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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)

Choral Fantasy in C minor, Opus 80 (1808)

Beethoven needed a piece to tie together the Akademie in 1808, so he wrote the *Choral Fantasia* starting in mid-December 1808 and finishing the work just hours before the concert. He brought the orchestral parts and choral score to the rehearsal still wet and put together a hurried rehearsal.

The text was written by either the Viennese writer Christoph Kuffner, who fit the text after the music was already composed, or by Georg Friedrich Nottbohm, the writer of the final text of Beethoven's opera *Fidelio*. In any case, the text was written according to the directions of the composer. The semantic scope is especially focused on the post-revolutionary concepts extolling liberty, equality, and brotherhood among mankind—concepts tinged with the mysticism notably conveyed by the Free Masons. It is interesting that this piece pre-dates the 9th Symphony of Beethoven by 19 years, yet, the same concepts in the text are evident and seeds of melodic and harmonic content are planted.

When the piece was actually performed for the first time, Beethoven had forgotten some of the last-minute instructions that he had given in his hurried, last-minute rehearsal, so it was a near disaster and Beethoven had to stop and call out to the musicians. Confused in the moment, one of the violinists asked about the repeats that Beethoven had fixed in the rehearsal and Beethoven replied, "Yes!" and they started again and played through the piece a second time without stopping.

What made this work even more unique was simply the instrumentation that Beethoven chose – solo piano, orchestra, and chorus. Audiences had never heard this combination before and at first they didn't know quite what to make of it.

TEXT

Schmeichelnd hold und lieblich klingen
unsres Lebens Harmonien,
und dem Schönheitssinn entschwingen
Blumen sich, die ewig blühen.
Fried und Freude gleiten freundlich
wie der Wellen Wechselspiel.
Was sich drängte rauh und feindlich,
ordnet sich zu Hochgefühl.

Wenn der Töne Zauber walten
und des Wortes Weihe spricht,
muss sich Herrliches gestalten,
Nacht und Stürme werden Licht.
Äuss're Ruhe, inn're Wonne
herrschen für den Glücklichen.
Doch der Künste Frühlingssonne
lässt aus beiden Licht entstehn.

Großes, das ins Herz gedrungen,
blüht dann neu und schön empor.
Hat ein Geist sich aufgeschwungen,
hallt ihm stets ein Geisterchor.
Nehmt denn hin, ihr schönen Seelen,
froh die Gaben schöner Kunst:
Wenn sich Lieb und Kraft vermählen,
lohnt den Menschen Göttergunst.

With grace, charm and sweet sounds
The harmonies of our life,
And the sense of beauty engenders
The flowers which eternally bloom.
Peace and joy advancing in perfect accord,
Like the alternating play of the waves;
All harsh and hostile elements
Render to a sublime sentiment.

When the magic sounds reign
And the sacred word is spoken,
That strongly engender the wonderful,
The night and the tempest divert light.
Calm without, profound joy within,
Awaiting the great hour.
Meanwhile, the spring sun and art
Bathe in the light.

Something great, into the heart
Blooms anew when in all its beauty,
Which spirit taken flight,
And all a choir of spirits resounds in response.
Accept then, oh you beautiful spirits
Joyously of the gifts of art.
When love and strength are united,
The favour of God rewards Man.

Instrumentation – 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets in C, 2 Bassoons, 2 horns in C, 2 trumpets in C, timpani, violin 1, violin 2, viola, cello, double bass

Artifact –

[First edition title page](#)



1. Brendel - Beethoven - Piano Concerto No. 5 "Emporer" Choral Fantasy Op. 80 - Alfred Brendel, Vienna Pro Music Orchestra, Zubin Mehta, Friedrich Wuhre, Academy Chamber Orchestra, Wiener Philharmoniker & Clemens Krauss

2. Beethoven: Piano Concerto No.3 & Choral Fantasy - Daniel Barenboim, Laszlo Somogyi & Orchester der Wiener Staatsoper

3. Beethoven: Symphony No. 9 Op. 125 "Choral" & Choral Fantasy Conclusion - Zubin Mehta, Dame Margaret Price, Emanuel Ax, Jon Vickers, Marilyn Horne, Matti Salminen, New York Choral Artists & New York Philharmonic



1. Concerto in C Major, Op. 56 (Triple Concerto): and Fantasia in C Minor, Op. 80 (Choral Fantasy) in Full Score (Dover Music Scores)

2. Choral Fantasy, Op. 80: For Chorus, Piano and Orchestra

3. Conversations with Beethoven (NYRB Classics)

4. Beethoven - Triple Concerto ~ Choral Fantasy / Perlman, Yo-Yo Ma, Berliner Phil., Barenboim

5. Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 5, Choral Fantasy, Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage

YouTube Video Links –

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLLNuP4fUUC>

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