

BEETHOVEN

CONCERTO No. 2 IN B-FLAT MAJOR FOR PIANO AND ORCH., Op. 19

BACH

CONCERTO No. 1 IN D MINOR FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA

GLENN GOULD, Pianist

LEONARD BERNSTEIN

conducting the COLUMBIA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

■ The *B-flat* major Concerto is without doubt the most unjustly maligned of Beethoven's orchestral compositions. Until very recently it has been reserved for occasional appearance as a curiosity-piece, and it is still greeted more often than with critical reserve.

It is, of course, his first major orchestral composition (it antedates the *C* major Concerto, Opus 15, by several years) and it was written at a time when Beethoven's prowess as a solo pianist might well have prompted him to mold a show piece for his own exhibition. Yet his concern for this work seems to have long out-lived his personal need for it, for he not only set about revising it in 1800 at a time when the concerti in *C* major and *C* minor were extant, but provided a cadenza for the first movement (much the finest cadenza he ever wrote, too) in an idiom of such rugged motivic sculpture that it can scarcely have been written before 1815.

Yet, though this cadenza is no more an idiomatic extension of the rest of the concerto than Beethoven's of *Figures* it does nevertheless reiterate and further expand the most imposing aspect of Beethoven's structural conception of the first movement—the close interdependence and consistent development of the motivic figures in the very first phrase.



Within this opening phrase the dual thematic character of the classical concerto allegro is summed up. The martial revolve of figure 1 (an inverted Mannheim skyrocket) makes an appropriate gesture of symphonic pomposity, is subtly modified by figure 1A, and balanced by the lyric attitude of the consequent motif. At once is depicted that play of aggression and reticence, of power and of gliding which is the Concerto idea. Now, it can be argued that the alternation of two such motives, of triad intervals followed by a slice of the diatonic scale on a contrived dynamic plane, is the most familiar and the most obvious method of opening a classical symphonic work. But these motives are not long left in the hands of the orchestra; the entire concerto is tried and fitted with each other and with successive motives, assuming a rhetorical guise consistent with the aristocratic episode and often, especially in the development, remaining recognizable only through this rhythmic adherence.

The opening orchestral tutti omits the advance preparation of the secondary theme (or dominant group), the only piano concerto in which it is not presented verbatim (although the *C* major Concerto and the second episode of the subsidiary group). This makes for a tighter, Mozartian exposition and also introduces the one moment of

really exotic colour. At the point (bar 46) when a half close on octave *C* leads one to anticipate the *F* major 2nd theme, a truly magical inspiration persuades Beethoven to present a sequence of Figure 2 (example 1), exalted by the austere relationship of the minor modal. (He tries the same trick with somewhat less effect in the development section.)

The concluding rounds, seeming thoroughly earthbound after the magnificent glowing adagio, nevertheless exhibit in a much less pretentious way the same interest in motivic compression as does the opening movement. It is notable among the concerto rounds for having as its central episode (*G* minor) a firm organic continuation of the principal theme. Following the superbly turned cello line in bar 116 the *G* minor episode seems the only logical extension.



All in all a work which does not need the consideration of historical precedents to deserve the epithet 'remarkable.'

However individual a Beethoven concerto may be in its subjective treatment of the thematic material or the soloist's artistry, there remains from the analyst's point of view the comforting thought that, in discovering its overall design, certain analytical yardsticks may with certainty be applied. So familiar have we become with the propriety of the classical sonata-allegro that we tend to analyse the work as a series of departure from an harmonic norm which can almost be taken for granted. Thus the *B-flat* major (minor modal) episode in the tutti devoted above can, by its challenge of the expected, be perceived almost as a literary idea.

■ But such blind faith in the inviolability of an harmonic cast is not rewarded in analysis of the baroque concerto. Here one can treat of the melodic delineation of the subject matter or of its application to a legal exposition, of its rhythmic mating with a counter-theme, in short, with every aspect of the baroque style which pertains to melodic principle or to harmonic progression within one particular episode. What does not come so easily is the discovery of a unifying principle of key-order which would provide a means of reference through which to define the harmonic adventure of baroque literature or even the work of any one composer. There is much less difference in the thematic key-regions inhabited by the concerti of Mozart and Bach than of those than between any two of the *Broadway* Concerti.

Some hint as to the baroque concerto style as a century-long testing ground. They recognize

that the modulatory capacity of the tonal orbit gradually evolved while each member of the diatonic solar system found for itself the most favourable relationship with the tonic. In this view the virtual equality of modulation characteristic of the early baroque gradually gives way to fields of greater or lesser gravitational force and eventually merges with the tonico sonata in which the dominant-tonic alteration has assumed primary importance.

This view has the virtue of historical continuity and it can cite the fact that the very nature of the long-limbed subject motives so favoured in the baroque—especially the Italian concerto—do obviate the necessity of subordinate thematic groups and do encourage the austere expanse, the legal exposition, the long reticence in falling sequences from an unstable harmonic position—all devices which must be used sparingly if the climactic impact of classical tonality is to be preserved. But this view does rather overstate the fact that the baroque is a period of harmonic transition and in its desire to salute the dawn of the classical era it does deny something of the grandeur which is so obviously lacking when one compares the concerti of Haydn or of Schubert with the models of Bach or of Vivaldi.

If, on the other hand, one approaches the baroque concerto as an harmonically stable institution one must attempt to prove each individual movement the product of a farcical and entirely controlled idea. No examples could be more rewarding for that task than the allegro movements of the *Bach* *D* minor Concerto.

The first movement is divided into four main sections, each of which commences with the main theme:



They begin respectively, (1) in the Tonic, *D* minor, bar 1; (2) in the Dominant, *A* minor, bar 36; (3) in the Sub-dominant, *G* minor, bar 104; (4) in the Tonic, *D* minor, bar 172. Each of the first three sections (the fourth is a coda which remains in *D* minor through the end) is in turn sub-divided into three sections. Considering their respective tonalities as those of the short mentioned bars 1, 36 and 104, these can be designated as (1) in the tonic, (2) in the dominant (i.e. *A* minor, *E* minor and *D* minor) and (3) in the mediant (*F* major, *C* major and *B-flat* major). Each of these sections presents an adaptation of the theme of Example 3. The dominant groups (with the exception of the central episode in *B* minor which makes striding use of a neutral figure in the viola) presents the motive in se-



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quences of falling fifths passing two and one half times around the diatonic sphere and coming to rest upon the mediant groups where the theme is given its greatest range of dynamic expression and its most ingeniously disconnected phrase.



It should be noted also that the character of the dominant episodes within the first and third groups, i.e. the episodes in *A* minor, bar 32, and *D* minor, bar 116, do not anticipate or usurp the function of the principal divisions beginning in these keys, bars 56 and 172. In other words, despite the authentic modulations which precede both types of episode, one might say that they illustrate Sir Donald Tovey's distinction between being in the dominant and being on it.

■ If space permitted, the final movement would be shown to follow the same structural procedure. It consists of three divisions, the first two (Tonic and Sub-dominant) being sub-divided in the same manner as the first movement and followed by an extended coda. Unlike the first movement however, the three sections are linked by transitions which fancifully elaborate the main theme.

Whether or not the ear can recognize in this type of development the psychological strategy which it appreciates in the classical concerto, the fact must remain that as an individual instance these movements are as tightly interwoven in the harmonic relationships of the various sections and as unerringly organized as any sonata structure thereafter. Whether there is a common denominator which one could apply to the baroque concerto and concerto grosso literature, or whether each work must prove to have been designed with a special harmonic framework erected to house its unique thematic activities, remains an open question. Perhaps if one made a really systematic excavation in the early Italian harps one might discover the real foundation on which the monuments of baroque culture have settled. To my knowledge, it is a study which has never adequately been undertaken but one which could repay handsome reward.

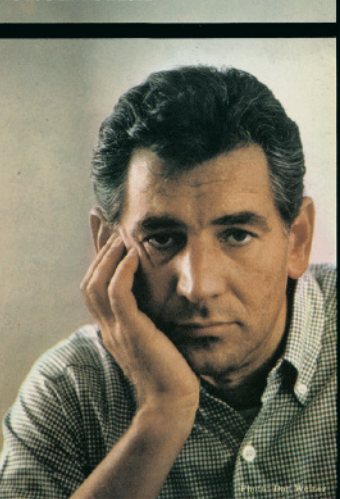
GLENN GOULD

■ Library of Congress catalog cards R57-1069 and R57-1060 apply to this record.

G010003287342

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LEONARD
BERNSTEIN
conducting the
COLUMBIA SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

Ludwig van Beethoven 1770–1827

Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 2 in B-flat major op. 19

B-Dur · en *si* bémol majeur

1	I. Allegro con brio	13:05
2	II. Adagio	9:23
3	III. Rondo. Molto allegro	5:32

Johann Sebastian Bach 1685–1750

Concerto for Keyboard and Orchestra No. 1 in D minor BWV 1052

d-Moll · en *ré* mineur

4	I. Allegro	8:37
5	II. Adagio	7:15
6	III. Allegro	8:18

Total Time 52:18

Glenn Gould piano

Columbia Symphony Orchestra
Leonard Bernstein conductor

Original LP: ML 5211 · Released October 14, 1957

Recording: Columbia 30th Street Studio, New York City,
April 9/10, 1957 [1–3]; April 11, 1957 [4–6]

Producer: Howard H. Scott

Cover Photos: Marvin Koner (Glenn Gould), Dan Weiner (Leonard Bernstein)

Liner Notes: Glenn Gould

LP Matrix: xLP 41749 [1–3], xLP 41748 [4–6] (mono)

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It is, of course, his first major orchestral composition (it antedates the C major Concerto, Opus 15, by several years) and it was written at a time when Beethoven's prowess as a solo pianist might well have prompted him to mold a show piece for his own exhibition. Yet his concern for this work seems to have long out-lived his personal need for it, for he not only set about revising it in 1800 at a time when the concerti in C major and C minor were extant, but provided a cadenza for the first movement (much the finest cadenza he ever wrote, too) in an idiom of such rugged motivic sculpture that it can scarcely have been written before 1815.

Yet, though this cadenza is no more an idiomatic extension of the rest of the concerto than *Rosenkavalier* or *Figaro* it does nevertheless reiterate and further expand the most imposing aspect of Beethoven's structural conception of the first movement – the close interdependence and consistent development of the motivic figures in the very first phrase.

Within this opening phrase the dual thematic character of the classical concerto allegro is summed up. The martial reveille of figure 1 (an inverted Mannheim skyrocket) makes an appropriate gesture of symphonic pomposity, is subtly modified by figure 1A, and balanced by the lyric attitude of the consequent motive. At once is depicted that play of aggression and



reluctance, of power and of pleading which is the Concerto idea. Now, it can be argued that the alternation of two such motives, of triad intervals followed by a slice of the diatonic scale on a contrasted dynamic plane, is the most familiar and the most obvious method of opening a classical symphonic work. But these motives are not long left in the neat package of the opening sentence. They are tried and fitted with each other and with successive motives, assuming a rhythmic guise consistent with the particular episode and often, especially in the development, remaining recognizable only through this rhythmic adherence.

The opening orchestral tutti omits the advance presentation of the secondary theme (or dominant group), the only piano concerto in which it is not presented verbatim (although the G major Concerto reproduces only part of the subsidiary group). This makes for a tighter, Mozartean exposition and also introduces the one moment of really exotic colour. At the point (bar 40) when a half close on octave C leads one to anticipate the F major 2nd theme, a truly magical inspiration persuades Beethoven to present a sequence of figure 2 (example 1), exalted by the austere relationship of the minor mediant. (He tries the same trick with somewhat less effect in the development section.)



The concluding rondo, seeming thoroughly earthbound after the magnificent glowing adagio, nevertheless exhibits in a much less pretentious way the same interest in motivic compression as does the opening movement. It is notable among the concerto rondos for having as its central episode (G minor) a firm organic continuation of the principal theme. Following the superbly turned cello line in bar 116 the G minor episode seems the only logical extension.

All in all a work which does not need the consideration of historical precedence to deserve the epithet “remarkable.”

However individual a Beethoven concerto may be in its subjective treatment of the thematic material or the solo-tutti antithesis, there remains from the analyst's point of view the comforting thought that, in describing its overall design, certain analytical yardsticks may with certainty be applied. So familiar have we become with the propriety of the classical sonata-allegro that we tend to analyse the work as a series of departures from an harmonic norm which can almost be taken for granted. Thus the D-flat major (minor mediant) episode in the tutti described above can, by its challenge of the expected, be portrayed almost as a literary idea.

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Some historians see the baroque sonata style as a century-long testing ground. They recognize that the modulatory capacity of the tonal orbit gradually

evolved while each member of the diatonic solar system found for itself the most favorable relationship with the tonic. In this view the virtual equality of modulation characteristic of the early baroque gradually gives way to fields of greater or lesser gravitational force and eventually merges with the rococo sonata in which the dominant-tonic altercation has assumed primary importance.

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The first movement is divided into four main sections, each of which commences with the main theme:



They begin respectively, (1) in the Tonic, D minor, bar 1; (2) in the Dominant, A minor, bar 56; (3) in the Subdominant, G minor, bar 104; (4) in the Tonic, D minor, bar 172. Each of the first three sections (the fourth is a coda which remains in D minor through the end) is in turn sub-divided into three sections. Considering their respective tonics as those of the above mentioned bars 1, 56 and 104, these can be designated as (1) in the tonic, (2) in the dominant (i.e. A minor, E minor and D minor) and (3) in the mediant (F major, C major and B-flat major). Each of these sections presents an adaptation of the theme of example 3. The dominant groups (with the exception of the central episode in E minor which makes striking use of a neutral figure in the viola) presents the motive in sequences of falling fifths passing two and one half times around the diatonic sphere and coming to rest upon the mediant groups where the theme is given its greatest range of dynamic expression and its most ingeniously disconnected profile.



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