Beethoven

Pathetique Op. 13, 1st Movement in C minor

Tonality/Harmony

- Tonic key of C minor
- Ist subject C minor
- 2nd subject Eb minor and Eb major
- Ist and 2nd subject return in C minor during the recapitulation section
- Some adventurous key changes
- Interrupted cadence in introduction
- Diminished and dominant 7th chords
- Dominant preparation
- Some chromatic shifting (introduction)

Instrumentation

- Solo Piano
- Use of the sustain pedal in introduction
- Uses the full pitch range of the piano
- Often virtuosic
- Exploits the full dynamic range of the piano
- Some crossing of hands (2nd subject)

Romantic Features

- Chromatic Harmony
- Diminished 7th chords
- Extended structure
- Expressive use of dynamics and tempo – often contrasting and changing suddenly
- Adventurous choice of keys

Context

- Piano Sonata
- 1798
- Classical Period
- Contains many Romantic features
- First movement (of 3 in total)
- Pathetique means 'emotional or passionate'

Melody

- Introduction based on a repeating motif
- Ist and 2nd subject
- Ist subject rises in pitch and contains some chords. Balanced phrasing
- 2nd subject uses contrasting articulation and is ornamented (mordent and acciaccatura)
- Often uses sequences
- Contrary motion in 2nd subject

Structure

- Sonata Form
- Intro – exposition – development – recapitulation
- Intro music regularly reappears
- Sub sections include transitions, codetta and coda

Dynamics

- Very expressive
- Wide ranging
- *fp and sfz* fully exploited
- crescendo and diminuendo

Texture

- Melody dominated homophony
- Homophonic at start of introduction
- Ist subject melody is developed over a pedal

Tempo/rhythm

- 4/4 and 2/2 (alla breve)
- Grave and allegro di molto
- Changes between tempos in several places
- Dotted rhythm in introduction
- Some syncopation
- Some very short note durations and complex groupings (sextuplet etc.)