

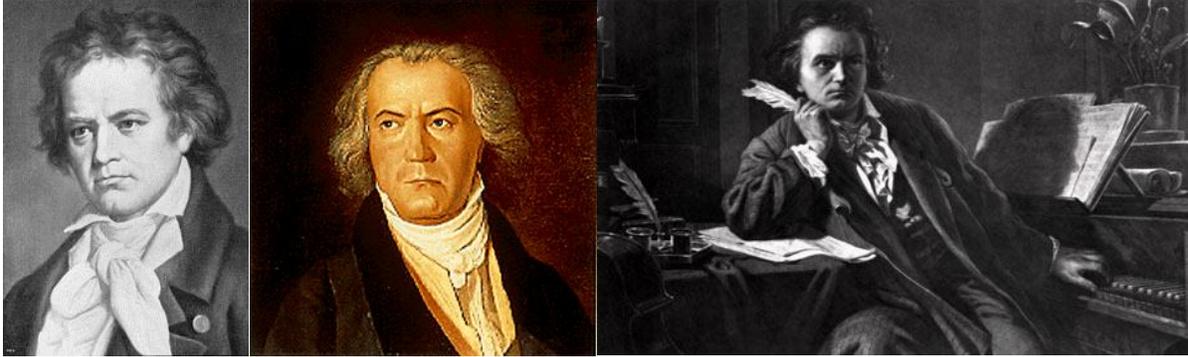
Late Beethoven

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This course will examine the evolution of Beethoven's late works. In addition to the music itself, we will focus on the sociological, political, and philosophical interactions between Beethoven's work and the turbulent events of his era, such as the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. Ultimately, the course aims to foster the acquisition of a deep sense of context for the listener and to provide students with the skills and strategies needed for a deeper understanding of Beethoven's late symphonies and quartets.



Ludwig van Beethoven was born in 1770 in Bonn, Germany. His father was also a musician and had dreams of young Ludwig becoming the next Mozart. Beethoven visited Vienna at age 17 and made it his home five years later. There he studied under Haydn, as well as Schenk, Albrechtsberger and Salieri. A virtuoso pianist, Beethoven quickly gained the patronage of Vienna's aristocracy and thereafter became what might be called the first great freelance composer. Around 1802 Beethoven realized that he was losing his hearing but kept working and attempted to keep his disability a secret. By 1812 he had fallen into a deep depression over his hearing loss, other medical problems and romantic disappointments. But the artist in him soldiered on, producing some of the finest masterpieces in all of classical composition in his late period. Beethoven died in Vienna in 1827 with over 10,000 people attending his funeral.

Recommended Readings

Claudio Arrau, *Arrau on Music and Performance*

Alfred Brendel, *Brendel on Music*

Barry Cooper, *Beethoven*

Elliot Forbes, *Thayer's Life of Beethoven*

Glenn Gould, *The Glenn Gould Reader*

David Wyn Jones, *The Life of Beethoven*

Joseph Kerman, *Concerto Conversations; Beethoven Quartets*

William Kinderman, *Beethoven*

Lewis Lockwood, *Beethoven*

Charles Rosen, *Beethoven Piano Sonatas: A Short Companion*

Maynard Solomon, *Beethoven; Late Beethoven: Music, Thought, Imagination*

Beethoven's Three Periods

Beethoven's compositional career is usually divided into Early, Middle, and Late periods. In this scheme, his early period is taken to last until about 1802, the middle period from about 1803 to about 1814, and the late period from about 1815.

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In his Early period, Beethoven's work was strongly influenced by his predecessors Haydn and Mozart. He also explored new directions and gradually expanded the scope and ambition of his work. Some important pieces from the Early period are the first and second symphonies, the set of six string quartets Opus 18, the first two piano concertos, and the first dozen or so piano sonatas, including the famous *Pathétique* sonata, Op. 13.

His Middle (Heroic) period began shortly after Beethoven's personal crisis brought on by his recognition of encroaching deafness. It includes large-scale works that express heroism and struggle. Middle-period works include six symphonies (Nos. 3–8), the last three piano concertos, the Triple Concerto and violin concerto, five string quartets (Nos. 7–11), several piano sonatas (including the *Moonlight*, *Waldstein* and *Appassionata* sonatas), the *Kreutzer* violin sonata and Beethoven's only opera, *Fidelio*.

Beethoven's Late period began around 1815. Works from this period feature great intellectual depth, formal innovations, and intense, highly personal expression. The String Quartet, Op. 131 has seven linked movements, and the Ninth Symphony adds choral forces to the orchestra in the last movement. Other compositions from this period include the *Missa Solemnis*, the last five string quartets (including the massive *Große Fuge*) and the last five piano sonatas.

Class Schedule

Week 1: Prefigurations

Op. 74, Op. 95, Seventh Symphony, Op. 59 No. 1, Op. 90

Week 2: Recitative

Ninth Symphony, Sonata Op. 101, Sonata Op. 110, Sonata Op. 111, Piano Concerto No. 4, Op. 130-132, Op. 135

Week 3: Variations

Diabelli Variations, Sonata Op. 111, Piano Concerto No. 5th, Ninth Symphony

Week 4: Missa Solemnis

Week 5: Ninth Symphony

Week 6: Baroque and Neoclassical

Eighth Symphony, Op. 127, Op. 135

Cycles: Op. 126, *And die Ferne Geliebten*, Quartet Op. 131

Week 7: Fugue

Op. 110, Op. 106, op. 102, Grosse Fugue, Ninth Symphony, Op. 131

Week 8: Divinity

Op. 132, Ninth Symphony