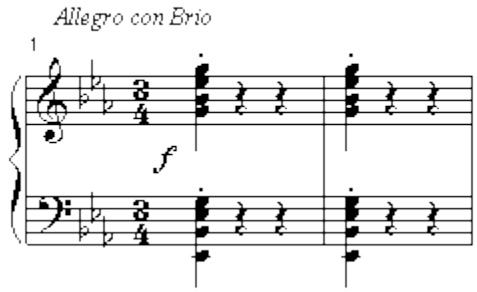
Beethoven Symphony No. 3 in E-flat Major. Op. 55 (Eroica)

First Movement, Allegro con Brio

Times refer to recording by the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique. John Eliot Gardiner. B393 sy5 h. 1993.

Orchestration typical of the time, but with an extra horn (three instead of the typical two)
The first movement follows Sonata form, but with some twists

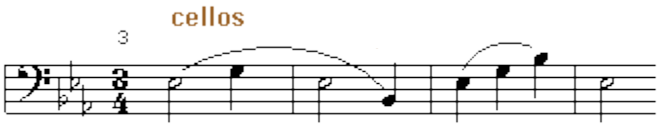
The movement begins with two, E ♭ major chords (m 1-2) (0:00)



Exposition

Theme 1

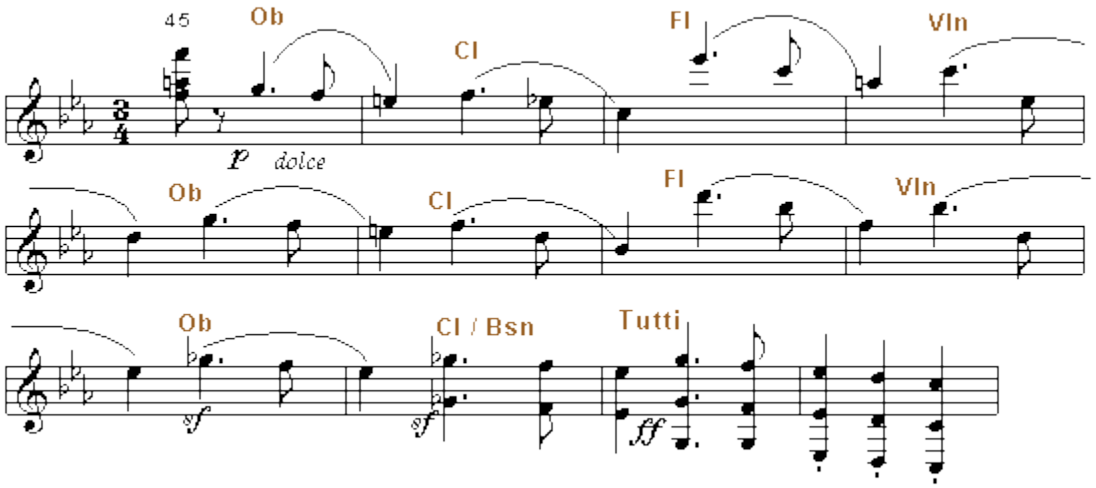
First introduced by the cellos in m. 3 (0:04)



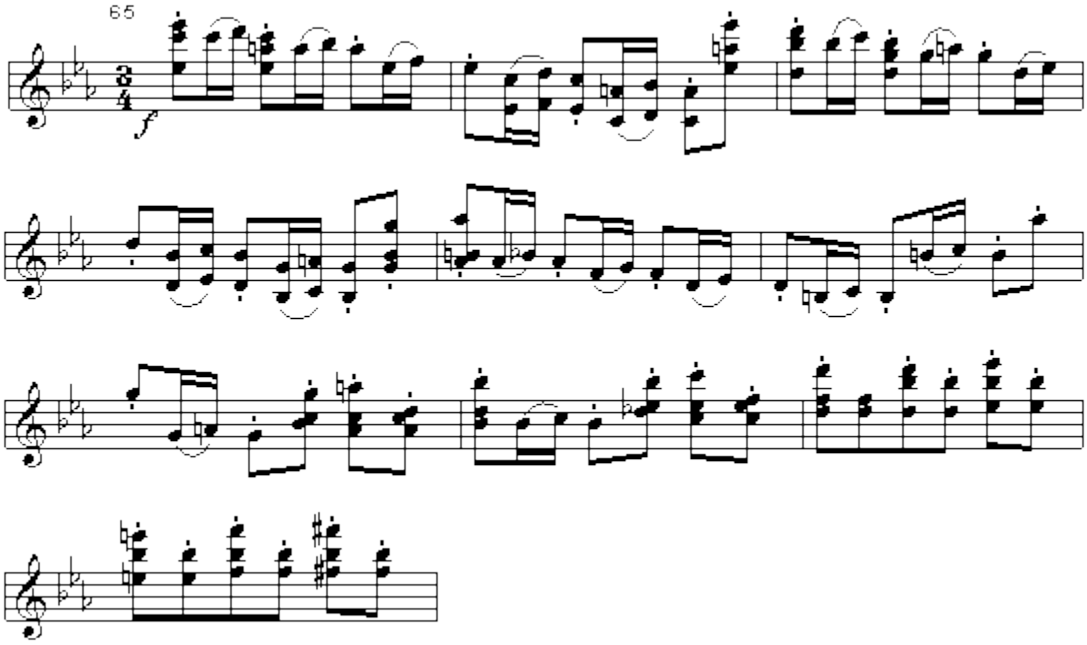
Transition/Theme 2

There is debate among scholars whether this section should be considered the 2nd theme or a transition

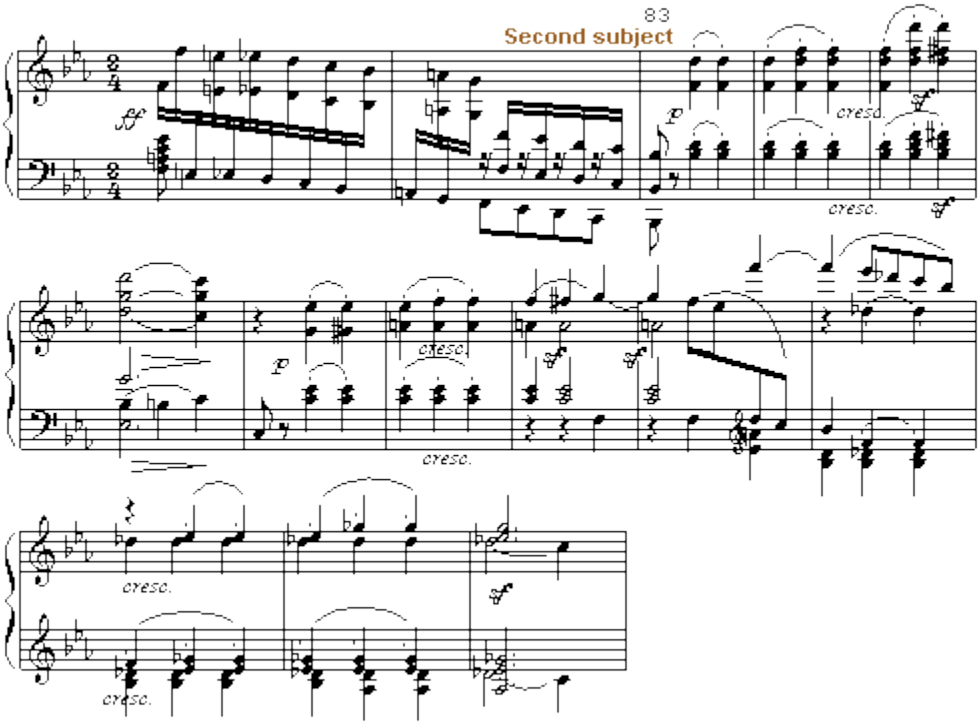
Motif 1 (m 45) (0:48)



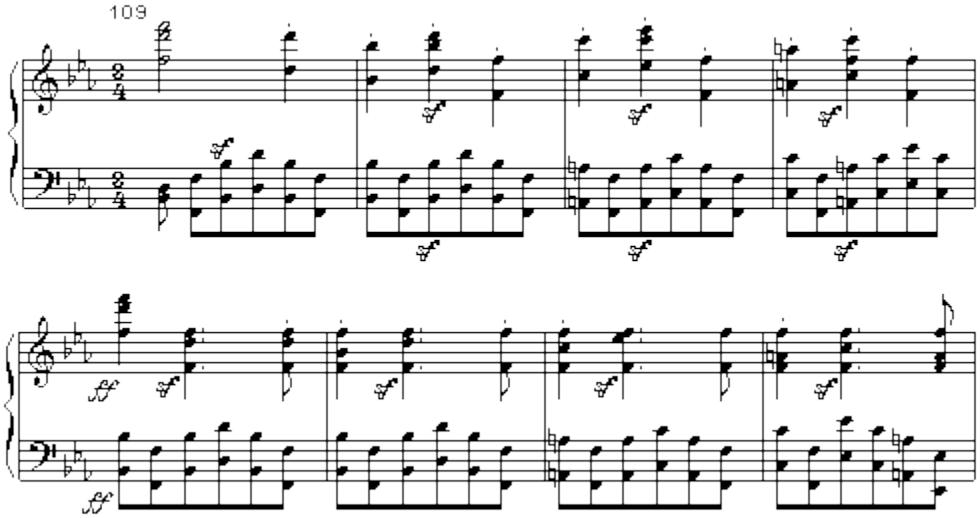
Motif 2 (m 65) (1:09)



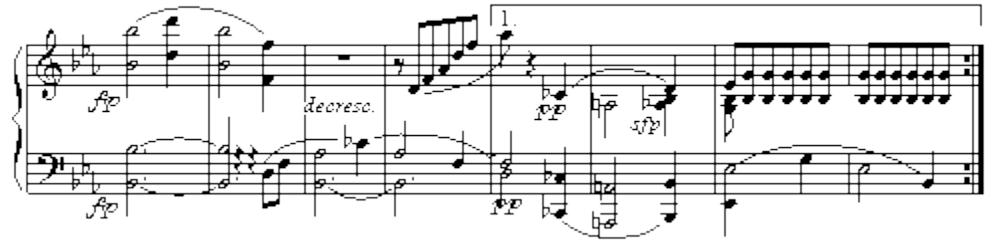
Theme 2/Theme 3 (m. 83) (1:29)



In measure 109, a variation on motif 1 of the Transition occurs (1:59)

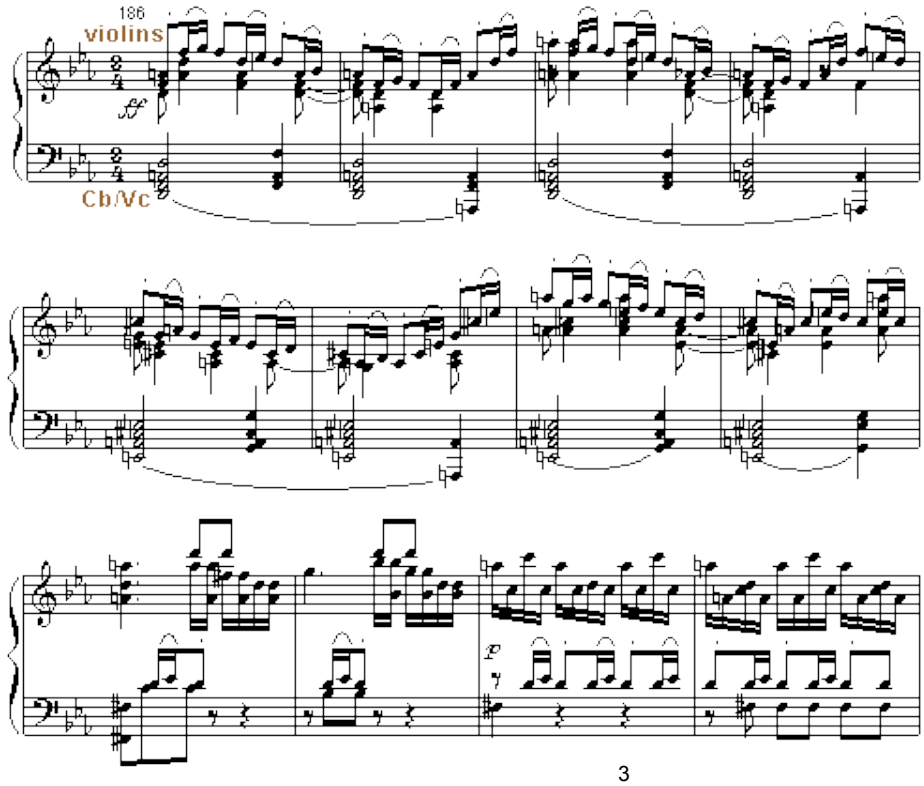


At measure 149 the first theme returns and the exposition repeats (2:42)

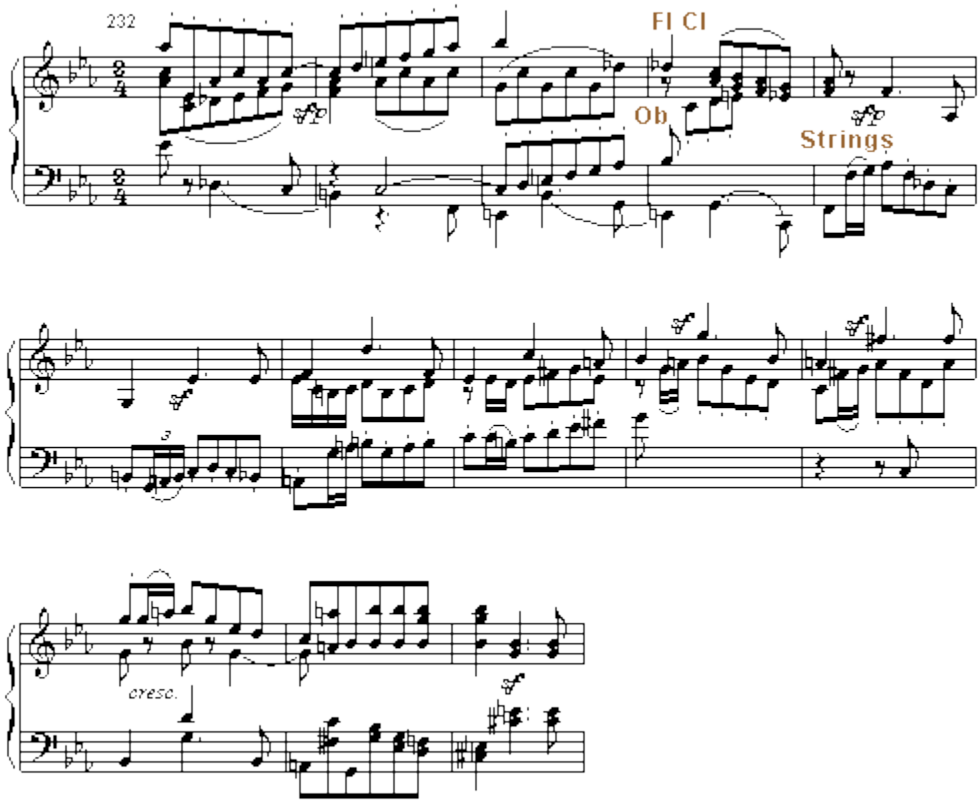


Development (5:29)

Beginning in m. 186, Motif 2 in the violins is juxtaposed with Theme 1 in the lower strings (6:10)

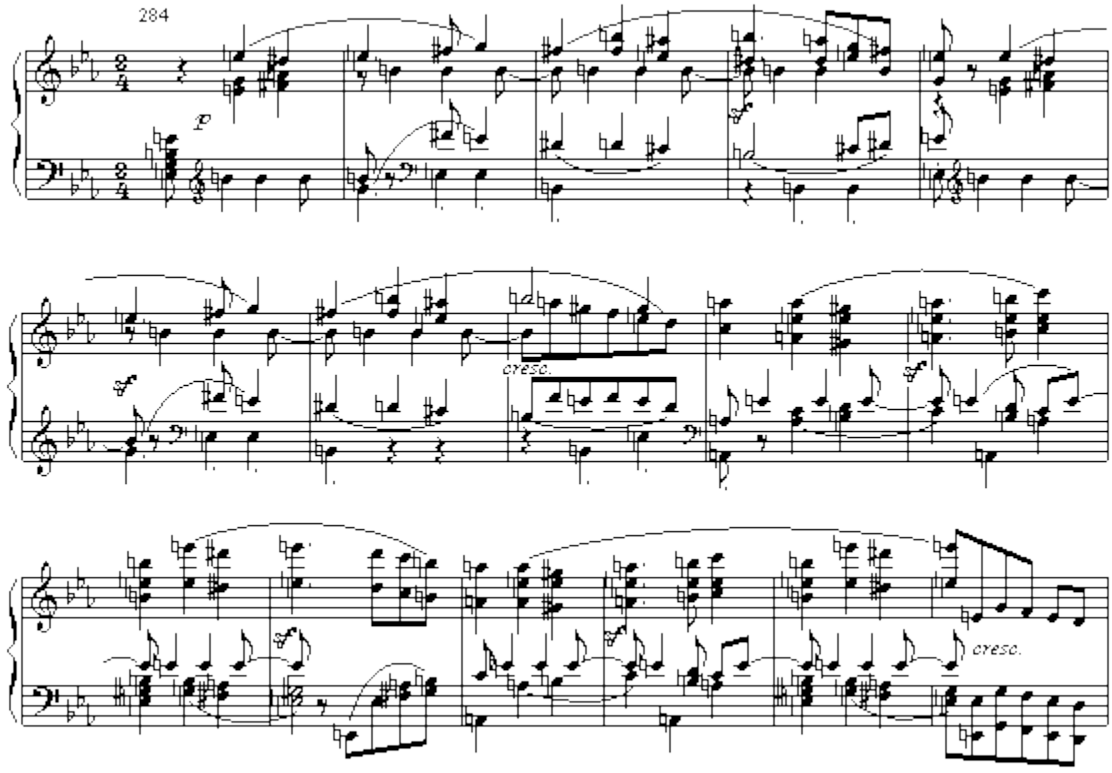


A fugue based on Motif 1 begins at m 232 (7:01)

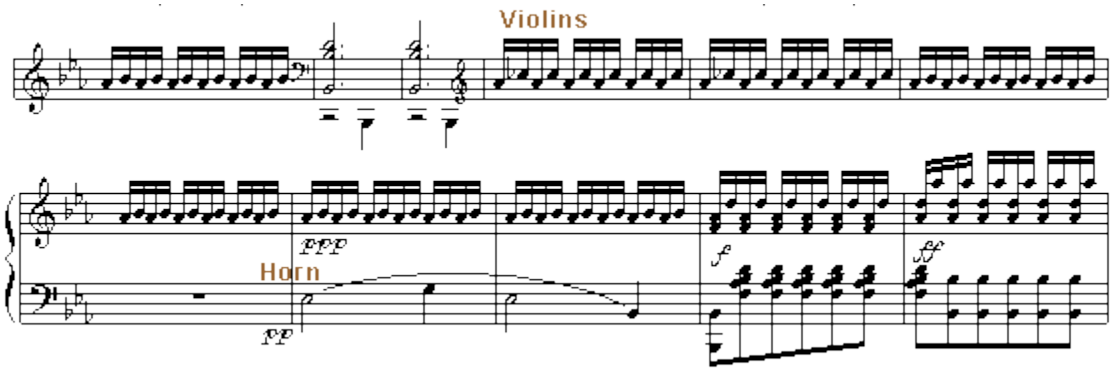


New theme (8:00)

In m. 284 a new theme is introduced in E minor. It is debated whether this is actually a new theme, but either way it was surprising that Beethoven introduced a new sound at this point in the piece



In m. 394 (10:00) theme 1 is played by the horn in the tonic as the strings are playing the dominant chord. This was very surprising in Beethoven's time leading some to think a mistake had been made and some conductors to change what was written to either move the horn into the dominant or the orchestra to the tonic



Recapitulation (10:03)

The recapitulation begins in m. 298

Coda (13:07)

The Coda begins in m. 561

The themes introduced earlier, including the new theme continue to develop in the Coda, ending on theme 1.

Sources

- Sheet music excerpts from beethovenseroica.com
- Dritte Symphonie (Symphony No. 3) in E Flat Major, Op. 55; by Beethoven, Ludwig van (composer); Breitkopf and Härtel (publisher); published 1888; University Music Editions (collection); 94pp http://shmu.alexanderstreet.com/papyrus/dorp/408548/?size=large&pg=13
- http://www.beethovenseroica.com/Pg3_anal/1mov/1m01.htm
- Smith, Jordan Randall, "Beethoven's Symphony no. 3 in E-flat Major: Thematic Analysis" http://jordanrsmith.com/publications/jrs2010.pdf
- Taruskin, Richard, *Music in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (2009)

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