BEETHOVEN
SYMPHONY NO. 3 (EROICA)
SYMPHONY NO. 5

KURT MASUR *conductor*
LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
SYMPHONY NO. 3 IN E FLAT MAJOR, OP. 55 (EROICA)

Allegro con brio
Marcia funebre: Adagio assai
Scherzo and Trio: Allegro vivace
Finale: Allegro molto

Only a year separates the completion of Beethoven's Second Symphony from that of his Third, yet in that time the composer made an enormous leap forward that left his contemporaries gasping in his wake. It was not just that the 'Eroica' ('Heroic') expanded the physical size of the symphony to hitherto unknown dimensions; it also imbued the genre with a new and gigantic message, turning it into an artistic and philosophical statement that transcended any of its previously accepted functions. For here Beethoven used the symphony to express nothing less than his abiding faith in mankind's capacity for greatness.

The figure with whom he most associated greatness when he wrote the work in 1803 was Napoleon. At that time Napoleon seemed to embody the republican ideals of many of Europe's intellectuals, but when he crowned himself Emperor in 1804 Beethoven angrily deleted his name from the title-page of the score, where he had been cited as dedicatee. Yet heroism – personal and idealistic – did not lose its significance for the composer.

His own claim to artistic heroic status could hardly be doubted after his emergence from the near-suicidal despair of 1802 with his creativity unimpaired, and the spiritual rebirth this represented is outlined in the four movements of the 'Eroica': the first a titanic struggle; the second a tragic funeral march; the third a joyous renewal of life; and the last a confident and triumphant affirmation of the power of Man. It was with this realisation of the extra-musical autobiographical potential of the symphony that Beethoven was to set the ideological tone for the next hundred years of symphonic writing.

As in the Second Symphony, Beethoven's expansion of the genre's dimensions here makes use of the conventional building blocks, but in the 'Eroica' the familiar is made to sound impressively different. The opening chords are almost startlingly terse, while in its smooth spaciousness the main theme is like no main theme ever written before. The central development section is a long and brutal battle, but leads to a return to the main theme that is hushed and mysterious. After all this, the movement's long, gently developmental coda is nothing less than a structural necessity.

The second movement – the funeral march – makes large-scale use of what is basically a simple design.

Three immensely slow, grief-stricken outer sections frame a vainly hopeful major-key 'trio', a solemn double fugue and a cataclysmic orchestral upheaval. There is another long coda, at the end of which, in one of the Symphony's most radical gestures, the music literally disintegrates, seemingly incapable of consolation.

But all is not lost. The *Scherzo* now steals in almost imperceptibly on the woodwind and strings, to be joined eventually by the full orchestra. The *Trio* does not do much to calm the celebrations, though it is less frantic, and the repeat of the first section is no mere formal nicety but a winding-up of the euphoria, with the orchestra at one point almost falling over itself with glee.

The *Finale* is one movement in which Beethoven did create a new formal design – a unique combination of variation form, *passacaglia* and *rondo*. After a noisy orchestral opening, the movement's early progress from stark bass-line to dance-like tune is borrowed from an earlier set of piano variations on a theme from Beethoven's music for the ballet *The Creatures of Prometheus*. The theme itself does not appear until the third variation, where it is played by the oboe, but by then the music has already begun to acquire an unstoppable feel. Eventually a slower variation brings the movement a dignity more befitting the work's heroic subject, before a return of the orchestral introduction sweeps the music into a joyful coda.

The story of the Prometheus ballet had concerned a figure who creates two beings with the aid of fire stolen from the gods and then instructs them in human arts and passions. As a representation of the creative artist's role as educator and civilising influence, it could hardly have failed to appeal to Beethoven; by making such direct reference to it, how better could he have concluded this masterly symphonic self-portrait?

SYMPHONY NO. 5 IN C MINOR, OP. 67

Allegro con brio
Andante con moto
Allegro –
Allegro

Beethoven's most famous Symphony opens with a short, brave and arresting gesture. The Viennese might well have been flabbergasted by the Fifth's opening gambit when the 37-year-old Beethoven let it loose on them in 1808, but they had been warned. Beethoven had put the cat amongst the pigeons before: his earlier Third Symphony was over twice as long and far more complex than any work of the same form that preceded it. The Fifth, though, stepped resolutely onto new and profound ground from its epoch-making opening four notes. It is a piece in which we can still recognise the revolutionary today, despite the musical upheavals that have followed it.

Beethoven, though, wasn't working in a vacuum. He was influenced significantly by his contemporaries and predecessors, Haydn and Mozart in particular. Haydn's building of symphonies on single, short ideas and Mozart's triumphant use of the key of C minor are both at work in Beethoven's Fifth. But the sonic realm of this piece, especially its shocking opening bars, is a long way from the High Classicism of Beethoven's illustrious predecessors.

And so to that iconic opening: eight notes divided into two sets of four – three Gs falling to E flat, and three Fs falling to D (heard, surprisingly perhaps, on just strings and clarinets). The so-called 'fate' motif not only dominates the first movement's music, but is referenced in almost every one of the movement's bars. This cellular writing provides a fascinating refraction of the principle of thematic development – almost as if Beethoven is deconstructing and dissecting his theme rather than expanding and developing it. The motif then expands into a horn call, from which the more contented second idea takes its notes; everything in this movement, and within the depths of its perfectly pruned polyphony, is born of the same idea.

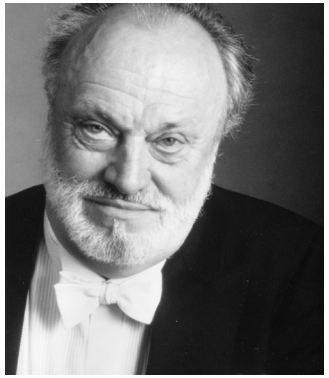
In the 'double variation' *Andante* that follows, Beethoven poses alternate variations on two themes in music that seems at times free and improvisatory, with Hadynesque charm and plenty of unusual orchestral touches. The third movement is dark *scherzo*: two brief and enigmatic gestures preface the dolefully transformed horn-call remembered from the first movement – again maintaining the rhythm of the Symphony's opening motif. After the cellos's campaign to initiate a full-blown fugue, and a delicately orchestrated airing of the horn theme, the timpani taps pregnantly

before the orchestra explodes into the final movement with the brazen unleashing of a C major triad (related to the third movement's opening notes).

The *Finale* continues in this joyous mode – carried forward by its own infectious enthusiasm, littered with rhythmic and harmonic references to the fate motif and overcoming the cheeky reappearance of the third movement's main theme mid-way through (which is triumphantly rebutted by the C major triad). 'I will seize fate by the throat; it shall certainly not bend and crush me completely', Beethoven famously said. His major-key quashing of the fate motif is his musical promise to do just that.

Programme note © Andrew Mellor

KURT MASUR
conductor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Kurt Masur was well known as a distinguished conductor and humanist. His 25 year relationship with the LPO began in 1987, and he became Principal Guest Conductor from 1988–1992. He was appointed the Orchestra's Principal Conductor in September 2000 and led them for the following seven years. In September 2002 Masur also became Music Director of the Orchestre National de France in Paris, and in July 2007 he conducted the joint forces of the two orchestras in an extraordinary BBC Prom concert to celebrate his 80th birthday.

Masur was Kapellmeister of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra for an unprecedented 26 years from 1970, after which he became
the Orchestra's first ever Conductor Laureate. He was instrumental in preventing an outbreak of violence in Leipzig in the lead up to the fall of the Berlin wall, and during his tenure as Music Director of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra he led a moving performance of Brahms's German Requiem in the wake of 9/11.

As well as towering interpretations of the core central European orchestral repertoire, Masur conducted world premieres of works by many of the major composers of the late 20th century, and collaborated with jazz pianist Herbie Hancock and Wynton Marsalis's Lincoln Centre Jazz Orchestra.

A professor at the Leipzig Academy of Music from 1975, Kurt Masur received numerous honours and titles, including Commander of the Legion of Honour from the Government of France and New York City Cultural Ambassador from the City of New York in 1997; Commander Cross of Merit of the Polish Republic in 1999; and the Cross with Star of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany in 2002. He held an honorary doctorate from London's Royal College of Music and was an Honorary Citizen of his hometown, Brieg.

LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The London Philharmonic Orchestra is one of the world's finest orchestras, balancing a long and distinguished history with its present-day position as one of the most dynamic and forward-looking ensembles in the UK. This reputation has been secured by the Orchestra's performances in the concert hall and opera house, its many award-winning recordings, trail-blazing international tours and wide-ranging educational work.

Founded by Sir Thomas Beecham in 1932, the Orchestra has since been headed by many of the world's greatest conductors, including
Sir Adrian Boult, Bernard Haitink, Sir Georg Solti, Klaus Tennstedt and Kurt Masur. Vladimir Jurowski was appointed the Orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor in March 2003, and became Principal Conductor in September 2007.

The Orchestra is based at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall in London, where it has been Resident Orchestra since 1992, giving around 30 concerts a season. Each summer it takes up its annual residency at Glyndebourne Festival Opera where it has been Resident Symphony Orchestra for over 50 years. The Orchestra performs at venues around the UK and has made numerous international tours, performing to sell-out audiences in America, Europe, Asia and Australasia.

The London Philharmonic Orchestra made its first recordings on 10 October 1932, just three days after its first public performance. It has recorded and broadcast regularly ever since, and in 2005 established its own record label. These recordings are taken mainly from live concerts given by conductors including LPO Principal Conductors from Beecham and Boult, through Haitink, Solti and Tennstedt, to Masur and Jurowski. **lpo.org.uk**

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

48:05	**Symphony No. 3 in E flat major, Op. 55 (Eroica)**	
01	*16:57*	Allegro con brio
02	*14:02*	Marcia funebre: Adagio assai
03	*05:34*	Scherzo and Trio: Allegro vivace
04	*11:25*	Finale: Allegro molto

34:56	**Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67**	
05	*07:12*	Allegro con brio
06	*09:14*	Andante con moto
07	*07:59*	Allegro –
08	*10:25*	Allegro

KURT MASUR *conductor*
LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
Boris Garlitsky *leader*

Recorded live at Southbank Centre's **ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL**, *London*