



[*The Mount of Olives*], a new grand symphony, a concertante for violin, cello, and pianoforte with full orchestra, three new solo sonatas [one of these is what we know as the *Waldstein*]...

"I have the desire that the first three works should appear as soon as possible.... The symphony is really entitled *Bonaparte*, and in addition to the usual instruments there are, especially, three obbligato horns. I believe it will interest the public...."

CONCERTO IN C MAJOR, OP. 56,
FOR VIOLIN, CELLO, AND PIANO
Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

This work, referred to as the *Triple Concerto* because of the use of three solo instruments, opens in true classical tradition with an introduction of thematic material, initially by the cellos and basses and then by the full orchestra. At this point, the solo instruments take over the theme in succession—cello, violin, and piano.

After an abbreviated introduction by the strings, the cello states the theme of the *Largo*, a broad, sweeping melody richly colored by background figurations. There is no break between the *Largo* and the closing *Rondo alla polacca*. Instead, the link is provided by the cello. In a briskly paced movement, all three soloists shine.

The *Triple Concerto* was completed in 1804 and published in 1807 by Kunst-und Industrie-Comptoire. Its first public performance took place in May of 1808 at the Augartensaal. According to Anton Schindler, the work was written for Archduke Rudolph, violinist Seidler, and cellist Kraft. However, the concerto is dedicated to Prince Lobkowitz.

SYMPHONY NO. 3 IN E-FLAT MAJOR, OP. 55 (*EROICA*)
Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Beethoven first named this work *Bonaparte*, but later changed the title to *Eroica* (hero), because of his disillusionment and rage at Napoleon's assuming the title of emperor.

The first movement, *Allegro con brio*, opens with two crashing chords that lead to the theme given out by the cellos. A tender episode for the woodwinds, repeated by the strings, follows. In the massive coda, Beethoven's unending fertility of invention in the treatment of thematic material is glowingly evident.

The second movement, *Marcia funebre: Adagio assai*, is impressive and tragic. It is frequently used by radio stations universally in observance of mourning for heads of state. The independent double bass part was a daring innovation for that age.

As a contrast to the solemnity of the *Adagio*, Beethoven leads into a *Scherzo: Allegro vivace* with its sparkling rhythm and delicate scoring.

The *Trio* section features a splendid, fanfare-like passage for the three horns. The *Finale: Allegro molto* is in variation form. Beethoven does not present the main theme until well into the movement. The theme and its bass are from his ballet *Prometheus*. A *presto* coda brings the music to a heroic and triumphant end.

—Sorab Modi, © 1993