

## BEETHOVEN – SYMPHONY #4

The opening of the symphony presents various problems for the players. The most apparent is for the winds to be able to hold the long note for the 5 measures, which very well may influence the choice of tempo. Beethoven's indication of quarter note = 66 may seem on the fast side, but it enables the players, including the flutist, to hold the long B flat without needing to breathe again. The "traditional" tempo of about quarter note = 48 makes for real difficulty, especially for the flutist. Also note that the score is written "alla breve", which might imply an inner pulse of two beats to the measure. So perhaps a tempo between 60 and 66 would work well. Also it is vital to note that the second horn low B flat is very difficult to produce, and I recommend breathing with the orchestra, especially with the second horn, when you start the piece. I find that when I conduct in this manner, that I don't have to worry about the pizzicato in the strings being together. Other suggestions include little or no vibrato for the flute, G string for the violins, and just a touch of vibrato for the strings. If the flute player has difficulty holding through, a very quick catch breath at the end of bar 4 is possible. In bar 5, I recommend the swell to go to the third beat, and not exaggerated. The strings can help facilitate the swell by adding a touch more vibrato. Also, make sure that the resolution is a full eighth note.

### FIRST MOVEMENT

First violin, bar 6 and also at Letter A: all eighth notes up bow, with a small retake for each note.

Winds, bar 10: winds should match the length of the eighth notes in the strings.

Tutti, bar 13: same as the beginning

Tutti, Letter A: even though the note doesn't change, be sure that the "non-resolution" is a full eighth note

Tutti, bar 29: the conductor needs to decide what kind of *sfz* to ask for, expressive, heavily accented, etc.

Second violins, bar 31: *espressivo*

Tutti, bar 32: I have the orchestra *diminuendo* continue all the way to bar 35.

Violins, bar 35: I have the violins play up bows on each note

Tutti, bar 36: Double dotting the quarter note for everyone and treating the quintuplets as grace notes is a common practice, which also produces a dramatic effect. In bar 37, after conducting the downbeat, I put my hands at my sides, and don't move a muscle.

Of interest - note that the modulation from A major to F major, bar 34 to bar 36, is identical to the modulation in Beethoven 9 on the words "vor Gott!", which occurs in the last movement before the march in 6/8 time.

It's possible to conduct bar 36-38 in a tempo which would allow eighth note = half note, subdividing the last beat of bar 38 to facilitate this metric modulation. Half note = 144 is about what I take

Winds, bar 47: perhaps lead to bar 49 with a slight crescendo

Flute, bar 53: possible to insert high B flat, F, B flat in place of the rests.

Violins, bar 53: low D can be eliminated

Tutti, bar 53: careful that the brass and timpani don't cover the melody. Our modern instruments are surely capable of doing so.

Tutti, bar 57: as before, lead to bar 59 with a crescendo

Tutti, bar 61: tenuto or short quarter notes must be decided

There are several passages in the Beethoven 4 which are rendered more effective through antiphonally seated violins, that is, with the first and seconds seated opposite one another. This 19th century stereophonic effect can be brought out with this seating, which is more than likely the seating that Beethoven used. The passage beginning at bar 65 is one such example.

Bassoons, bar 65: prominent

Tutti, bar 77: perhaps subito p, if the preceding passage is a little too loud.

Tutti, bar 81- 89: invertible counterpoint

Tutti, bar 93: perhaps a crescendo into Letter B

Tutti, Letter B to bar 103: a decision needs to be made as to whether the syncopations are to be accented or smooth and connected

Winds, Letter B - depending on the players and the acoustics, the moving parts, rather than the static C's, should be brought out

Violas and cellos, bar 103: espressivo, diminuendo all the way to bar 107

Strings, bar 107: up bow, poco vibrato

First violins, bar 117: A string

First violins, bar 119: B# in both Barenreiter and Breitkopf

Strings, bar 121: I do an unusual bowing here; for 9 bars, I have the strings play one down bow followed by two up bows to bring out the 3/2 hemiolas. At bar 130, they then play down bow, up bow in each bar. This bowing is probably unnecessary, but I like also for the players to be aware of this pattern.

Violins, bar 135: Here I have the violins play two hooked down bows per bar for 3 bars; continuing the printed markings, the downbeat of Letter C is an up bow, which works well for the subito piano.

Strings, bar 142: I have each of these phrases starting up bow, and very quietly to avoid covering the clarinet and bassoon canon.

Violins, and then violas, bar 149: the conductor needs to choose how he or she would like the phrasing of this passage. In order to connect the dotted half note to the eighth notes, the eighth notes need to begin up bow; if the eighth notes are to begin on a down bow, then a space will result between the dotted half note and the eighth notes. If the up bow is decided upon, then it must be clear that the passage must connect, without spaces.

Violins and violas, bar 158 to bar 159: a substantial difference must be heard between the p and the pp.

Violins, Letter D and bar 181: double down bow works well to delineate the phrase, which starts on the second quarter note

Cello and basses, bar 183: the Breitkopf edition has an F quarter note which is incorrect and should be omitted

I always take the first ending.

Tutti, bars 187-203: maintain ff throughout, no diminuendo

First violins and cellos, bar 203: be sure that the rhythm is very steady

Flute, bar 215: be sure that the flutist plays 16th notes, and not 8th notes

Note that my bar numbers skip over the first ending, The first bar of the second ending is bar 185

First violins and cellos, bar 221: phrase can lead to the 4th bar in this phrase, and the subsequent three phrases.

First violins and cellos, bar 223: the grace note may be played quickly before the beat, or as a quarter note

Flute, clarinet, and bassoon, bar 225: same as the previous comment regarding the grace note

Tutti, bar 257: note the entrance of the trumpets and timpani on the E diminished 7th chord, making this last sequence the most powerful

First violin, bar 280: possible to take just a little time at the end of this bar

First violin, bar 282 and bar 286: diminuendo on the 16th notes make it possible to avoid playing a crescendo on the ascending scale

Timpani, bar 283: note that the B flat is an enharmonic A sharp

First violins, bar 287: page turn in the Breitkopf edition; if this edition is being used, it's best to find a way to facilitate the page turn by pasting what's on the next page to the bottom of the page, or some such accommodation

First violins, bar 290: B sharp or B natural

Strings, flute, bar 297-305: smooth and connected, seamless legato

Tutti, bar 304: possible to take a little time

First violins, bar 314, pickup: A string

Tutti, bar 321: careful not to start crescendo before it's written to do so

Violins and violas, bar 335: this passage is more easily negotiated by leaving out the sixth, or the sixth and seventh 8th notes, and then slurring the 16th notes into the quarter notes on down bows.

Tutti, bar 337 and 338: note that the trumpets have the melody for these two bars

First violins, 360: down bow; then I like all down bows starting with the second half note of bar 365

All comments in the exposition are applicable in the recapitulation

Violins and violas, bar 494: same as bar 335

There are several places in the exposition of the first movement that Beethoven marks as rests to instead add the note C for timpani, matching the passages in the recap where the timpani plays the dominant. These are as follows:

- Bars 137-143
- Bar 164
- Bar 176
- Bars 180 and 184
- Second bar of the first ending

## SECOND MOVEMENT

For the second movement, I do Beethoven's tempo of eighth note = 84. I feel that the long phrase is well served at this tempo, and has a natural sweeping arc. Also, examining the phrase markings in the flute at bar 10, it's possible to play from measure 10 to the third beat of bar 13 in one breath, which would be very difficult to do at, let's say, eighth note = 72. I start the first bar in 6, or subdivided 3, and then conduct in 3 starting in the second bar. The first note in the strings, other than the second violins, sounds well when played as a full eighth note with a touch of vibrato. Second violins can play with expression, and then more rhythmically with short notes in the second bar.

I like to start the first violin melody in the second bar up bow, which in the third bar of the phrase, leads nicely on an up bow to the A appoggiatura in the bar 5. I suggest starting the melody on the D string.

Second violins, violas, cellos, bar 6: tenuto eighth note

Bar 9, tutti: single forte

Bar 12, woodwinds and horns: lead as the first violins did in bar 4 to the appoggiatura in bar 13.

Bar 12, oboes: enter quietly to be sure that the melody instruments are not covered; also at bar 16

Bar 13 and 14, second horn: possible to play the D below the staff, rather than double the first horn

Bar 14, strings: tenuto eighth note, as earlier

Tutti, Letter A – tenuto eighth notes

Bar 18 and bar 20, first violins: I suggest changing to up bow on the 4<sup>th</sup> sixteenth note of the second beat

Bar 18, cellos and basses: perhaps shorter eighth notes here, so that the second violins and violas can play off their pulse

Bar 23, violins: an option here is to play the third beat on a down bow, rather than to slur into the third beat. This bowing might be helpful for the ensemble, precluding the need for another up bow on the second 32<sup>nd</sup> note of the third beat.

Bar 24, first violins and woodwinds: note that the 32nds for these instruments do not include dots – having them play a little longer helps to bring out the moving parts

Bar 25, first violins: if possible, changing to the A string on the third quarter note might make for a better color to the sound for the diminuendo up to the B flat

Letter B, strings: very quiet and connected; the sound of the A diminished 7<sup>th</sup> chord over the B flat pedal needs to be quite mysterious.

Bar 27, clarinet: maybe just a tiny hesitation at the end of this bar

Bar 27 and 28, first violin: slur the entire bar 27 on a down bow, and then start bar 28 up bow, at the tip, on the A string

Bar 30, tutti: I pencil in mf at the end of the measure; also, the conductor needs to decide the length of the notes for the bassoons, to be short like the pizzicato, or somewhat longer

Bar 33, woodwinds: lift between the two eighth notes

Bar 33, tutti: single forte

Bar 34, tutti: this phrase also tells me that quarter = 84 is a good tempo; if slower, the phrase in the bassoons really dies. I like the sound to keep spinning throughout the long note here, as well as in bar 37 for the upper woodwinds

Bar 40, tutti: the first ff in the movement

Letter C, second violins: as at the beginning, expressively, no dots, as in the Barenreiter score. Begin forte, with a very gradual diminuendo, most of it toward the end of the bar

Bar 44, first violins: “brush” stroke, middle of the bow, off the string, but slightly tenuto

Bar 46, second violins, violas, cellos: tenuto eighth note, as previously

Bar 49, tutti: single forte

Bar 50, tutti: fortissimo, abrupt change of character

Bar 53, violins: especially for younger players, be sure that they are playing 32<sup>nd</sup> notes

Bar 53, first violins: I have them play only seven 32<sup>nd</sup> notes on the last beat, so that they can start Letter D up bow, which helps the phrasing in bar 56. I also pencil in an E natural and a G flat at the end of the bar of Letter D as reminders, and a G natural at the end of bar 55.

Bar 54, 55, violins: here is another passage for which antiphonal violin seating is effective

Bar 58, tutti: I pencil in a crescendo in this bar, which increases the intensity to bar 59

Bar 64, first horn: this entrance is notoriously difficult. If the player has a lot of trouble playing the high E flat, the first clarinet can play his note somewhat stronger, which is the same note as the first horn, and the first horn double the lower e flat with the second horn. It's probably best

to let the player go for it in rehearsal, and only deal with the possible alternative if he or she just can't manage it.

Bar 67, oboes: as before, quietly in order to allow the flute to be heard easily

Bar 68: tutti: I pencil in a forte for the woodwinds at the end of the bar, and mf for the strings

Bar 68, second horn: possible to play the D below the staff, rather than double the first horn

Bar 69, oboes and horns: the question is whether we can assume that Beethoven wanted these 16<sup>th</sup> notes played as duples, or as the third 16<sup>th</sup> note of the triplets. I've always done them as duples, but it's not impossible that they were meant to be played as triplets.

Bar 72-93: same comments as in the exposition

Bar 82, first clarinet: as a clarinetist, playing the usual fingering for the high D flat will produce a small pop. I always encourage the player to use the side fingering, which will keep that note in the same harmonic series, and make for a smooth connection

Bar 93, woodwinds, cellos, basses: tenuto eighth note

Bar 95, cellos: pocchissimo allargando at the end of the bar is possible

Bar 98 and 99, second horn, first violins, first clarinet, first flute: I suggest articulated eighth notes, but not short. However, note that starting in the third beat of the flute passage, the notes are marked with dots, suggesting shorter notes. First violins can start up bow at the tip

Bar 101, violins: Young players will invariably miscount here the first time through, playing 32<sup>nd</sup> rather than 64<sup>th</sup> notes.

Bar 100, second horn: possible to play the F second space, rather than double the first horn

Bar 101, tutti: tenuto eighth note

Bar 103, strings: perhaps have the players play the second pizzicato note louder to match the crescendo in the horns and timpani

Bar 104, tutti: tenuto eighth notes

### THIRD MOVEMENT

This movement features unusual accenting and hemiolas. For example, the first two bars are essentially a 3/2 hemiola, and bars 13-16 are two 3/2 hemiolas. Many other examples exist throughout. Also unusual is the reiteration of the trio.

Beginning, second violins, violas, cellos, basses: a pulsation on the half notes here and in analogous places helps the rhythmic momentum.

Bar 5-13, tutti: notice that the melody is continuous, but passes from the clarinet and bassoon to the strings. If the clarinet and bassoon play a slight crescendo, it allows the connection between the instruments to be smoother.

Bar 24, second violins and violas: these passages will need to be rehearsed, especially for younger musicians; they will become more comfortable and confident as they see how their parts fit in

Bar 43, tutti: possible to add a diminuendo to bar 49

Trio, winds: broadening the pickup helps lead to the new tempo

Bar 93, first violins: two up bows on the quarter notes, and scherzando makes for a nice contrast to the lyrical melody

Bar 122, horns: I like the horns to play this phrase expressively, with long quarter notes

Letter B, tutti: the phrase leads to the sf

Letter B, tutti: to me, this phrase is reminiscent of the Pastoral Symphony

Bar 171-175, tutti: possible to continue the diminuendo all the way to the Tempo 1

Bar 353, tutti: notice that the orchestration is different from the first time

Last 4 bars, horns: possible to stretch the tempo slightly

#### FOURTH MOVEMENT

My metronome marking is quarter note = 140-144

Bar 5, tutti: note that the pp needs to be decidedly softer than the opening p

Bar 14, first violins, cellos, basses: my suggestion is that since the phrase starting in bar 12 is expressive, that it's consistent to play the eighth notes in this bar expressively. The same goes for the eighth notes in bar 18 for woodwinds. The eighth notes in bar 20 may be played the same or can be shorter, for a more energetic lead-in to the ff

Bar 31, timpani: check the new edition for 16th notes

Letter A, clarinet: in this register, the clarinet needs to project, and play a particularly short staccato to be heard clearly



Letter A, strings: pp, senza vibrato

Letter A, oboe and flute: I suggest the oboe phrase to be played expressively, and the flute phrase to be played scherzando, clipping the second eighth note in each group of two

Bar 45, strings: similarly, cellos and basses expressively, and violins quietly, pulsating on the syncopations.

Bar 49, strings: the roles here are reversed, with violins expressive, and cellos and basses quiet and pulsating on the syncopations (invertible counterpoint)

Letter B, tutti: subito ff

Bar 65, first violins: down bow on the second beat, up bow at bar 66, and all down bows on the second beats of bars 66-69

Bar 70, first violins: up bow, toward the tip, alternate bows until bar 73 which is played with two up bows to get back to the frog

Bar 74, first violins: double down bow, then all down bows as previously

Bar 100, tutti: I suggest doing the first ending

Breitkopf does not count the bars in the first ending

Bars 104-113, second violins, violas, cellos: the pulsation for these bars is 1-1-1-2, 1-1-1-2, 1-2. These strong beats may be slightly accented.

Bar 122, 126-130, cellos and basses: as previously - expressive, slightly tenuto eighth notes; same for woodwinds and horns in bar 126 and bar 128, and all strings in 130

Tutti, bars 133-136, 139-142, 145-148: can be felt in 1 beat per bar

Bar 149, tutti: pp subito – noticeably quieter

Bar 165, tutti: heavy eighth notes; cellos and basses: accented syncopations

Bars 169-172 and 177-180, violins: start each half note down bow

Bars 169-172 and 177-180, violas and cellos: start all groups of 16<sup>th</sup> notes down bow

Bar 181, violas and cellos and bar 182, first violins: I pencil in f so that the diminuendo is gradual, and doesn't start too softly

Bar 184, bassoon: this passage is very difficult; if the bassoonist can't manage to play evenly, two notes slurred and two notes tongued is fine for me. Note that most bassoonists will need to

play this passage using double tonguing. The same situation exists for the clarinet in bar 297; however, it's rare that a clarinetist can double tongue at all.

Recap, bar 189 to Letter G, tutti: same comments as in exposition

Bar 294, violins: as in bar 181, I pencil in *f* so that the diminuendo is gradual, and doesn't start too softly

Bar 319, tutti: *pp*!

Bar 322, violins and violas: tenuto eighth notes, as previously; same for woodwinds and horns in bar 326

Bar 328, clarinets and bassoons: expressive, ending with a tenuto quarter note; same for flutes, oboes and clarinets in bar 332, but this time *pp*

Bar 335, tutti: I pencil in another *pp* to be sure that this passage starts really quietly

Bar 345, first violins: this phrase can be done in tempo or slower. I do it slightly slower, connecting to the bassoons, who then connect to the second violins and violas.

Bar 350, tutti: my cutoff also serves as a silent downbeat, which then launches the final furious rush to the end

Last bar, violins: note that the second violin suddenly plays the highest part, resolving the previous chord

## BARENREITER EDITION

The Barenreiter publications are recognized worldwide as the most scholarly and trusted editions. Below are listed some departures from the Breitkopf edition.

### FIRST MOVEMENT

Bar 109, oboe: all 4 eighth notes are legato

Violins, bar 119: second quarter note is correct - B sharp

Measure 183, cellos and basses: F natural should be omitted, as noted earlier in this article

First violin, bar 290: here B sharp, not B natural

### SECOND MOVEMENT

Clarinet, bar 28 to 29 and bar 83 to 84: legato

First violins, bar 28 and 83: no dot on the downbeat

Oboe, bar 18 and 73, and first violins, bars 18 and 20, and bars 73 and 75: slur starts after the dotted eighth note, not for the whole bar

Letter C, second violins: as noted earlier, no dots, as in the Barenreiter score

Timpani, bar 71: no crescendo

Flute, bar 99: dots on the third beat only