

L. van Beethoven, *Symphony No. 8, Op. 93*



The Eighth Symphony consists of four movements:

1. *Allegro vivace e con brio*
2. *Allegretto scherzando*
3. *Tempo di Menuetto*
4. *Allegro vivace*

The symphony is scored for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets in B flat, 2 bassoons, 2 horns in F and B flat (bass), 2 trumpets in F, timpani and strings and it is approximately 26 long.

Portrait of Beethoven *circa* 1812.

The Eighth Symphony is generally light-hearted, though not lightweight, and in many places is cheerfully loud, with many accented notes. Various passages in the symphony are heard by some listeners to be musical jokes.

The work was begun in the summer of 1812, immediately after the completion of the Seventh Symphony and took Beethoven only four months to complete. Beethoven considered the Eighth "much better" than the Seventh. As Antony Hopkins has noted, the cheerful mood of the work betrays nothing of the grossly unpleasant events that were taking place in Beethoven's life at the time, which involved his interference in his brother Johann's love life.

The premiere took place on February 27, 1814, at a concert at which the mighty Seventh Symphony (which had been premiered two months earlier) was also played. Beethoven was growing increasingly deaf at the time, but nevertheless led the premiere.