like Beethoven. Recent scholarship places the work later. Other sketchbooks indicate that Beethoven began thinking about the concerto in earnest sometime around 1800. In a letter to his publisher dated April 22, 1801, Beethoven wrote, "Musical politics make it advisable to keep one's best concerto to oneself for a time." The manuscript is almost certainly from 1803, right before the premiere, and research by Leon Plantinga indicates that most of the composition occurred in 1802 - 1803. This small "correction" in the dating of the work may seem insignificant to the layman but helps reveal a greater understanding of the work and Beethoven's frame of mind during its composition.

Beethoven's model for his Concerto was Mozart's C Minor Piano Concerto. Much of Beethoven's early works were a process of coming to grips with the legacy of Mozart and Haydn, equaling them in style and formal structure, and then asserting his individuality and genius to stake his claim on an entirely new mode of expression.

By the Third Concerto, Beethoven is beginning to explore new territory. Maynard Solomon writes, "The Third represents Beethoven's first effort in this genre to record something far beyond merely exterior wit or refinement, and to move toward the dramatic oratory." Is there something in Beethoven's life that might have inspired this emotional outcry? If we accept Plantinga's assertion that the concerto was composed mostly during 1802 and early 1803, we know that a great crisis in Beethoven's life occurred in the fall of 1802. While indications of hearing difficulty had begun to surface earlier, by the summer of 1802, it became increasingly clear that the condition was worsening and not reversible. This crisis led to the famed Heiligenstadt Testament of October 1802, a letter to his brothers, which some scholars describe as Beethoven's "last will and testament" and possibly even a suicide note. The more plausible explanation of this Testament validated in a letter to Ferdinand Ries is a symbolic interpretation in which Beethoven re-dedicates his life to

his art and determines to turn away from the past and set out in spite of his hearing on an entirely new path in composition.

The Third Concerto pays tribute to the past before it steps into the future. The link to Mozart's C Minor Concerto is heard in the mood and even in the rising triadic shape of the opening theme. Like Mozart, Beethoven adds trumpets and timpani to the orchestral palette. The emotional feeling of the first movement reflects the Sturm und Drang (storm and stress) aesthetic of the mid-18th century that marks the earliest emergence of literary romanticism, and which impacted composers like CPE Bach, Haydn, and Mozart in the 18th century. Beethoven's use of C minor to reveal his most turbulent musical thoughts already had precedent in earlier works, most notably the "Pathetique" Piano Sonata, Op. 13 of 1799. The Third Concerto stands midway between the Pathetique and Beethoven's most famous C Minor composition, the Fifth Symphony, which he completed in 1808.

The Third Concerto represents the culmination of the 18th-century classical concerto and the point of departure for the romantic concerto of the early-19th century. As is typical of late-18th century classical concertos, **the first movement** is in sonata-allegro form. The exposition with the principal themes is heard twice, first with just the orchestra and then repeated with the addition of the pianist who embellishes the themes during his interaction with the orchestra.

The opening theme is latent with harmonic possibilities that will have an impact as the concerto progresses. The opening phrase, a C minor triad and a five-note descending scale with a rhythmic cadence, offers the simplest of ideas. The hushed unison strings suggest there's drama ahead. An immediate restatement of the phrase in the contrasting color of harmonized woodwinds, but on the dominant of G major, helps to establish a harmonic tension and hints at harmonic possibilities to be explored. After reconfirming the C minor tonic, Beethoven repeats the first idea in his favorite heroic key of E-flat major. Now he uses the full orchestra in this bold, loud statement and immediately begins to ratchet up the tension through a new sequence of harmonies before resolving back to E-flat major and the beautiful, lyrical second theme. This theme eventually ends in C major, of all places, and we even find ourselves back at the first theme with a C major re-statement in the bassoons and doubles basses. C minor grabs hold at the end of the exposition with one more statement of the first theme in the winds, followed by the strings in a fugato one bar later. It is a fantastic opening to this concerto, and must have registered on listeners in Beethoven's time, who surely understood the references to Mozart, but would have also been struck by "the shock of the new."

After this opening drama, the piano must make its entrance boldly. With three sweeping C minor scales announcing its appearance, the piano enters with a *forte* statement of the first theme that reflects the

heroic Beethoven. While the piano exposition presents the themes again, Beethoven uses developmental techniques to expand his ideas. He never uses literal repetition. The piano writing is challenging to play, and its power reflects the improving quality of the instruments at Beethoven's disposal at the turn of the century.

Since Beethoven is already developing his themes during the second exposition, the actual development is comparatively short. It's announced by the three piano scales, now in D major highlighting Beethoven's move to the dominant key of G but appearing in its minor mode. The return of the opening theme in C minor signals that we've reached the recapitulation.

We've come a long way from the hushed opening. Now we hear the theme in a full orchestral *fortissimo*. The recapitulation is not a literal repeat but offers further opportunities for variation while resolving the harmonic tensions of the exposition. The cadenza for the piano soloist is extensive and almost long enough to be called a second development. A brief coda brings the movement to a close in a rhythmic, rather fist-shaking manner reminding us of our impressions of Beethoven railing against fate. This opening movement is approximately seventeen minutes long, or nearly five minutes longer than the first movement of Mozart's C minor Concerto.

Following the tumultuous emotions of the first movement, one would expect **the second movement** to serve as a moment of repose in contrast. The hushed tones of the solo piano begin the second movement. Today, we hear this opening with a sense of awe and wonder, a prayer-like moment. In Beethoven's time, the impact would have been even more remarkable because instead of placing his second movement in the more commonly expected keys of F major or A-flat major following the C minor first movement, he surprised 19th-century listeners by using E major, a key very remote to C minor. For Beethoven's time, it is almost as if he had crossed over a river and entered a new land. Further underscoring this newness is a change in the orchestral sound where Beethoven omits the clarinets and oboes from this movement. The combination of the two flutes and two bassoons, the highest and the lowest of the woodwinds, creates a somewhat softer textured sound that characterizes this movement.

An amateur looking at the piano score of the second movement would be easily intimidated. Although the tempo is a stately, measured *largo* in 3/8 time, Beethoven's piano writing is highly decorative using an abundance of 64th and even 128th notes, the latter creating a subdivision of sixteen notes to every eighth note, and which tend to blacken the page. These subdivisions of the beat never come across as rigid but instead create a flowing, embellished line that has great freedom. Technical difficulties include double-thirds in the right hand and sweeping arpeggios broken between the hands that exploit the entire range of the instrument in Beethoven's time.

The keyboard style takes its departure from Mozart but goes much beyond Mozart to anticipate music by Johann Nepomuk Hummell, and ultimately Chopin.

Following this sublime movement, Beethoven returns to a traditional rondo finale that shows the influence of Haydn. The principal theme has a Hungarian quality, and Beethoven varies its appearances with short, decorative cadenzas. Whereas the C minor of the first movement created drama, here, the same key creates more wit and an exotic flair.

As if to make up for the absence of the clarinets in the second movement and to demonstrate his compositional acuity, Beethoven introduces a new theme for the solo clarinet, which is a slightly varied, and inverted derivative of the second theme from the first movement. It also borrows a motive from the opening of the third movement. This "marriage" of ideas and the instrumental color create a magical moment. Through a developmental passage of the rondo's first theme, Beethoven leads us through some contrapuntal statements, and a progression of harmonies that touch upon some remote keys, including the E major of the second movement. It's all very clever. By avoiding a resolution to the C minor tonic, Beethoven begins to demonstrate how he will stretch the classic forms of the 18th century to encompass more expansive architectural soundscapes. With one final variation of the main theme, Beethoven whips up a quick coda in C major that resolves everything in good humor and concludes the concerto with a virtuosic sparkle.

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