

The Cambridge Companion to the *Eroica* Symphony

This Companion provides orientation for those embarking on the study of Beethoven's much-discussed *Eroica* Symphony, as well as providing fresh insights that will appeal to scholars, performers and listeners more generally. The book addresses the symphony in three thematic sections, on genesis, analysis and reception history, and covers key topics including political context, dedication, sources of the symphony's inspiration, 'heroism' and the idea of a 'watershed' work. Critical studies of writings and analyses from Beethoven's day to ours are included, as well as a range of other relevant responses to the work, including compositions, recordings, images and film. The Companion draws on previous literature but also illuminates the work from new angles, based on new evidence and a range of approaches by twelve leading scholars in Beethoven research.

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The Cambridge Companion to
**THE *EROICA*
SYMPHONY**

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EDITED BY
Nancy November
The University of Auckland

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publications on Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven include *Haydn and the Classical Variation*, *Mozart: The Jupiter Symphony* and 'Music and the Labyrinth of Melancholy'. An Honorary Member of the American Musicological Society, she was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2014.

Eroica Chronology, 1770–2020

- 1770 Beethoven born in Bonn, baptised 17 December
- 1773 Goethe's drama *Götz von Berlichingen* published
- 1781 Schiller's drama *The Robbers* published
- 1787 Schiller's drama *Don Carlos* published
- 1788 Goethe's drama *Egmont* published
- 1791 Death of Mozart (5 December)
- 1792 Travelled to Vienna hoping to study with Haydn (November)
- 1789–99 French Revolution
- 1792–1802 French Revolutionary Wars lead to Napoleonic Wars (1803–15)
- 1796 Napoleon's first victory as army commander (Battle of Montenotte)
- 1798 General Bernadotte spends time in Vienna as French ambassador; Anton Schindler reported (probably falsely) that it was Bernadotte who suggested to Beethoven that he should compose a symphony to honour Napoleon
- 1799 First troubling symptoms of Beethoven's deafness; begins systematic use of sketchbooks. Napoleon becomes First Consul of France
- 1799–1800 Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 21 (first performed April, 1800)
- 1800–1 Piano Sonata in A^b, Op. 26 with slow movement 'Marcia funèbre sulla morte d'un eroe'; ballet music *Creatures of Prometheus*, Op. 43 (performed and published 1801)
- 1801–2 Contradance WoO 14 No. 7 (drawing on the theme from Op. 43 also used in *Eroica*). Beethoven commissioned by Countess von Kielmansegge (Dessau) to write a 'Revolutionary Sonata' (November 1801), but he is reluctant to take this on (April 1802) and the Countess withdraws her offer on hearing that his proposed fee was very high. Around 1802, Beethoven to Krumpfenholz (according to his former student Carl Czerny): 'I am only a little satisfied with my previous works. From today I will take a new path'
- 1802 'Heiligenstadt Testament'. Piano Variations (two sets): Op. 34 in F major; Op. 35 in E^b major (on the *Eroica* finale)

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- theme). Beethoven to his publisher, Oct. 1802: ‘Both [of these sets] are written in a really entirely new style’. Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 36 (first performed 1803; published 1804). Beethoven begins sketching *Eroica* after work on Op. 35 in the ‘Wielhorsky’ Sketchbook (Autumn)
- 1802–3 Haydn ceases active composition. Sketching *Eroica* in ‘Landsberg 6’ (end October 1802 or May/June 1803); main work in 1803, final revisions at the beginning of 1804
- 1803 Symphony No. 3 in E♭ major, Op. 55 (performed 1804, published 1806). Kaspar Karl van Beethoven offers the *Eroica* to Simrock, Breitkopf & Härtel (May), which are later withdrawn (December), probably due to Lobkowitz’s six-month performing rights. Simrock reports that ‘Beethoven has now composed two symphonies, of which one is already finished’ (August), probably referring to *Eroica*’s completion. Beethoven plays the *Eroica* on the piano for (and according to) Ries, who reports that Beethoven wants to dedicate the symphony to Napoleon and name it ‘Bonaparte’ (October) Oratorio, Christ on the Mount of Olives, Op. 85
- 1804 Austrian Empire founded by Francis I. Napoleon crowns himself Emperor of the French. Beethoven is disillusioned with Napoleon (Ries reports in May), and at some point crosses out ‘intitolata Buonaparte’ on the autograph score’s title page energetically, causing a hole; but his views of Napoleon continue to vary (e.g., writing to Breitkopf, in August: ‘the symphony is actually entitled ‘Ponaparte’, and at some stage writing ‘geschrieben auf Bonaparte’ in pencil on the autograph score’s title page, under the erasure). Starts sketching Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67. First performances of *Eroica* in two ‘rehearsals’ in Lobkowitz’s palace in Vienna; private performance in Raudnitz, Lobkowitz’s palace in Czechoslovakia (August); re-offers *Eroica* to Brietkopf (August) but they decline (May/June 1805) after delays; receives payment from Prince Lobkowitz for the dedication of *Eroica* and the Triple Concerto, Op. 56 (November)
- 1805 Semi-public performances of *Eroica* in Vienna (January); mixed reviews. Napoleon defeats the Austro-Russian army at the Battle of Austerlitz
- 1806 Symphony No. 4 in B♭ major, Op. 60 (first performed March 1807). *Eroica* is finally published in orchestral parts by Kunst- und Industrie-Comptoir, Vienna; the title ‘Eroica’ first

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- appears with the publication of these parts. Holy Roman Empire dissolved as a consequence of the Treaty of Pressburg. Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia, whom Beethoven knew through Lobkowitz, loses his life to the Napoleonic troops in battle
- 1806–7 Publication of list of the most significant errors in the original edition of *Eroica* (*Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*). Arrangement of *Eroica* for septet, by Girolamo Masi (London: Monzani and Co., c.1807)
- 1807 Arrangement of *Eroica* for four-hand piano (Leipzig: Kühnel). Friedrich Rochlitz publishes the first technical/analytical review of *Eroica* (*Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, 9, cols. 321–33)
- 1807–8 Final work on Symphony No. 5, Op. 67, and Symphony No. 6 in F ('Pastoral'), Op. 68 (both first performed in the same concert, December 1808)
- 1809 War is declared against France (April); French troops occupy Vienna (May). Death of Haydn (31 May). *Eroica* is published in orchestral score by Cianchettini & Sperati in London, with the title ('Sinfonia Eroica composta per celebrare la morte d'un Eroe', later 'per festeggiare il sovvenire di un grand'uomo')
- 1810 Beethoven makes a note on a sketch leaf about possibly dedicating his Mass in C to Napoleon (eventually dedicated to his patron Prince Kinsky)
- 1811–12 Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92 (first performed December 1813)
- 1812 Symphony No. 8 in F major, Op. 93 (first performed February 1814). French invasion of Russia marks a turning point in the Napoleonic Wars
- 1813 *Wellington's Victory*, Op. 91, to commemorate the Duke of Wellington's victory over Napoleon at the Battle of Vitoria on 21 June 1813 (first performed December 1813)
- 1815 Congress of Vienna; Napoleon escapes exile and begins the Hundred Days before being defeated at the Battle of Waterloo
- 1817 Arrangement of *Eroica* for nonet, Carl Friedrich Ebers (Leipzig: Hofmeister). Authentic metronome markings for *Eroica* are published by Steiner, Vienna
- 1818 Near total deafness; begins use of 'conversation books'
- 1819 Starts work on Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125
- 1821 Napoleon dies in exile on the island of Saint Helena
- 1822 *Eroica* is published in orchestral score by Simrock in Bonn

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- 1823 Symphony No. 9 (primary work)
 1824 Symphony No. 9 (first performance May 1824; publication 1826)
 1826 Beethoven becomes ill, ceases composition (December)
 1827 Beethoven dies (March 27). Arrangement of *Eroica* for two pianos by C. Czerny
 1832 Arrangement of *Eroica* for Piano, Flute, Vn, Vc (ad lib.) by Johann Nepomuk Hummel (London: Chappell & Co.; includes arrangement for piano solo)
 1837–65 Liszt transcribes the entire cycle of Beethoven's symphonies for solo piano
 1847 Marcia funebre played at the funeral of Felix Mendelssohn
 1862–5 First collected edition of Beethoven's works (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel)
 1880 Gustav Nottebohm's monograph on the '*Eroica* Sketchbook', with selective transcriptions and commentary
 1892 Hans von Bülow re-dedicates the *Eroica* to Otto von Bismark
 1926 First recordings of *Eroica*, with Henry Wood and Albert Coates conducting
 1937 Arturo Toscanini rehearses *Eroica* with the BBC SO, declaring 'Is-a not Napoleon! Is-not 'Itler! Is-a not Mussolini! Is-a *Allegro con brio!*'
 1945 Marcia funebre played to commemorate Franklin D. Roosevelt
 1948 Wilhelm Furtwängler records *Eroica* – one of the slowest versions on record
 1957 *Eroica* performed under Bruno Walter at the memorial concert for Arturo Toscanini
 1963 Marcia funebre played to commemorate John F. Kennedy
 1972 Marcia funebre performed at public memorial following the terrorist attacks at the summer Olympics, Munich
 1980s The earliest recordings on period instruments (Hogwood, 1983; Brüngen, 1987; Goodman, 1988; Schröder, 1989; Norrington, 1989)
 2001 Bärenreiter Urtext edition of *Eroica*, edited by Jonathan del Mar
 2003 Release of *Eroica*, BBC television film, dir. Simon Celland Jones. Ensemble 28 records a reconstruction of the first performance in the Lobkowitz Palace (CD released 2004)
 2009 Premiere of Tan Dun's Internet Symphony No. 1 ('*Eroica*') by the YouTube Symphony Orchestra

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- 2013 Entire ‘*Eroica* Sketchbook’ published in facsimile, with transcription and commentary by Lewis Lockwood and Alan Gosman; *Beethoven Werke* (Gesamtausgabe, Beethoven-Haus Bonn) edition of *Eroica*, edited by Bathia Churgin (Henle)

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