

Passions arise in discussion of nearly any measure of this symphony, especially the masterfully efficient first movement. Take, for example, this diatribe from Richard Wagner, regarding how long the fermata in the second measure should be held:

“The E-flat is habitually held no longer than the duration of an ordinary forte taken by a careless bow. Now let us suppose the voice of Beethoven to have cried from the grave to a conductor: ‘Hold thou my fermata long and terribly! I wrote no fermata for jest or from bewilderment, haply to think out my further move; but the same full tone I mean to be squeezed dry in my Adagio for utterance of sweltering emotion, I cast among the rushing figures of my passionate Allegro, if need be, a paroxysm of joy or horror. Then shall its life be drained to the last blood-drop; then do I part the waters of my ocean, and bare the depths of its abyss; or curb the flocking herd of clouds, dispel the whirling web of mist, and open up a glimpse into the pure blue firmament, the sun’s irradiate eye. For this I set fermate in my Allegros, notes entering of a sudden, and long held out. And mark thou what a definite thematic aim I had with this sustained E-flat, after a storm of three short notes, and what I meant to say by all the like held notes that follow.”

The three latter movements, often forgotten in all the excitement over the opening *Allegro con brio*, are equally important to the organic whole of the symphony. The *Andante con moto* features a double set of variations, alternating the development of two contrasting themes. The third movement, though not marked as such, is a quintessential *Scherzo*, with a principal theme reminiscent of the finale of Mozart’s 40th Symphony, a scurrying trio and final coda that connects directly to the last movement. The concluding *Allegro* completes this symphony’s journey to a triumphant C Major, featuring the novel (though not unprecedented) addition of piccolo and trombones for extra orchestral brilliance. Many listeners have cited the

recurrence in varied forms of the dot-dot-dot-dash rhythmic figure in each movement as proof of the work’s unity; beware, though, that this simplification may obscure the full richness of harmonic and structural cohesion in this masterwork.

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DRESDEN PHILHARMONIC

With its approximately 80 concerts in Dresden, the Dresden Philharmonic is the busiest symphonic orchestra in Dresden and essentially characterizes the cultural life of the city. The orchestra plays in the festival hall of the Dresden Kulturpalast am Altmarkt—right in the heart of the city. The concerts of the orchestra have emerged as an attraction for thousands of Dresdeners and for visitors to Dresden, ‘the metropolis on the Elbe,’ often called ‘Florence on the Elbe.’ The Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra is sought after on concert stages worldwide and their tours have occurred throughout Europe, China, Japan, Israel, South America and the USA.

The Dresden Philharmonic traces its formation back to the formal opening of the first concert hall in Dresden on Nov. 29, 1870. This marked a social change in the city from concerts for the aristocracy to the concerts for the general public. From 1885, the then “Gewerbehauseorchester” gave full seasons of symphonic concerts in Dresden, which earned them the title, “Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra” in 1915.

Historically the great composers such as Johannes Brahms, Piotr Tchaikovsky, Antonin Dvorak and Richard Strauss have conducted and often premiered their works with the orchestra. Previous Music Directors have included Paul van Kempen, Carl Schricht, Heinz Bongartz, Kurt Masur, Guenther Herbig, Joerg-Peter Weigle and Michael Plasson, nearly all of whom have recorded with the orchestra.

From the beginning of the 2003 season until September 2004 Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos