

# Ludwig van Beethoven



# Early Life

- Birthdate: December 16, 1770
- Birthplace: Bonn, Germany
- Parents: Maria Magdalena and Johann van Beethoven
- Oldest of three children
- Started from modest beginnings



# Developing Talents

- Father taught him to play piano and violin
- Filled in as church organist (12 years old)
- At age 17, travelled to Vienna, Austria to seek out advanced teacher (supposedly Mozart) but forced to return a few months later due to his mother's fatal illness
- Father died 2 years later making him the breadwinner of the family



(Beethoven's father)



# Years in Vienna

- 5 years later he returned to Vienna to study under famous composer, Joseph Haydn
- Became educated in piano, organ, instrumental composition, and vocal composition



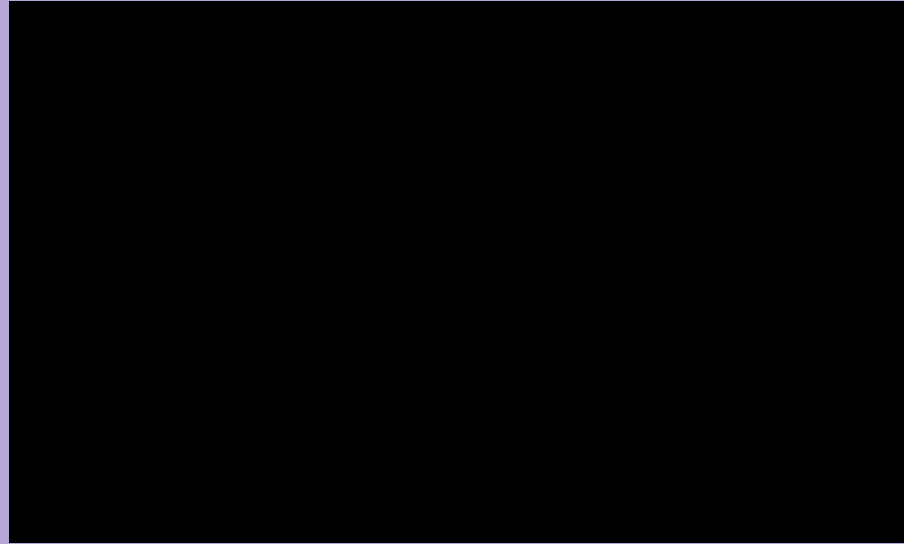
**Joseph Haydn**  
(Beethoven's teacher)

- Developed ties with many of the Viennese aristocracy who became his loyal patrons
- His music was so popular that he was literally paid to compose what he wanted to, whenever he wanted to



# Early Period (1795-1802)

- Beethoven's musical style mainly aligned with the current time period
- **Classical period**: clarity, restraint, balance (Mozart and Haydn)
- Notable pieces: *First Symphony* and *Septet, Opus 20*



***First Symphony***

# Loss of Hearing

- Around the end of the first period (28 years old), Beethoven began to experience first symptoms of hearing loss
- Continued to compose and perform as though everything was normal
- By 1802 (32 years old), it became clear that he was becoming permanently deaf



- This was a devastating blow to Beethoven as he had just lost a crucial tool in his composing process
- Beethoven continued to compose music despite his major disability
- By clenching a long stick with his teeth and holding it against the piano, he could discern faint sounds





# Middle Period (1802-1812)

- Unlike the first period, he spent much more time composing and meditating on the pieces he created in the second period (some took over 4 years)
- Much more emotional, powerful, and energetic (**Romanticism**). The piano sonatas from this period would profoundly impact all Romantic piano sonatas moving forward.



*Beethoven's 3<sup>rd</sup> Symphony*



*Beethoven - Piano Sonata No. 23*  
*"Appassionata"*

# Late Period (1812-1827)

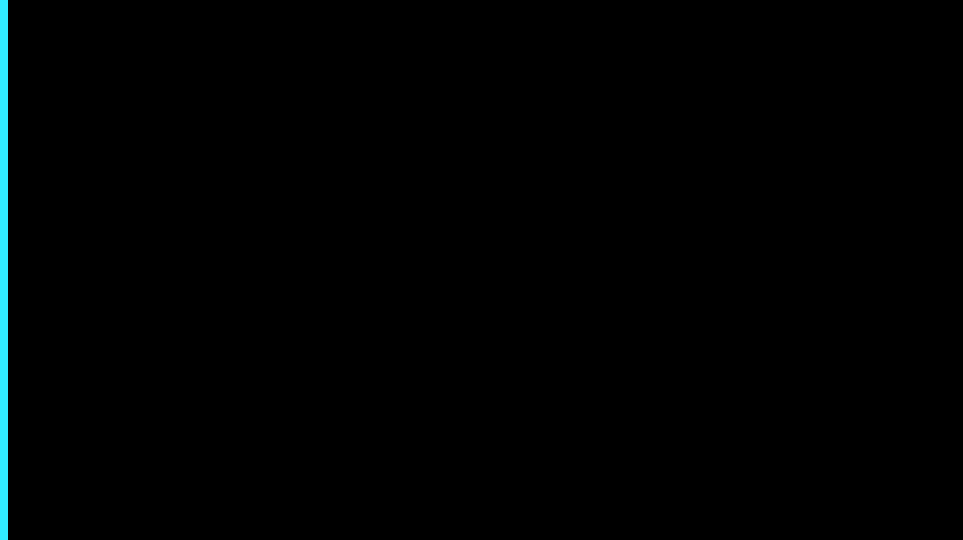
- In this stage of his life, Beethoven became more reclusive
- Wrote less symphonies and sonatas
- This period is often described as private, contemplative, and thoughtful
- Possible reasons for this shift: growing depression over hearing loss, recent rejection from a love interest
- Notable pieces: *Piano Sonata No. 32, Ninth Symphony*



*Piano Sonata 32*

# Why is the 9<sup>th</sup> Symphony So Special?

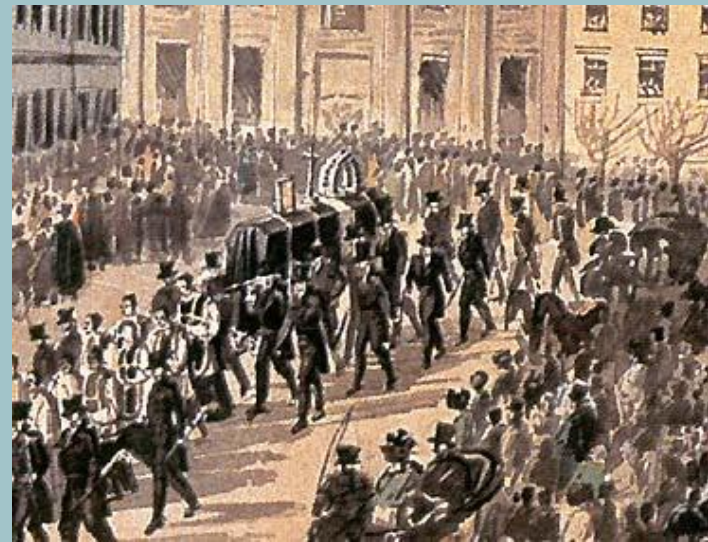
- It was longer and more complex than any **symphony** to date and required a larger **orchestra**. But the most **unique** feature of “The **Ninth**” was that **Beethoven** included chorus and vocal soloists in the final movement. He was the first major composer to do this in a **symphony**.



*Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup> Symphony* (play from 12:39)

# Last Days

- Returned to Vienna to live out his remaining days
- Died of cirrhosis (liver disease)
- Death date: March 26, 1827 (He was only 56)
- 20,000 people attended his funeral three days later



# Significance of Beethoven

- Served as the bridge between the Classical period and Romantic period
- Inspired other famous future composers such as Mahler, Brahms, and Schoenberg
- Raised music from an inferior art form to a highly respected and admired art form
- First to perform public concerts (Kind of)

