

## Montgomery Philharmonic 2014 - 2015 Concert Season – SINGULARITY

### Ludwig van Beethoven – He Changed the World – November, 23 2014

#### About Ludwig van Beethoven –

Ludwig van Beethoven was a German composer and pianist. A crucial figure in the transition between the Classical and Romantic eras in Western art music, Beethoven remains one of the most famous and influential of all composers. He began his professional study as a pianist in 1779 in Bonn with Christian Gottlob Neefe, a court-appointed organist who also taught him composition. Beethoven's first job was working as Neefe's assistant, and during this time, his first works were published—a set of piano variations and three sonatas. Soon afterward, Beethoven moved to Vienna, intending to study with Haydn. It is not clear how long he actually studied with Neefe, but he did study counterpoint with Haydn. At the same time, Beethoven established himself as a piano virtuoso and violinist.

In the early 1800's, Beethoven began to write symphonies, chamber music, and piano sonatas, and he also accepted piano students. The first signs of tinnitus began to appear at this time, and by 1811 he was having great difficulty playing his own work, the *Emperor Concerto*; by 1814 he was completely deaf. Beethoven's deafness has been attributed to lead poisoning. He kept his wine in a ceramic container that had a lead-based glaze, and a recent analysis of a few strands of his hair found that it had abnormally high levels of lead. Beethoven's last period of composition began in 1815. At this point, he became an innovator in various forms of composition and his music had a striking intellectual depth and intensity of expression.

- **Born:** December 16, 1770, in Bonn, Germany
- **Died:** March 26, 1827, in Vienna, Austria
- **Full Name:** Ludwig van Beethoven
- **Compositions:** 9 symphonies, 7 concerti, 1 opera, 1 ballet, numerous works for piano including 32 piano sonatas, 16 string quartets, and dozens of other chamber music works
- **Parents:** Maria Magdalena Keverich, Johann van Beethoven
- **Siblings:** Kaspar Anton Karl van Beethoven, Nikolaus Johann van Beethoven, Ludwig Maria van Beethoven

Overture, The Creatures of Prometheus, opus 43

Mass in C major, Opus 86 (1807)

Choral Fantasy in C minor, Opus 80 (1808)

#### Overture, *The Creatures of Prometheus*, opus 43 (1801)

The first concert of our 2014–15 season begins with works by Ludwig van Beethoven, all of which were written during the same 15-year period of time. This was the most prolific period for Beethoven and marks what is generally known as the beginning of the second creative period during Beethoven's life—his heroic period.

Beethoven wrote one full-length ballet during his lifetime—*The Creatures of Prometheus*. The work was written with Salvatore Vigano, the famous dancer/choreographer, in mind because Vigano had spoken with Emperor Francis during the second of his two residencies in Vienna in 1799. The Emperor had just learned that Beethoven had dedicated the score of his Septet, Opus 20, to his wife, Maria Theresa, so the composer was on the Emperor's mind. Beethoven was approached and Vigano's plan for the ballet was explained, so Beethoven agreed to take on the composition. The legend of *Prometheus* was popular during the early 19th century and Beethoven was especially interested in the fact that Prometheus helped humans understand the arts, so everyone involved with the ballet had high hopes. Although Emperor Francis did not like the ballet, it was very popular in Vienna because both Vigano and Beethoven were held in such high regard.

*Prometheus* gives the listener a peek at what was yet to come in Beethoven's future compositions. The overture starts ominously with large chords that were discordant and very sudden for that time. After the slow introduction, the strings begin the allegro section with soft scale passages leading to a bold allegro section pulsed by the brass and woodwinds. The second section of the allegro begins with soft woodwinds, followed by the strings imitating them; it ends with loud and soft sections using both the winds and strings. Transitional material by the woodwinds follows. The final section begins as the opening allegro with the strings and continues as a repeat of the first and second sections of the allegro. The overture finishes with a bold coda that utilizes all of the forces of the orchestra in scale passages and large tutti chords.

**Instrumentation** – 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets in Bb, 2 bassoons, 2 horns in C, 2 trumpets in C, timpani, , violins 1, violins 2, violas, celli, double basses

#### Artifacts –

[Front Plate of the first edition of the full score](#)

[Complete score of the ballet](#)



1. [The 99 Most Essential Beethoven Masterpieces - Various Artists](#)

2. [Beethoven: Complete Overtures - 12 Minuets - 12 German Dances - 12 Contredances - Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Kurt Masur & Sir Neville Marriner](#)

3. [Beethoven: The Amnesty International Concert - Symphonies Nos. 7 & 9, Overtures, String Quartet & Missa solemnis - Leonard Bernstein, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra & Wiener Philharmoniker](#)

4. [Beethoven: Symphony No. 6, "Pastoral" & Overtures - Berliner Philharmoniker & Herbert von Karajan](#)

5. [The Creatures of Prometheus, Op. 43: Overture - Beethoven's 5th](#)



1. [Beethoven: Creatures of Prometheus](#)

2. [The Creatures Of Prometheus, Op.43 - Overtura. Adagio - Allegro Molto Con Brio](#)

3. [Beethoven: The Creatures Of Prometheus, Op.43 - Overtura. Adagio - Allegro molto con brio](#)

4. [Beethoven: Anguish and Triumph](#)

5. [Conversations with Beethoven \(NYRB Classics\)](#)

6. [Beethoven's Hair: An Extraordinary Historical Odyssey and a Scientific Mystery Solved](#)

#### YouTube Video Links –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJbZCqbBQVM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vcPkUfRAzY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eg5xkKstW3c>