

篇名:

The Musical Legend - Ludwig Van Beethoven

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I. Introduction

Like few other musicians in the Western canon, Ludwig van Beethoven (1770~1827) dedicated his art to the problems of human freedom, justice, progress, and community. Beethoven found his voice in Bonn with a cantata memorializing the enlightened reforms of Joseph II, and he crowned his public career in Vienna with the Ninth Symphony's hymn to universal brotherhood. The Third Symphony, probably Beethoven's most influential work, centers around a funeral march evoking patriotic ceremonies from the French Revolution. Clearly, if we want to understand this music we need to learn something about the composer's politics. A full and detailed study of Beethoven can clearly be regarded as a curiosity for interdisciplinary studies which belongs squarely within musical criticism, alongside biography, sketch studies, and formal analysis.

II. Thesis



1. Beethoven's Life and Background

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770~1827), a German composer of classical music, who predominantly lived in Vienna, Austria. He was a major and crucial musical figure in the transitional period between the Classical and Romantic eras Western classical music, and remains one of the most acclaimed and influential composers of all time. Beethoven is widely regarded as one of the greatest of composers. His reputation has inspired many composers, musicians, and audiences who were to come after him. Among his most widely-recognized works are his Fifth Symphony, Ninth Symphony, the piano piece Für Elise, the Pathétique Sonata and the Moonlight Sonata. In 1780, Ludwig was being taught violin and viola by his cousin Franz Rovantini. At the same time, he was attending primary schools, first Neugasse, later Münsterschule, and finally Tirocinium. Beethoven was both overworked and undernourished for a child of his age. In 1781 he left school for good to dedicate himself full-time to music. Later he studied under Zenser, the organist of the Münsterkirche. By 1783 he was sufficiently trained so as to be able to seek paid appointments, and in 1784 he was appointed assistant organist at court. Beethoven moved to Vienna in 1792, where he studied with Joseph Haydn and other teachers. He quickly established a reputation as a piano virtuoso, and more slowly, as a composer. Rather than working for the church or a noble court, like most composers before him had done, he was

a freelancer who supported himself with public performances, sales of his works, and stipends from noblemen who recognized his ability.

Beethoven's personal life was troubled due to his encroaching deafness which led him to contemplate suicide. Beethoven was often irascible and may have suffered from bipolar disorder and irritability brought on by chronic abdominal pain beginning in his twenties that has been attributed to possible lead poisoning. Nevertheless, he had a close and devoted circle of friends all his life, thought to have been attracted by his reputed strength of personality. Toward the end of his life, Beethoven's friends competed in their efforts to help him cope with his incapacities. Sources show Beethoven's disdain for authority and social rank. He stopped performing at the piano if the audience chatted among themselves, or afforded him less than their full attention. At soirées, he refused to perform if suddenly called upon to do so. However, these reactions and events couldn't erase the greatness and importance of Beethoven.



A. Childhood

Ludwig van Beethoven suffered a tragic childhood. Beethoven's first music teacher was his father, who worked as a musician in the Electoral court at Bonn, but was also an alcoholic who beat him and unsuccessfully attempted to exhibit him as a child prodigy, like Mozart. His father Johann would force Ludwig to practice all of the time, and when Beethoven made a mistake, he would slam the piano cover on his knuckles and make him play it over again. Often times, Johann would stay out late drinking with his buddies, and then bring them home at one o'clock in the morning to listen to little Ludwig play. Because Beethoven was so poorly treated by his father, he developed a close relationship with his mother. Beethoven's mother died when he was 17. Therefore, for several years he was responsible for raising his two younger brothers. His father sought another teacher in 1779, an excellent musician named Tobias Pfeiffer. Because Beethoven's father was increasingly becoming worse and worse with his drinking, then he became unemployed. By this time, Beethoven realized that he needed to live by his own and was already composing works and was considered to be a piano virtuoso. Next year, Ludwig was hired as orchestral harpsichordist at the court.



B. Adulthood

In 1792, Haydn visited the Bonn court on his way back from Vienna. It was where (the Bonn Court) that Beethoven met Haydn. Ludwig showed a funeral Cantata (Honoring the recently deceased Emperor Joseph II) to the composer, and Haydn was extremely impressed and offered to study with Beethoven. Beethoven spent a year studying with Haydn in Vienna, and then lost interest in his teachings. Beethoven then dedicated various works to Haydn. After studying with Haydn, he studied with Johann Schenk in the field of composition and counterpoint. Soon thereafter, Beethoven studied with Antonio Salieri.

Beethoven really didn't have a steady job. He made most of his money by playing the piano in Salons at gatherings and giving piano lessons to wealthy students. Basically, Beethoven was one of the first "accepted" freelance composers in Vienna. Beethoven quickly gained popularity in the Vienna court and in the town. He often challenged people to test their musical ability. He was also the best sight-reader since Mozart. One day, Beethoven challenged a singer, stating that he could throw the singer off by varying his themes by playing them on the organ. He was quite successful and had won the challenge.



C. Death

Otosclerosis is a progressive disease that is said to diminish one's physical health as well as mental health. In September of 1826, Beethoven's abdomen started to swell with fluid and his feet swelled as well. Diarrhea and vomiting were an everyday occurrence. In March of 1827, Beethoven's illness finally caught up with him. On March 24, 1827 Beethoven fell unconscious and died. Because Beethoven was so popular in Vienna, it is said that 1 of every 10 people who lived in Vienna attended Beethoven's funeral.

To many, Beethoven represents the highest level of musical genius keeping in mind composers such as: Bach, Mozart, Handel, and Haydn. Beethoven's life was very productive, given that he had no formal education past the 5th grade, and of all of his hardships in which he had to deal with. His catalog includes: 9 symphonies

Wellington's Victory ,2 independent orchestral concert overtures, Incidental music for 6 drams , 2 ballets , 1 Opera , 2 Masses , Fantasias and Oratorios ,9 piano trios ,32 large piano sonatas ,16 string quartets ,Many arias and songs. There are also 200 arrangements of folk songs with piano and trio accompaniment and much more.

2. Musical Style and Innovations

Beethoven is viewed as the transitional figure between the Classical and Romantic eras of musical history. As far as musical form is concerned, he built on the principles of sonata form and motivic development that he had inherited from Haydn and Mozart, but greatly extended them, writing longer and more ambitious movements. The work of Beethoven's middle period is celebrated for its frequent heroic expression, and the works of his late period for their intellectual depth. Beethoven set the trend for the entire Romantic period. Composers after Beethoven could not get around Beethoven and the standards he set for music of the future. Beethoven even stated that the music that he composed throughout his life was for the future. Beethoven also expanded the orchestra. He was one of the first to attach movements together, and one of the first to include a choir in a symphony. Although he was not the first to include a choir in a symphony, but he was the first man to do it right. Beethoven also expanded the musical length of the symphony. He expanded the development of the symphony, and added new material in the coda. Indeed, Beethoven is a perfect example of how someone can be a romantic composer composing music because of the impeccable urge to.

A. Early Period

Beethoven's career as a composer is usually divided into early, middle, and late periods. In the Early period, he is seen as emulating his great predecessors Haydn and Mozart. At the same time, he explored new directions and gradually expanding the scope and ambition of his work. Some important pieces from the early period are the first and second symphonies, the first six string quartets, the first two piano concertos, and the first twenty piano sonatas, including the famous Pathétique and Moonlight.

B. Middle Period

The Middle period began shortly after Beethoven's personal crisis centering around deafness. The period is noted for large-scale works expressing heroism and struggle. These works include many of the most famous works of classical music. The middle period works include six symphonies (Nos. 3 – 8), the last three piano concertos and his only

violin concerto, five string quartets (Nos. 7 – 11), the next six piano sonatas including the Waldstein, Appassionata, and Beethoven's only opera, Fidelio.

C. Late Period

Beethoven's late period began around 1816 and lasted until Beethoven ceased to compose in 1826. The late works are greatly admired for and characterized by intellectual depth, intense, highly personal expression, and his experimentation with forms. The period includes the Missa Solemnis, the last six string quartets and the last six piano sonatas.

Considering the depth and extent of Beethoven's artistic explorations, as well as the composer's success in making himself comprehensible to the widest possible audience, we could pronounce Beethoven as humanity's greatest mind altogether.

Beethoven's personal life was troubled. Around the age of 28, he started to become deaf, a calamity which led him for some time to contemplate suicide. He was attracted to unattainable (married or aristocratic) women, whom he idealized; he never married. A period of low productivity from about 1812 to 1816 is thought by some scholars to have been the result of depression, resulting from Beethoven's realization that he would never marry. He also frequently behaved badly to other people. He moved often from dwelling to dwelling and had strange personal habits such as wearing filthy clothing while washing compulsively. He often had financial troubles.

It is common for listeners to perceive an echo of Beethoven's life in his music, which often depicts struggle followed by triumph. This description is often applied to Beethoven's creation of masterpieces in the face of his severe personal difficulties. Beethoven was often in poor health, especially after his mid-20s, when he began to suffer from serious stomach pains. In 1826 his health took a drastic turn for the worse. His death in the following year was attributed to liver disease.

3. Beethoven's Personal Beliefs and His Musical Influence

Beethoven was much taken by the ideals of the Enlightenment and by the growing Romanticism in Europe. He initially dedicated his third symphony, the Eroica (Italian for "heroic") to Napoleon in the belief that the general would sustain the democratic and republican ideals of the French Revolution. But in 1804 tore out the title page upon which he had written a dedication to Napoleon, as Napoleon's imperial ambitions became clear, renamed the symphony as the "Sinfonia Eroica, composta per festeggiare il Sovvenire di un grand Uomo", or in English, "composed to celebrate the memory of a great man". The fourth movement of his Ninth Symphony features an elaborate choral setting of Schiller's

ode An die Freude ("To Joy"), an optimistic hymn championing the brotherhood of humanity. Scholars disagree on Beethoven's religious beliefs and the role they played in his work.

III. Conclusion

Beethoven has achieved iconic status as a composer. In the musical community, this position has been achieved due to the immense, even revolutionary, influence he has had on the development of music as the pivot point from the Classical to the Romantic eras. His symphonies in particular demonstrate this development, especially the themes from the 5th and the 9. His image is also well-known among non-musicians, with his features of intense concentration and unruly hair. Beethoven's deafness has served to underline this position as icon, both because it makes his achievements seem more remarkable, but also because it emphasizes the popular picture of a composer whose inspiration comes from within. Those inner thoughts and sounds are elaborated and pieced together into the most intricate musical canvas. Rather in many ways it was his own thoughts, feelings and ideology which he strove to commit to musical form, and it was this which singled Beethoven out as the first of the great Romantic composers. Beethoven's method of working was to record ideas in numerous notebooks, which sometimes he would mull over for years, before eventually developing them into the building blocks of his compositions. This suggest a long gestation period and supreme attention to detail in order to depict in music the strength of his idealism. This creative process and the path he initiated was followed and extended by many other composers of the Romantic era, including composers as diverse as Brahms, Wagner and Mahler. All in all, Beethoven's influence is significant from generations to generations. Try hard to appreciate and enjoy the music of this musical master's works.

IV. Reference

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The Musical Legend -- Ludwig van Beethoven

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