

Beethoven's Symphony No. 5, movement I is in sonata form—albeit unusual. Your final short analysis assignment is to create an accurate and clean diagram. Whereas jazz lead sheets and Bach chorales fit on a single page, this Beethoven movement is over 500 measures long! One inch could represent about 100 measures on your diagram. Here are the basic facts:

Exposition (mm. 1–124)

Theme 1 (m. 1) C minor

Theme 2 (m. 59) Eb major

Development (mm. 125–247) many keys

Theme 1 (m. 125)

“Theme 2” (m. 179)

Recapitulation (mm. 248–373)

Theme 1 (m. 248) C minor

Theme 2 (m. 303) C major

Coda (mm. 374–502) C minor

Theme 1 (m. 478)

Everyone’s analysis of this music will be slightly different—just like different performers have different interpretations. Some of you indicate that theme 1 begins in bar 6. I can live with that, but bars 1–5 certainly act as a fanfare or introduction to bar 6. They belong together. Likewise bars 59–62 herald measure 63. Some of you consider bars 22–58 to be a transition. I am fine with that as well. Finally, bar 95 may be considered a closing theme or codetta to the exposition.

As expected, the exposition is repeated. This makes it easy to find the development. Here Beethoven explores a number of keys in quick succession. (You might create a diagram and speculate about the choices he made.)

The opening motive announcing the recapitulation is cleverly hidden in bar 248. The first flute, first oboe, both trumpets, and timpani play only the pitch G. (The horns play only concert G in mm. 250–252.) One of the unusual features of this movement is that the recapitulation's second theme is in C major rather than C minor. Consider the emotional effect Beethoven creates with major versus minor. (FYI, the last movement of this symphony is in C major.)

Bars 362–374 feature only C major and G major triads, I - V - I - V - I - V - I - V - I. The piece could end here, but instead we find a coda that is not just a few bars, but rather the fourth major section of this movement—typical Beethoven. We return to C minor. Some of you consider bar 424 to be a new theme. I am OK with that. Finally, just when we are unsure about the direction the music is taking, the opening motive returns in measure 478.

With a coda beginning in m. 374, consider the balanced proportions:

Exposition — 124 bars

Development — 123 bars

Recapitulation — 126 bars

Coda — 129 bars