

# Ludwig van beethoven greatest composer

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Ludwig van Beethoven was one of the greatest composers of all time. The four symphonies, namely the Eroica (third symphony), the fifth, the Pastorale (sixth symphony), and the ninth symphony; an opera entitled Fidelio, and the Missa solemnis, his religious musical composition are some of his most celebrated masterpieces (Burnham 29; Pestelli and Cross 217; Lane). He was also recognized as a gifted concert pianist. He has had a huge influence on the history of music.

He earned for composers their new found freedom of self expression. The composers who came before him wrote music for purposes of religious services, teaching, and entertainment (Burnham 29; Cooper 1; Pestelli and Cross 217; Lane). When he came into the scene, his patrons heard his composition for its own sake. Hence, he made music become more independent of religious, teaching, and social functions. Ludwig van Beethoven composed some of the greatest music the world has ever heard.

#### The life of a musical genius

Born in the city of Bonn in Germany on the 16th day of December in the year 1770, Beethoven displayed musical talent while he was still young, and was taught to play the piano and violin by his father, who was a singer (Cooper 1; Pestelli and Cross 217; Lane). In 1787, Beethoven's gentle and loving mother died. After that, his father was often drunk and had a bad temper. He sought relief from his troubled domestic life and found it when he tutored the Von Bruening children. The Von Bruening matriarch was a fine and cultured lady who introduced him to influential people of Bonn.

In the year 1787, he also went to the state of Vienna in Austria, and well-known composer Wolfgang Mozart heard him play the piano. Upon hearing

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him play, Mozart remarked that Beethoven will offer the world a kind of music worth listening to. About this time, Beethoven became acquainted to Count Ferdinand Waldstein who later became his friend. Waldstein also supported his musical career (Burnham 29; Cooper 41; Pestelli and Cross 231; Lane). In 1792, Beethoven earned the praise of another famous composer in the person of Joseph Haydn for one of his compositions (Burnham 142; Cooper 41; Pestelli and Cross 23; Lane).

Haydn even persuaded him to visit the state of Vienna. Later that year, the ruler of Cologne sent him to the state of Vienna (Burnham 142; Cooper 41; Pestelli and Cross 231; Lane). There, he was received into the homes of many of the state's aristocrats. Apart from his short trips, Vienna was home for him for the rest of his life. A lot of great composers then including Mozart and Haydn were regarded as employees by those who paid money for their music (Burnham 29; Cooper 200; Pestelli and Cross 217; Lane). On the other hand, Beethoven's his music equated royalty and wealth.

He was paid by his patrons. His listeners compensated him as a friend rather than as someone hired to write music (Burnham 142; Cooper 41; Pestelli and Cross 231; Lane). It was in 1790's when he started to grow deaf (Burnham 142; Cooper 319; Pestelli and Cross 240; Lane). Around the 1800's, this growing deafness changed his behavior. He had constantly been conceited, independent, and rather weird. But as he grew deaf, he turned out to be more distrustful and short-tempered. He completely lost his hearing during the last years prior to his death.

Nonetheless, as many people believe, even as he lost his hearing, it did not get in the way his composing. But then, his deafness lessened his typical

social life, which made him suffer deeply (Burnham 142; Cooper 319; Pestelli and Cross 240; Lane). His life dealt with added sourness brought about by his miserable relationship with his siblings Johann and Karl, who also lived in Vienna (Burnham 142; Cooper 1; Pestelli and Cross 218; Lane). The two quarreled with Beethoven almost constantly. Some scholars writing about his life charge his two siblings for the trouble although Beethoven himself was very hard to deal with.

In 1815, his brother Karl left a nine year old son when he died. Karl's son became Beethoven's ward, but theirs was a relationship that has gone sour too. Beethoven did not have the disposition to father a young man. His nephew rebelled against him which contributed further to his misery (Burnham 142; Cooper 1; Pestelli and Cross 218; Lane). It was in the year 1826 when he suffered from severe cold which progressed into pneumonia and eventually into dropsy (Burnham 142; Pestelli and Cross 244; Lane). He died on March 26, 1827 (Burnham 142; Cooper 319; Pestelli and Cross 217; Lane).

The music of a genius He was led by a basic optimism as well as a confidence in moral values in his lifetime. These at all times directed his musical compositions, even though unhappy moods and a bleak struggle commonly precede the happiness usually found at the end of his works (Burnham 29; Cooper 200; Pestelli and Cross 218; Lane). His sketchbooks revealed that he crafted his compositions with great precision, carefully reworking his themes and altering the form in which they played (Burnham 29; Cooper 319; Pestelli and Cross 218; Lane).

This process continued for several years before he was contented with the details as well as of the general structure of his ideas. Such careful craftsmanship seems most outstanding in the initial movement of the fifth symphony (Burnham 29; Cooper 78; Pestelli and Cross 218; Lane). Every note seems so perfect that it could not be written in any other way. Such musical compositions display his trust in the serious nature of his work as well as the immortality of his masterpieces – a novel idea then.

The first period of his career as a composer began in the later part of the 1780's and continued until around the 1800 (Burnham 29; Cooper 78; Pestelli and Cross 231; Lane). At this point in his career, his music also display some dependencies on the composers who came before him, particularly Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Franz Joseph Haydn, Christian Gottlob Neefe, and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (Burnham 29; Cooper 78; Pestelli and Cross 231; Lane). Still, his music display distinctiveness in the careful way they were composed and their powerful melodies.

Beethoven's piano sonatas are patterned after the works of the Italian composer Muzio Clementi (Burnham 142; Cooper 200; Pestelli and Cross 217; Lane). The second period of his career as a composer began in the 1800 and continued until the 1815 (Burnham 29; Lane). It was when he was most productive. During this period, he composed the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and eight symphonies, a violin concerto, his two final piano concertos as well as several other chamber music. He also composed fourteen piano sonatas, together with the Appassionata, Waldstein, and Moonlight sonatas (Burnham 29).

His music has been common on most concert programs nowadays, although early in his own musical career, his compositions stirred a great deal of controversies. He significantly stretched and altered conventional music forms like the symphony. The power and might of these musical compositions puzzled some critics, who found many of his works difficult to understand. He revealed the model of great courage that he believed Napoleon embodied in his composition entitled Eroica (Burnham 29; Pestelli and Cross 217; Lane). Initially, his listeners could not identify with his work.

Then again, he lived long enough to witness the significant recognition of the power and goodness of his music. Fidelio was inspired by a tale of a wife's dedication and bravery in saving her husband from unfair sentence (Lane). Here, Beethoven glorified the principles of freedom, valor, and dignity of a person prevailing over tyranny – ideals depicting the French revolution. It presented him more trouble as compared to any of his other musical compositions. It has undergone two revisions and four overtures or openings before the composer was finally pleased with the result.

He felt limited by the demands of writing music for the stage. He must have thought writing music for the stage did not suit his talent. Fidelio shows striking force, however, it was a special kind of opera, in which mood and meaning are articulated more through music rather than by means of action (Lane). The third period of his career as a composer consists of several key musical compositions. The Missa solemnis is one of his most touching religious works. His ninth symphony praises the model of human brotherhood which flourished during the later part of the 1700's (Burnham 29).

In Beethoven's final string quartets and piano sonatas, he fashioned a novel and individual world of expression. Such compositions bring a feeling of immense power as well as of puzzling complexity (Burnham 29). Still he gave his music a lyrical quality uttered with poignant simplicity. His compositions during the second period had great impact on the romantic composers from the early part of the 1800's (Burnham 29). However, his compositions during the third period were not completely understood until later, in part since they were very difficult to execute.

In the sonatas and quartets he composed, he made an effort to incorporate complex musical structures and fugues, which are short themes copied or reiterated by different instruments in accordance to strict melodic rules (Burnham 29). Such compositions required completely new qualities of sound from the piano as well as from the string quartet. His works from this period had a significant impact on the composers from the 1900's particularly Bela Bartok and Arnold Schnoberg (Cooper 319; Pestelli and Cross 244).

Ludwig van Beethoven is part of both the classical as well as to the romantic periods of music history (Burnham 142). As seen in his clever motifs or brief themes, Beethoven was a master of the classical music techniques. He searched the new and other mysterious qualities of tone that fascinated the romantic musicians. His composition evokes meanings without providing specification. Due to his unvarying feeling of mysterious significance, he was honored as one of the initiators of musical romanticism during the 1800's (Burnham 142; Cooper; Pestelli and Cross 240).

It turned out to be fashionable to create or find tales which would describe this fashion by appending descriptive titles like " Pastoral" to some of his

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compositions (Burnham 142; Pestelli and Cross 240). The ninth symphony for instance seems to support the idea that his instrumental music was striving for some significant meaning, given that its final movement brings into play the words from an ode written by German author Friedrich Schiller (Burnham 142; Pestelli and Cross 240).

For the romantic composers from the early 1800's together with Robert Schumann, this evocative yet indistinct property was the most striking element of the instrumental music of Beethoven (Burnham 142; Pestelli and Cross 240). But Richard Wagner and the other more realistic musician from the later part of that era consider such indistinct style to be a flaw (Burnham; Cooper; Pestelli and Cross; Lane). It caused them to veer away from symphonies, quartets, and sonatas and thus turned into the direction of program or descriptive music and the opera.

In the classical as well as in the romantic eras of music, though, it is recognized that Beethoven fittingly emerged as the composer who had initially exploited instrumental music's the full potential. Beethoven had sustained great, individual masterpieces from the start until the end with a strong and highly diverse flow of emotions. However, the harmony of each piece of music did not depend on this emotional development nor did it rely on certain external course of action. The harmony permanently lies on the structure and interrelationship of the composition itself. Such was the classical and key element of his achievement.

In the veins of Mozart and Haydn, Ludwig van Beethoven articulated emotion devoid of the surrendering proper balance. Nonetheless, the balance was more complicated and was achieved with great effort, since the emotion was



deeper and stronger. Works Cited Burnham, Scott G. Beethoven Hero. New Jersey: Princeton University, 1995. Cooper, Barry. Beethoven. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. Lane, William. “ Beethoven: The Immortal. ” 16 January 2006. Ludwig van Beethoven. 31 July 2008 . Pestelli, Giorgio and Eric Cross. The Age of Mozart and Beethoven. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984.