

## Form – Sonata Form

The 1<sup>st</sup> movement of this concerto is in sonata form with an aspect of Baroque styled *ritornello*, recurring passage, in the exposition. The orchestral exposition is from bars 1-110, with the strings introducing the first theme which is in C minor, then imitated by woodwinds in the dominant. The orchestra then introduces the second theme in the relative major, Eb, in bar 50.

The contrast of the two themes is typical in the Classical period. The first theme is bold and strong whereas the second theme is sweet and lyrical.

At bar 111, the piano plays the exposition in a virtuosic manner. Within the piano exposition we can hear the contrasting bodies of sound between the piano and the orchestra.

At bars 249-308, we enter the development phase where there is instability in tonality. This also creates contrast. Beethoven moves through several relative keys: D major, G minor, F minor, Db major and G major. The piece modulates in bar 249 to D major (the major dominant of the dominant of C minor) where the piano plays scales. Then it transitions into G minor, the dominant key, in bar 258 where the piano plays expressively. Around bar 270, it modulates to F minor, the subdominant key. After that the piece shifts to Db major (major subdominant of the submediant key of C minor). This occurs around bar 281. Bar 295 is G major, major dominant key. This leads back to C minor in the recapitulation.

The recapitulation is from bars 309-415 where the two themes are restated. The cadenza starts from bar 417 through to 480. The coda is from there to the end. This is standard first-movement concerto-sonata form as it allows for two expositions and a cadenza.

In both the cadenza and piano expositions, Beethoven has written passages that show the pianist's virtuosity. As Beethoven was the first to perform this concerto he would have improvised the cadenza. He then wrote it down later so it became standardised. The piece makes the most of piano techniques and characteristics through the use of scalic passages (bar 200), broken octaves (bar 205), staccato arpeggios and trills in bar 223. At the beginning of the cadenza, the pianist plays broken chords with the right hand and melody with the left. At bars 420-423, the theme is played in canon with use of sequence. Other techniques such as chromaticism (bars 465-469) are also used in the cadenza. The use of trills (ornamentation) is also used to signal the end of the cadenza. This is typical of a Classical period concerto.

The piece requires virtuosic skills from the pianist and there are signs of these skills increasing in demand in Beethoven's music, mainly because of his amazing talent, but also because he is beginning to lead the way into the Romantic period, when the virtuoso pianist would reign supreme.