



PATHETIQUE

L Van Beethoven (1796-1799)



POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Classical vs Romantic features
- The way the fortepiano is exploited
- Sonata form and its characteristics
- The expressive style of the music.,

1ST MOVEMENT FROM PIANO SONATA NO.8 IN C MINOR

STRUCTURE:

- Sonata form
- Slow Introduction
- Exposition 1st and 2nd Subject
- Development
- Recapitulation
- Coda

HARMONY AND TONALITY:

- In C minor
- Modulates to related keys (Eb major and F minor)
- Modulates to unrelated keys (E minor)
- Chromatic chords
- Diminished 7ths
- Perfect cadences at the end of the movement
- Interrupted cadence in introduction.
- Circle of 5ths
- Augmented 6ths

CONTEXT:

- Born in 1770 in the western German city of Bonn. As a young man he moved to Vienna in Austria, where he became known as a virtuoso pianist.
- He mainly performed his own improvisations and compositions, in the salons of wealthy aristocrats, and at grander-scale concerts.
- He started composing piano concertos and trios, but his greater works later on in his career were piano sonatas. This is his 8th published sonata.
- The French term pathétique means 'moving' or 'emotional'. This piece demonstrated a new passionate musical style.
- Although a 'Classical' composer, this piece shows early signs of the Romantic style to come.

RHYTHM, METRE AND TEMPO:

- Introduction is marked 'grave'
- Dotted rhythms
- Very rapid notes: septuplets and 1/128th notes.
- The main allegro di molto e con brio section is in alla breve time.
- Continuous quavers
- Staccato crotchets

MELODY:

- Introduction uses 6 note motif.
- Scalic passages
- Chromatic scale
- Arpeggios and broken chords
- Ornamentation in the 2nd subject

PERFORMING FORCES:

- The fortepiano was a recent invention and was in process of development.
- Beethoven was one of the first to use dynamic markings.
- Sonata has frequent performance markings.
- The sustaining pedal was coming into use.

TEXTURE:

- Homophonic (chordal) writing in Introduction
- Right hand plays in octaves.
- Monophonic passage leading into recapitulation.
- Melody dominated homophony in the 2nd subject.
- 2 part music with broken chords.
- Brief passage in 3rds with trills.