

Herbert von Karajan, (born April 5, 1908, Salzburg, Austria—died July 16, 1989, Anif, near Salzburg), Austrian-born orchestra and opera conductor, a leading international musical figure of the mid-20th century.

A child prodigy on the piano, Karajan studied at the Mozarteum in Salzburg. He made his professional conducting debut in 1929 at Salzburg, and he was appointed to a conducting position in Ulm, Ger., later that year. He remained in Ulm until 1934, when he was appointed Kapellmeister at Aachen. Karajan was in Aachen until 1941, also occasionally conducting the Berlin State Opera during that period. He fled to Italy in 1944. He helped found the London Philharmonia in 1948, and in 1955 he became music director of the Berlin Philharmonic.

A Nazi Party member from 1933 to 1942, Karajan was exonerated by an Allied tribunal after World War II, but his American debut in 1955 precipitated public protests. He soon became principal conductor for the Vienna State Opera (director, 1956–64) and the Salzburg Festival, an annual music festival with which he was energetically associated throughout his later career. He was also a chief conductor at La Scala, Milan, and a guest conductor at the New York Philharmonic. In 1967 Karajan founded the Salzburg Easter Festival. He conducted the Orchestre de Paris (1969–70) and returned to the Vienna State Opera in 1977. Throughout these associations the Berlin Philharmonic generally remained the centre of his musical activities, though after 1982 a series of disputes caused estrangement between the orchestra members and Karajan. He resigned his position in April 1989, a few months before his death.

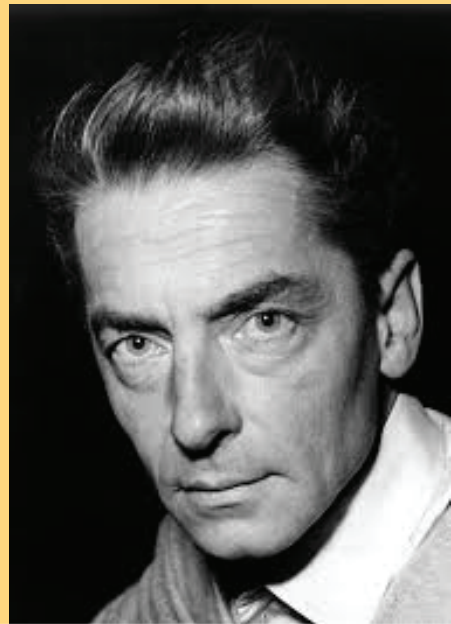
Karajan's musical interpretations were noted for their precision and objectivity. In the 1970s and '80s, however, his conducting was characterized by a more personal style.

Ludwig Van Beethoven

Beethoven

Symphony No. 3 (Eroica)

Herbert von Karajan
Berliner Philharmoniker



Beethoven completed this work in 1804; it was introduced privately in Vienna, chez Prince Lobkowitz, to whom it is dedicated. Beethoven also conducted the public premiere on April 7, 1805, in the Theater-an-der-Wien. Despite everything written to the contrary, the *Sinfonia eroica* was never a "portrait" of Napoleon Bonaparte, although Beethoven did plan to dedicate it to the charismatic Corsican "First Consul of France." He went into a rage, however, when a pupil, Ferdinand Ries, brought news in May 1804 that Napoleon had crowned himself Emperor. According to Ries, Beethoven shouted that the General was only "an ordinary human being, [and] went to the table, took hold of the title page, tore it in two, and threw it on the floor."

A different story posits that Beethoven erased the Napoleonic dedication from a copy made in August 1804 and entitled *Sinfonia grande*. In fact, *Sinfonia eroica* did not appear as the work's title until publication in 1806.

What Beethoven never told Ries was that Prince Lobkowitz, before May 1804, had proffered a handsome fee in exchange for the dedication, which Napoleon's subsequent arrogance made possible. Or that Beethoven realized the advantage in bringing with him a *Sinfonia Bonaparte* when a Parisian trip was proposed later on (but never materialized). It was conductor Arturo Toscanini who put everything into perspective 50-odd years ago: "Some say Napoleon, some say Hitler, some say Mussolini; for me it is *Allegro con brio*."

The sheer length of the *Eroica*'s first movement was revolutionary -- an opening movement of 691 measures, plus an exposition repeat of 151 measures. No less revolutionary was Beethoven's jarring C sharp at the end of a main theme in E flat major -- indeed it is an E flat arpeggio. Not until the recapitulation does that C sharp become D flat enharmonically. It is in this

movement that the long-range harmonic connections explored over the course of the Romantic era have their real start; the movement is heroic mainly in the vastness of its reach.

A "Funeral March" slow movement was hardly revolutionary, but the span of his C minor slow movement, in rondo form, was unprecedented, and so was its range of emotions from outright grief to C major solace. Although "hunt" music in the third-movement Trio may have startled the *Eroica*'s first audience after funerary tragedy on an unprecedented scale, hunting music in Beethoven's time was even more modish than funeral marches. However, he used it for more than mere surprise in the midst of an onrushing and sometimes raucous scherzo (thereby banishing minuets and Ländler until the symphonies of Bruckner and Mahler). Psychologically he needed sunshine after so much weighty, solemn music.

He was also setting up a racy finale -- a set of variations including a fugue that detractors ever since have called a falling-off of inspiration. This kind of argument ignores, however, not only what preceded the *Eroica* historically -- Bach's Goldberg Variations for example -- but also Beethoven's own ennoblement of the form. He had already used the legato second theme of his *Eroica* finale in *The Creatures of Prometheus* (ballet music of 1800), in an 1802 Contredanse, and as the subject of 15 keyboard variations that same year (Op. 35), subtitled *Eroica* once the symphony had been published. A never-ending wonder is the viability of this subject after so much use. Beethoven's range of invention in the symphonic finale of 1804 -- from hymnody to humor, from fugue to dance, culminating in a Presto coda -- successfully freed the listener from the gripping, even shocking drama that has stalked his first and second movements.

Beethoven

Symphony No. 3 (Eroica)

Herbert von Karajan Berliner Philharmoniker

1. Allegro Con Brio 14:35
 2. Marcia Funebre: Adagio Assai 16:55
 3. Scherzo: Allegro Vivace 5:40
 4. Finale: Allegro Molto
Poco Andante - Presto 12:10
- Total Time: 49:20

Engineer – Günter Hermanns Recording Supervisor - Otto Gerdes
Recorded 1962 by DGG



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