

# Only When Having Undergone Agony, Can One Experience Joy

## Study on Musical Features and Artistic Quality of Beethoven's "Ninth Symphony"

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**Abstract**—Beethoven had suffered numerous mishaps in his life. In the face of sufferings, he was not scared, and created the world-renowned Ninth Symphony with extraordinary artistic techniques and creative methods. Based on this, this paper exhaustively dwells on Beethoven and the birth of Ninth Symphony, carries out meticulous analysis and research on its musical features and artistic characteristics, and conducts artistic analysis of Ninth Symphony by way of examples, aiming to promote people's understanding of the spiritual connotation of the work.

**Keywords**—Beethoven; the Ninth Symphony; musical features; artistic quality

### I. INTRODUCTION

The Ninth Symphony is a pinnacle of the music world, which is the perfect embodiment of Beethoven's ideological realm and artistic pursuit. This extraordinary revolutionary enthusiasm cannot be achieved and transcended by ordinary music works. In short, this work shows Beethoven's infinite love for music. On the strength of this, the author dwells on the musical characteristics and artistic features of the symphony.

### II. BEETHOVEN AND THE CREATION OF THE NINTH SYMPHONY

Beethoven had suffered innumerable hardships throughout his life. Before the creation of the Ninth Symphony, he was at the bottleneck period of creation. In the

early nineteenth century, the restoration of the feudal dynasty brought Europe into a dark period. Under this circumstance, Beethoven's yearning for freedom was more out of reach. The trough of creation, coupled with the increasingly deteriorating physical conditions, made Beethoven fall into an extreme pain. Later, the extravagant Italian opera was fashionable, and this kind of music over-emphasizing the style made the truly connotative works of art more excluded. In this harsh environment of creation, Beethoven's pursuit of art had gradually become a bubble, and his long-term resentment remained to burst out. In 1819, he finally stood up bravely and advocated freedom, equality, and philanthropy as the basis and idea for expressing music.

Beethoven was deeply influenced by Schiller's works in the process of the creation of the Ninth Symphony, among which the Ode to Joy had considerable impacts on him. When Beethoven was less than twenty years old, he tried to present the idea of this carol in an artistic way, but he did not adopt the content of the carol, but intercepted 36 lines of the 96 lines of the whole poem. The Ninth Symphony perfectly integrates music and language to fully present this great love.

### III. MUSICAL FEATURES OF THE NINTH SYMPHONY

#### A. Band Compilation and Orchestration Features

From the perspective of characteristics of band compilation and orchestration, the symphony has extremely distinctive band, with the mixed chorus as a highlight. The general structure is shown in "Fig. 1".

Music	Music Structure	Length
1、The Escape(逃亡)	<p>A B C A' D A'' Coda</p> <p>1-18, 19-38, 39-58, 59-86, 87-106, 107-119, 120-133</p>	5'30"
2、With the Dead(在死者中间)	<p>A B C D Coda</p> <p>1-22, 23-33, 34-50, 51-65, 66-74</p>	6'40"
3、Report of the Persecutors(迫害者的报告)	<p>A Coda</p> <p>1-32, 33-39</p>	1'50"
4、The Plane Tree Speaks(悬铃树的讲话)	<p>引子 A B C D Coda</p> <p>1-5, 6-43, 44-58, 59-89, 90-121, 122-132</p>	7'40"
5、The Fall(悬铃树被砍倒)	<p>A B C A' B' D E(Coda)</p> <p>1-10, 11-31, 32-65, 66-81, 82-107, 108-124, 125-146</p>	7'30"
6、The Night in the Cathedral(教堂之夜)	<p>A B C D E Coda</p> <p>1-57, 58-116, 117-175, 176-225, 226-338, 339-394,</p>	7'10"
7、The Rescue(获救)	<p>A B</p> <p>1-50, 51-108</p>	7'50"

Fig. 1. The structure chart of Ninth Symphony.

1. Band compilation features:

- a. There are many kinds of deformed instruments;
- b. Adopt large percussion instrument group and 30 kinds (group) of percussion instruments;
- c. Adopt a mixed chorus.

2. Orchestration features:

- A. Adopt mixed tone color as the main form of expression, combined with a large number of conventional performing techniques;
- b. There are many ways of orchestration features, such as color block type orchestration technique, continuous type orchestration technique, etc.
- c. The orchestration has obvious regional characteristics.

B. Structural Analysis

It can be seen from the preceding part of the text that the ninth symphony has a total of seven movements, and each chapter is not arranged according to the same genre logic. On the strength of this, the author selects the first four chapters as the analysis object, and the outline is as follows.

The first movement: a slowly and slightly solemn Allegro, d minor, 2/4 beat, sonata. This chapter adopts the two sounds of A and E as the primers, and adopts the combination methods of the downward five-degrees and four-degrees, but the tunes under this combination are not obvious, thus creating an obscure artistic conception. First of all, tonality is extremely powerful, which reflects the spirit of struggle that is reluctant to give up in adversity. It also sets off by contrast a strong and powerful resistance atmosphere. Secondly, the theme, such as the B-flat major, is like a transformation from hyperactivity to plaint, which lays the foundation for the development of the late steadfast character, fully demonstrating the heroic spirit of the music. Finally, the development of the movement is more tortuous. The "destiny motive" of the first development theme has laid the emotional tone for the later development of the movement. Then the end part is perfected present of "seeking pleasure in agony" in the accompaniment of the stringed instruments' tremolo chromatic scale.

The second movement: extremely vivacious Allegro, d minor, 3/4 beat, complex trilogy. Compared with the first movement, the second movement has clearer theme and is full of upward spirits. The basic theme of the scherzo usually

adopts the tone of the dance music, and the rich dance atmosphere makes the movement livelier. The humorous music itself carries a pastoral flavor, and this kind of country affection combines pleasure and joyful emotional appeal to incisively and vividly express the happiness. At the same time, the activities of the contours and the sound range of the voice make the movement closely follow the theme of Ode to Joy, and to a certain extent, which satirizes the blind pursuit of happiness.

The third movement: cantabile soft board, B-flat major, 4/4 beat, variation style. Compared with the first and second movement, the third movement is slightly more peaceful, and its melody is gentle and soft. The theme adopted in this chapter is fraught with calm observation meditation. This soft lyrical tone is fraught with rationality, and the fast-changing melody and variation have extremely strong appeal, and this music characteristic is also the main style of Beethoven's later creation. In addition, this powerful tonality is very different from the pastoral style.

The fourth movement: presto, D major, 4/4 beat, convolute variation style. The fourth chapter is the essence of the whole work. It mainly consists of two parts: musical instruments and vocal music. The former mainly includes prelude and recitative, and their main function is to evoke memories and lay the groundwork for happy themes. The latter is based on the large-scale vocal chorus.

### C. Technical Analysis

From the composition skills, the Ninth Symphony highlights Beethoven's unique personality. Even some music critics say Beethoven's Ninth Symphony combines all the composing techniques of the 20th century without adopting any new ones. On the strength of this, people deem that the musical style of the Ninth Symphony integrate all advantages in one. Different from the traditional symphony, the Ninth Symphony, in addition to adopting the rules of multi-sound structure, also combines the new-fashioned thinking of the early 20th century to "modify" these traditional technologies to the greatest extent, making this unique way of composing popular with the audiences. Hereinafter, the author analyzes the composition skills from two aspects.

1) *Free atonal pitch structure*: The rhythm of the symphony is ups and downs, and the pitch is based on the characteristic intervals. It is not difficult to find in other symphonies that Beethoven mostly adopts five degrees (pure five degrees, three full tones) and minor second degrees as the constituent elements of the high-pitched structure. This symphony still adopts the previous symphonies' characteristics and what difference between previous symphonies and the ninth symphony is that this high pitch structure is not obvious in the ninth symphony. In other words, pitch structure has a stronger free atonality. "Fig.2" fully demonstrates the free atonality of melody.



Fig. 2. Spectrum 1.

2) *Continuous tonality*: It is not difficult to spot in the whole symphony that the central pitch of many fragments is obvious, whose tonality is not given chord treatment, but the interval continues. This continuous composing technique is also one of the techniques commonly used in symphonies. For example, the bB and bE tones last for 50 beats at the end of the second movement. This composing structure splendidly highlights the central pitch bE, and place this tone in the tonal center.

## IV. THE ARTISTIC FEATURES OF THE NINTH SYMPHONY

### A. *Subverting Tradition and Applying a New Musical Structure*

The Ninth Symphony breaks through the constraints of the traditional symphony pattern, and adjusts the length of the work on the basis of the original basis. As for the band compilation, the symphony adopts the instruments such as Piccolo and Triangle Iron at the end of the symphony. In addition, compared with the traditional repertoire, this song moves the position of adagio movement after the humorous music movement, so the tunes hereafter are ups and downs, perfectly in line with the theme requirements. It is precisely because of the ingenious integration between the symphony and the chorus that the spiritual connotation of pursuing freedom and eager for liberation can be perfectly presented. In short, this subversive traditional musical structure makes the Ninth Symphony more unique.

### B. *It Is Well-conceived in Structure and Even Larger in Scale*

The musical structure serves as an important part of the symphony. In the Ninth Symphony, the first chapter chose by Beethoven as the main theme and then several sub-themes as a foil to it; the first part of scherzo of the third movement is appropriately extended to integrates the whole music into a complete sonata while extending the duration of the performance; the symphony finale movement is usually magnificent, thus allowing a prelude to be added before the chorus. In short, the theme of the music is perfectly presented through this ingenious music concept.

Throughout the overall structure of the Ninth Symphony, it is not difficult to spot that each movement is arranged in a compact manner, and the ring between one movement and another movement is firmly buckled, which is incomparable by the traditional musical structure. It can be seen from the preceding part of the paper that the symphony has four movement structures, among which the first chapter is the theme of principal part, and the other movements are the theme of accessory parts. Based on the emotional keynote of the whole song, each theme must reflect the urgent bass recitative. The first movement needs to be echoed in the last movement, so it is necessary to use the double-twisted melody of the bass violin to service as a foil to the theme of the whole song, and then sublimate the whole song. In short, the fourth movement is the essence of the Ninth Symphony. Its lyrics are full of sincere feelings, and the movements are meticulously structured, which are interlocked with the each other.

## V. FEELING THE TRUE MEANING OF THE NINTH SYMPHONY

### A. *The Tempering of Life*

Beethoven had suffered countless frustrations and tribulations throughout his life, and his life ruthlessly was encroached on by his increasingly deteriorating illness, rough life, and spiritual destruction. For a musician, sensitive hearing is an essential physiological condition, but Beethoven's ear disease continued to worsen and he eventually lost hearing. In the face of such a big blow, Beethoven once thought about retreating, but his pursuit of life finally make him defeat the pain brought by the disease and express his love for life in the Ninth Symphony. The Ninth Symphony is not only the pinnacle of the music hall, but also Beethoven's perception of life. Only by getting rid of sufferings can you get true happiness. This artistic realm may be his satire of death, and may be his best yearning for survival. If confronted with such great pain in our lives, we do not retreat, but transcend them through unremitting efforts, then we will embrace real happiness.

People often will be in chaos when suffering comes, which will lead us to make inaccurate judgments about things. Therefore, we need to overcome our inward fear of suffering and turn the pain we have experienced into the driving force of against suffering, the yearning for happy life and earnest longing for happiness. To a certain extent, this is also an escape from reality. Beethoven begins the route of creation by deeming art as a shelter and music as a compensation for his own long-term sufferings. The Ninth Symphony just about expresses Beethoven's relentless pursuit of ideals, whose unique musical charm demonstrates a stronger appeal.

### B. *Peaceful Symphony*

The symphony is ingeniously designed, whose mighty emotional keynote affirms Beethoven's yearning for a better life, but the ups and downs of the tune also reflect the tenacious revolutionary spirit. When we carefully taste the Ninth Symphony, we can earnestly feel the instinct, pain and pursuit of human beings. In the social context of that time, this work perfectly illustrates how to find the joy of life in pain. Due to in an era of turbulence, it makes Beethoven more eager for peace and freedom. Some people argue that Beethoven's talent is horrifying, but his personality has not been domesticated. Although many people don't like Beethoven's obstinate personality, many people think that this unyielding spiritual quality is worthy of praise. Beethoven yearns for peace and advocates heroes. The whole song expresses his feelings for the revolution and the hero.

### C. *The Inspiration of Philanthropy*

Music is a kind of art, and at the same time, an expression of emotion. People can express their emotions through music. Just like the creation of culture, people's pursuit of their own value must be higher than the pursuit of survival value. Life is certainly valuable, but the ideal surpassing real life is more valuable. Ode to Joy vividly expresses the life value of pursuing ideal, and helps countless

people to break through the mishaps, walk out of pain and rush to joy.

Beethoven's life is fraught with hardships. In the face of hardships, he never gave up, and created a world-famous musical masterpiece in such a difficult environment to show the world his longing for philanthropy. The Ninth Symphony stems from Beethoven's feelings to Schiller's Ode to Joy in the painful abyss. Ode to Joy resonates with Beethoven in emotions, and then he expressed his feelings in heart via music. This is where Schiller is similar with Beethoven. The same sentimental voice shows the ultimate concerns for human beings.

People's normal life is inseparable from abundant material foundation, but people's pursuit of spiritual quality is also inseparable from artistic masterpieces. The Ninth Symphony is an incomparable masterpiece that enriches people's spiritual qualities. In this Beethoven's work, we can appreciate his eternal pursuit of philanthropy and his rationality filled with emotionality. He faces sufferings rationally and treats life emotionally, and keeps the revelation of philanthropy in his heart for a long time. The touches brought us by this masterpiece not only from the pursuit of eternity, but also from the ultimate concern for people. In short, under the guidance of Beethoven's music, we should learn to treat the world from the perspective of the combination of rationality and emotionality, and truly realize freedom and liberation of human beings.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The appeal of music is strong. Looking back on the past and looking forward to the future, we shall display the value of life. With the rapid development of society, people are more and more likely to lose their true nature, so we should learn to enjoy the emotional sublimation brought by art. There are thousands of reasons in the world that can touch us, but there are very few things that really touch us, and we are gradually getting further away from our hearts. Beethoven created world-famous work with his extraordinary talent--the Ninth Symphony, which attracts countless music lovers with its distinctive musical temperament. In short, we should learn to face up to sufferings, not forget the original heart, and carry forward the power of life from this symphonic work. Beethoven uses his life as the creative materials and the powerful and forceful phonetic symbols in his symphony cause ripples in our hearts, and constantly urges us to pursue peace and philanthropy, as well as enjoying the joy after suffering.

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