



## Teaching Music with the Humanities with Dr. Junius Johnson

Lecture 5, Demo 1:  
Beethoven Symphony #7,  
2nd Movement

### Outline:

How to proceed with these music demonstrations:

- First, listen to each piece of music in its entirety (link provided).
- Then follow along with the video to hear embedded sections.
- Finish by listening to the entire movement again.

Dr. Johnson's listening tips:

- Don't multitask.
- Close your eyes or turn off the lights.
- Give the music your full and undivided attention.

This first demonstration will model how to put a piece of music into conversation with ideas and texts in order to draw students into a discussion.

- This medium is intended to be used by any humanities teacher to further the goals of a classical education.
- The point is not to philosophize about the music but to take the listener through an experience.
- The relevant ability is attentiveness, not musical ability.
  - If you can listen slowly and closely, you can both lead and design musical encounters like this one.

While the movement is played section by section, take note of the theme and its variations:

- The first theme is introduced by strings and is later repeated by woodwinds.
  - Over the course of the movement, it will repeat, evolve, and be transformed in various ways.
  - The theme will begin and finish with (i.e. depart from and return to) the exact same chord.
- Explore possible interpretations of the first musical theme using literary passages that bring its thematic elements into focus, such as:
  - Return (T.S. Eliot's "Little Gidding")
  - Foreboding (Charles Dickens' *Nicholas Nickleby*)



- The second musical theme is played by woodwinds and possible thematic interpretations include:
  - Longing (Herman Hesse's *Wandering*)
  - Hope (Alfred Lord Tennyson's "The Foresters")
  - Possibility (Emily Dickinson's "I dwell in Possibility")
- During the final listening, observe the two thematic strands in play and consider the music in light of the intellectual themes suggested by the literary texts.
- You are not trying to reach any specific conclusion when listening to a non-vocal performance.
  - Instead, your sense of wonder, longing, and curiosity should be awakened.
  - The literary texts do not awaken these experiences; rather, they give them directionality.

This exercise takes you on a journey, such that when the final chord is played, you are a different person from when you heard it introduced as the opening chord.

- The power of music to elicit a transformation in such a short time can be harnessed by the humanities teacher.
- At the very least, a teacher can use this method to help lead students thoughtfully along the path to erudition.