

A RHYTHMIC ANALYSIS OF THE ALLEGRO
MOVEMENT FROM BEETHOVEN'S SONATA OP. 2. NO. 3.

by 1264

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of This Study. The Allegro movement of Beethoven's Sonata Op. 2, No. 3 is a good example of the growth of rhythmic intensity. In this sonata, the rhythmic intensity is sensed from the beginning to the end. Its continuity is difficult to explain. In other works by Beethoven, it has been explained on the basis of the growth of rhythmic activity from section to section, ever-changing patterns of sonority values, and dynamic levels.¹

The primary purpose of this study was to analyze the rhythmic organization of the Allegro movement. The other factors studied were the effect of the dynamic markings on the rhythmic continuity and how the sonority was affected.

Methods of Study. The Sonata Allegro movement was analyzed in several ways. The complete movement was analyzed for the key areas and the harmonic progressions. All cadences and phrases were marked. The Form Units were marked within the movement, and each Form Unit was broken into stages. The stages are the small sections of different rhythmic ideas. The cumulative rhythm was used in the analyzing of the

¹Paul Kelly, "A Rhythmic Analysis of the Allegretto Movement from Beethoven's Seventh Symphony" (unpublished Master's report, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, 1965), p. 1.

rhythmic activity of the complete movement, and the cumulative rhythm note impulses were placed on a graph. The sonorities and dynamic levels were then analyzed in relation to the rhythmic activity.

Definition of Terms.

1. Form Unit. The term, form unit, denotes a complete theme or idea within the movement. For example, the First Form Unit is the first theme in measures 1 through 12. The Second Form Unit IIa begins in measure 13, which is the first episode, and ends in measure 26.
2. Stage. The term, stage, denotes a small section of the form unit that breaks into a separate rhythmic idea.
3. Metrical Relocation. This term refers to dynamic markings, especially the sforzando, being placed at the point in the rhythm of a measure to give the feeling of the accent being in an unusual place. A good example of the accent being in an unusual place is measure 116.
4. Cumulative Rhythm. The term, cumulative rhythm, refers to the total number of rhythmic note impulses of all voices within a given measure. For example, if, in a measure, the soprano voice had eight eighth notes and the bass voice had one whole note the cumulative rhythm of these two voices would be eight eighth notes. A good example would be measure 47.
5. Note Impulse. A note impulse exists whenever one or more notes are sounded simultaneously within the course of a beat.² For example, in example one, measure 2, the simultaneous sounding of the notes of the two lines on the first beat yields one note impulse.
6. Ceiling. The term, ceiling, refers to a series of notes of the same value. For example, a sixteenth note ceiling is sixteen sixteenth notes per measure for several measures. A good example would be measure 13.
7. Background Rhythm. This term refers to the rhythm

²Ibid. p. 3.

caused by the sub-beats, or note impulses.

The Whole Form. This movement is a Sonata Allegro form. The exposition ends in measure 90; its development ends in measure 138, and its recapitulation ends in measure 257. A closing theme and coda are included between measures 212 to 257.

The First Form Unit, mm. 1 to 12, is the first theme section. The material stated in the First Form Unit is theme a. It ends on a perfect authentic cadence with an elision moving to the next form unit.

The Second Form Unit is divided into two sections. These sections are referred to as Form Unit IIa and Form Unit IIb. The Form Unit IIa, mm. 12 to 26, Episode I, states theme b. In mm. 21 to 26 the transition material begins to develop. The form unit ends on a half cadence. The Form Unit IIb, mm. 27 to 46, is the beginning of Episode II. It states theme c. The transition material ends in measure 46 on a perfect authentic cadence with an elision leading to Form Unit IIIa.

The Third Form Unit is divided into two sections. These sections are referred to as Form Unit IIIa and Form Unit IIIb. Form Unit IIIa, mm. 47 to 54, states the second theme. A variation of theme b is repeated in mm. 61 to 76 and ends on a perfect authentic cadence. Form Unit IIIb, mm. 77 to 90, is the closing theme. Theme d is stated in mm. 77 to 84. The codetta to the closing theme begins in measure 85 and ends on a perfect authentic cadence.