



LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Germany 1770–1827

"Ode to Joy" from Symphony 9, last movement

Introduction

Beethoven is an extremely well known and celebrated German composer from the late 1700s and early 1800s. He wrote a great amount of well loved music, but he is also famous for something else: his deafness. Later in Beethoven's career, he started to lose his hearing, but this didn't stop him from writing his music. The piece we will be studying is the finale from Beethoven's ninth symphony, which he conducted while nearly entirely deaf. The story is that when the piece was performed for the first time, he couldn't hear his magnificent music as he was conducting. He didn't realize when the symphony was finished, or that there was thunderous applause from the audience. One of the musicians had to turn him around so that he could see the audience's reaction. You may know this by another name, "Ode to Joy," or recognize the melody when you hear it. The theme from Symphony No. 9 is amazingly simple—based on repeated notes or step-wise notes, except for two leaps, which are all the more dramatic because of the linear character of the rest of the melody. The ninth symphony was also the first time that voices were used in a symphony.

Learning Goals

PERFORMING	Students will sing the melody of the piece.
LISTENING	Students will identify specific instruments and instrument families.
	Students will differentiate between melody and accompaniment.
	Students will practice internal hearing.
MOVEMENT	Students will use simple movement to express melodic contour.

Materials:

Musical excerpts (included in lesson)

FOCUS: MELODY, INSTRUMENT FAMILIES, HISTORY/BIOGRAPHY

ACTIVITY #1

SINGING

ODE TO JOY

Beethoven

The musical notation consists of three staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The notes are as follows:

- Staff 1: G4 (m), A4 (m), B4 (f), C5 (s), B4 (s), A4 (f), G4 (m), F#4 (r), E4 (d), D4 (d), C4 (r), B3 (m), A3 (m), G3 (r), F#3 (r), E3 (m), D3 (m), C3 (f), B2 (s), A2 (s), G2 (f), F#2 (m), E2 (r).
- Staff 2: D2 (d), C2 (d), B1 (r), A1 (m), G1 (r), F#1 (d), E1 (d), D1 (r), C1 (r), B1 (m), A1 (d), G1 (r), F#1 (m), E1 (f), D1 (m), C1 (d), B1 (r), A1 (m), G1 (f), F#1 (m), E1 (r).
- Staff 3: D2 (d), C2 (r), B1 (s), A1 (m), G1 (m), F#1 (f), E1 (s), D1 (s), C1 (f), B1 (m), A1 (r), G1 (d), F#1 (d), E1 (r), D1 (m), C1 (r), B1 (d), A1 (d).

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|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Come and sing a song of joy | 2. That day will dawn as sure |
| for peace shall come to all the land, | as hearts that are pure are hearts set free |
| Sing, O sing a song of joy | Sing O sing a song of joy |
| for men shall soon join hand in hand | for peace and love and liberty. |

English lyrics from Musicanada book Grade 6

1. Sing or hum the melody above using lyrics or solfege syllables (provided above).
2. Have the students echo small sections back until you are satisfied with their grasp of the melody.



ACTIVITY #2

INTERNAL HEARING / RADIO GAME

3. "Internalize" the melody, so as to be sure that it has been learnt, by employing the "Radio" technique:

Mime switching **on** the radio, and have the class hum or sing until you mime switching it **off**, at which time they stop singing and hear the continuing music in their heads until you mime switching the radio **on** again whereupon they continue singing from the point the music would have reached. Repeat as much as you like to give students time to practice internal hearing, also called "audiation."



ACTIVITY #3

LISTENING – FORM AND INSTRUMENTATION

1. Beethoven introduces this beautiful theme on instruments alone, a little bit into the last movement of the symphony. He states it four times, evolving from the simple melodic line on strings to a jubilant tutti for the whole orchestra.
2. Play the recording, stopping after each rendition of the theme. Ask the Following questions:

2:54 – 2:36: Q: Which instruments are playing the melody?
A: Cellos and Basses.

2:36 – 4:20: Q: Which instruments are playing the melody?
A: Violas.

Q: Which instruments are accompanying? (Playing something different that supports the melody.).
A: Bassoons and Strings.

4:20 – 5:04: Q: Which instruments are playing the melody?
A: Violins

Q: Which instruments are accompanying? (Playing something different that supports the melody.)
A: Bassoons and Strings.

Q: What is the difference in the pitch of the melody this time?
A: It's higher

5:04 – end: Q: Which instruments are playing the melody?
A: The Woodwinds and Brass.

Q: How is this section different from the others?
A: It's louder, there are more instruments playing, including the timpani.

If your group has not been introduced to instruments and instrument families, show labeled pictures of the instruments that are playing the melody during each repetition of the theme.

3. If students are able to read the notation, display it and follow through by pointing to each note as it is played, or allow a student to do it. This is particularly easy during the first rendition of the theme as the melody is almost the only thing being heard. This is a good activity, even if the students are not used to reading notation. Pointing to the notes shows visually, not just aurally, how Beethoven wrote such a magnificent melody with only a few notes.



ACTIVITY #4

MELODIC CONTOUR

1. Present the students with the notation for the melody. Listen to the recording again, and tap along with the notes as they are played.
2. Draw the group's attention to how many different notes Beethoven used to write his melody. There are only 5 different notes in the whole theme (Do, Re, Mi, Fa, So) and they are almost always right next to each other on the staff (stepwise movement, very few leaps).
3. Listen again, this time asking the students to show the contour of the melody with their arms. When the melody goes higher, the arms are raised, and as it descends, they are lowered.

Extension: If your class is using recorders, this melody is easy to play. But do remember to observe the tie in measures 12–13!

Extension: This theme is known world-wide. The most moving performance of it that I ever saw was at the opening ceremonies of the Winter Olympic Games in Nagano, Japan, in 1998, conducted by Seiji Ozawa. Two thousand singers were in the performance (I believe they had rehearsed several times before the performance), and many others of the audience joined in. They were also joined by choirs from five continents: Australians (cleverly arranged in five circles on the steps of the Sydney Opera House, wearing the Olympic colours), South Africans at dawn, choirs from Berlin, USA (at the United Nations), and Beijing. There are also dancers.

If you haven't seen it, do watch. It is staggering. Beethoven would have wept for joy, I think.

*It is about 20 minutes long, so if you show it to the students **(after the lessons)** you may wish to skip some of the middle part. But make sure the students see the different singers' locations. Have a world map nearby to show the distances apart, and maybe the time zones. Some of the choirs had to sing in the middle of the night. Explain, also, that a symphony has more than one theme, so there will be music that they haven't learnt.*

Extension: "Beethoven Lives Upstairs" would be a good video to show the class **after** the piece has been studied.