

Beethoven's musical form



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Among the musical form these three forms are evident in the works of Ludwig Beethoven. The prelude, overture and sinfonie are among the musical forms which can be seen in the composition of Beethoven. These three forms evolved since the 17th century until now. To identify the similarity of prelude, overture and sinfonie it is best to describe each form.

A prelude is a piece of music which is short; it has no particular introduction to succeeding movements of a work that are usually longer and more complex. It features single rhythmic and melodic motif that is used in every measure throughout the piece. Stylistically, the prelude is improvisatory in nature. The prelude can also refer to an overture, particularly to those seen in an opera or an oratorio. Prelude can be referring to as a preface. It can stand on its own or introduce another work.

Overture in music is the instrumental introduction to a dramatic, choral (1911encyclopedia. org) or, occasionally, instrumental composition. It is used as an opening to a larger dramatic work such as an opera. Overture also referred to collections of movements, known as suites. (wikipedia. com).

A sinfonie is a musical composition, the extended and used for orchestra. It does not imply a specific form. There are sinfonies that are tonal works in four movements with the first in sonata form, and it is often described by music theorists as the structure of a classical (reference. com) sinfonie.

Evolution of Prelude

The very first preludes were lute compositions of the Renaissance era. They were free improvisations and served as brief introductions to larger pieces of

music or particular larger and more complex movements; lutenists also used them to test the instrument or the acoustics of the room before performing. In the 17th century in France the keyboard preludes started. During this century the duration of each note is left to the performer. The first composer who embrace the genre is Louis Couperin, and harpsichord preludes were used until the first half of the 18th century by numerous composers including Jean-Henri d'Anglebert (1629-1691), Élisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre (1665-1729), François Couperin (1668-1733) and Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764), whose very first printed piece (1706) was in this form. The last unmeasured preludes for harpsichord date from the 1710s. Prelude in the 17th century in Germany led to a sectional form similar to keyboard toccatas Johann Jakob Froberger or Girolamo Frescobaldi. Outside Germany, Abraham van den Kerckhoven (c. 1618-c. 1701), one of the most important Dutch composers of the period, used this model for some of his preludes. Southern and central German composers did not follow the sectional model and their preludes remained improvisational in character with little or no strict counterpoint. In the second half of 17th century prelude are being paired with figures in the same key. Preludes were also used by some 20th century composers when writing Baroque-inspired “suites”. Such works include Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin* (1914/17) and Schoenberg's *Suite for piano*, Op. 25 (1921/23), both of which begin with an introductory prelude. Ludwig van Beethoven wrote two preludes, Op. 39; each one cycles through all of the major keys of the piano.

Evolution of Overture

Overture was formulated during the 17th century. As a musical form overture begins with the works of J-B Lully (1911encyclopedia. org). He devised the scheme that constitutes the typical French overture up to the time (1911encyclopedia. org) of Johann Sebastian Bach and George Friderich Handel. This French overture consists of a slow introduction in a marked “dotted rhythm” (1911encyclopedia. org), followed by a lively movement in fugato style. The slow introduction was always repeated, and sometimes the quick movement concluded by returning to the slow tempo, (1911encyclopedia. org) usually with new motivic material but occasionally recapitulating the opening, and this combined fast-slow material was sometimes also repeated. The operatic French overture was frequently followed by a series of dance tunes before the curtain rose. It thus became used as the prelude to a suite. (1911encyclopedia. org) Bach was able to use the French overture form for choruses, and even for the treatment of chorales. Thus the overture, properly so called, of his fourth orchestral suite became the first chorus of the church cantata. (1911encyclopedia. org).

Evolution of Sinfonie

In German, *Symphonie* was a generic term for spinets and virginals from the late 16th century to the 18th century (Marcuse 1975, 501). In the sense of “sounding together” the word also appears in the titles of some works by 16th- and 17th-century composers including Giovanni Gabrieli (the *Sacrae symphoniae*) and Heinrich Schütz (the *Symphoniae sacrae*). (reference. com).

In the 17th century, for most of the Baroque period, the terms *symphony* and *sinfonia* were used for a range of different compositions, including instrumental pieces used in operas, sonatas and concertos—usually part of a larger work. The *opera sinfonia*, or *Italian overture* had, by the 18th century, a standard structure of three contrasting movements: fast; slow; fast and dance-like. It is this form that is often considered as the direct forerunner of the orchestral symphony. The terms “overture”, “symphony” and “sinfonia” were widely regarded as interchangeable for much of the 18th century. In 18th century the sinfonie has three movements, in the tempo quick-slow-quick. Symphonies at this time, whether for concert, opera, or church use, were not considered the major works on a program: often, as with concerti, they were divided up between other works, or drawn from suites or overtures. Vocal music was dominant, and symphonies provided preludes, interludes, and postludes. At the time most symphonies were relatively short, lasting between 10 and 20 minutes. Mozart’s early symphonies are in this layout. The early three-movement form was eventually replaced by a four-movement layout which was dominant in the latter part of the 18th century and most of the 19th century. The composition of early symphonies was centred on Vienna and Mannheim. The most important symphonists of the latter part of the 18th century are Joseph Haydn who wrote at . With the rise of established professional orchestras, the symphony assumed a more prominent place in concert life between approximately 1790 and 1820. Ludwig van Beethoven’s first Academy Concert advertised “Christ on the Mount of Olives” as the featured work, rather than his performances of two of his symphonies and a piano concerto. Beethoven dramatically expanded the symphony. (reference. com). His <https://assignbuster.com/beethovens-musical-form/>

Symphony No. 3 (the *Eroica*), has a scale and emotional range which sets it apart from earlier works. His *Symphony No. 9* takes the unprecedented step of including parts for vocal soloists and choir in the last movement.

Beethoven, together with Franz Schubert, replaced the usual genteel minuet with a livelier scherzo. (reference. com). The twentieth century also saw further diversification in the style and content of works which composers labelled as “ symphonies”. Some composers, including, continued to write in the traditional four-movement form, while other composers took different approaches: Jean Sibelius’ *Symphony No. 7* , his last, is in one movement. (reference. com).

Conclusion

Prelude, overture and sinfonie are musical form that has been connected to each other to form a musical composition. Prelude if seen in an opera or an oratorio can be referred to as overture. Symphonies provided prelude. These three forms of music have been used by several musicians. Composer like Beethoven has used the three forms. Understanding the use of each form will enlighten the mind of those who are confused and not familiar in this form.

References:

See R. Simpson, ed., *The Symphony* (2 vol., 1972); D. F. Tovey, *Essays in Musical Analysis: Symphonies* (1935, repr. 1972); R. Nadeau, *The Symphony* (rev. ed. 1974); H. Chappell, *Sounds Magnificent* (1986). [http://www.reference.com/search? r= 13&q= Symphony](http://www.reference.com/search?r=13&q=Symphony)

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[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prelude_\(music\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prelude_(music))

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