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For my family

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Preface

The *Eroica Symphony* is one of the most discussed works of Beethoven. Its connection with Napoleon Bonaparte, its unprecedented design, and its powerful emotional impact have continually fascinated critics. Its success forever redefined the potential of symphonic expression, and it may be termed without exaggeration one of the most significant works in the entire history of Western music. Almost two centuries of reception have not dulled its effect: even if Beethoven's music has become familiar, his accomplishment still astonishes.

Interpretative approaches to the *Eroica* have ranged from programmatic accounts of Bonaparte to autobiographical accounts of Beethoven to abstract theoretical observations. My study emphasizes history for two reasons. First, Beethoven's proposed dedication to Napoleon has never been satisfactorily explained. Beethoven's political acumen has been consistently neglected or misunderstood; I show that the dedication to Napoleon was neither naïve nor self-serving. Second, the connection with Bonaparte was profoundly formative for both the concept and structure of the symphony. The epic, battle-like opening movement, the borrowings from French revolutionary celebrations in the funeral march, the quotation of a soldier's song in the scherzo, and the allusion to the ballet *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus* [*The Creatures of Prometheus*] in the finale all have special "Napoleonic" significance (though I differ with some critics as to exactly what that significance is). Beethoven became disillusioned with Bonaparte the *man*, but he never lost faith in the ideals the First Consul had inspired.

I offer little by way of specific analytic remarks, though I refer to many works that have treated the *Eroica* analytically in great detail. In my view, no single analytic method does justice to the symphony. However, I do try to make the formal outlines as clear as possible by concentrating on

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structural aspects that are relatively unequivocal. Every critic finds something new and exciting in the form of the *Eroica*; this is not something to lament, but something to celebrate. In those few instances where I deviate from conventional theoretical approaches, I make it apparent when and why.

Penny Souster and Julian Rushton have been outstanding in offering me continual support and encouragement. Without pressuring me, they were able to keep me productively involved in my task, despite several unforeseen setbacks. Their work with the Cambridge Handbook series as a whole has helped to produce models that were inspiring and sometimes intimidating. I hope I can honor both of them with the work I present here.

This study is in large part an outgrowth of my doctoral dissertation, written under the guidance of Jeffrey Kallberg. When reworking the text, and while undertaking further research, I was reminded of how formative his approach to music criticism has been for me. I also owe thanks indirectly to Leonard Meyer and Lawrence Bernstein, the former for his philosophical sweep, and the latter for his scholarly exactitude.

I corresponded with Sieghard Brandenburg, Constantin Floros, Richard Kramer, Lewis Lockwood, Peter Schleuning, and Maynard Solomon while writing this book. We are all devoted to the *Eroica*, though each of us in our own separate ways. We often disagree, as the text will make clear, but I was encouraged by their willingness to accept me into their ranks. I hope this work stimulates further thought on the *Eroica* in the same way that their work has motivated me. The *Eroica* scholar with whom I share the most is Scott Burnham. His friendship and kindness remind me continually of the great benefits Beethoven's music has to offer.

By far the greatest challenges of the Cambridge Handbook series for the author are the demands of clarity and concision. I owe Joseph Helminski a great debt for continually reviewing my text and for offering suggestions to make the presentation more straightforward and at the same time more elegant. His remarks have made me a better writer in ways that go far beyond the specific requirements of this text. My thanks also to Ann Lewis for her careful copy-editing.

Finally, for their continued support and encouragement I want to

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