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The Shakespeare of Music: Beethoven



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♥Introduction:

- The body feeds on food, the brain feeds on knowledge, and the soul feeds on music. We all listen to music almost every day. Pop music, blues, classic music, etc. It has a great effect on us, our feelings and emotions, even our concentration, and we all wondered about all these people who composed this music? Who created it a long time ago? However, what music is all about transforming feelings to tones, ideas to sounds, to a wave that moves our emotions and engages our brain.

We always hear about the musicians who had a big effect on music long time ago, like Beethoven, Mozart and Bach. Those who gave music its beauty and variety, and affected on the musical ages which were distributed on a long period of time.

But between all of these composers there is a special one, who left his print in the history of music. Beethoven was a great composer and musician who became deaf in his middle age. So, what were the effects of getting deaf on his music? And, did he adapt with being deaf?

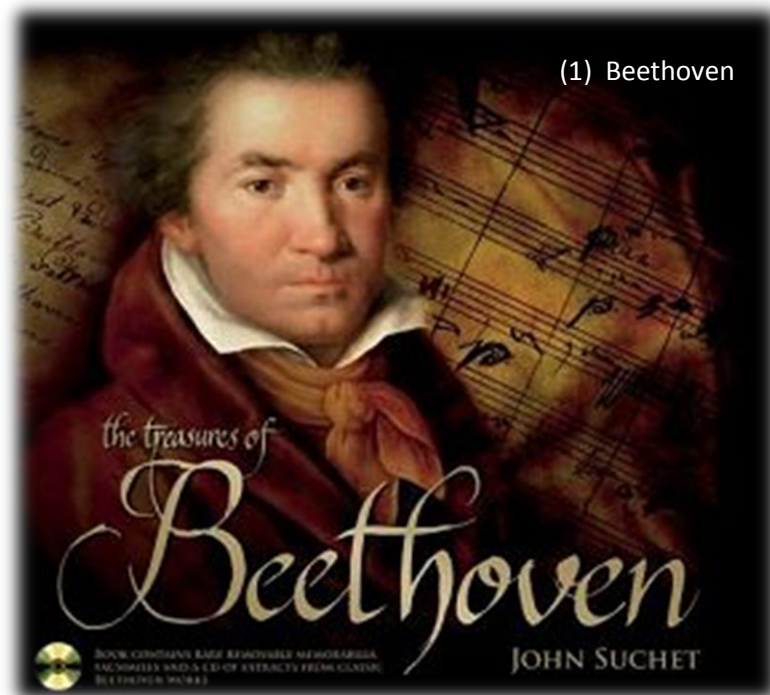
Although he was an important transforming point between classical and romantic eras, what did lead him to play such different type of music? And, what are the differences between classical and romantic music?

But before talking about all of that we'll take a look on Beethoven's childhood, the life he used to live and the most important events that happened with him. Also we are going to talk about the greatest achievements and works that he had done during his musical career as one of the most famous composer till now.

♥Chapter one: the musical spirit of Beethoven's life.

1.1 A bout Ludwig Van Beethoven.

*Known as the Shakespeare of Music ,Ludwig Van Beethoven was one of the greatest composers earth has ever had. He was born on December 16,1770,Bonna,Germany.There are no genuine records regarding his date of birth.Beethoven's father was a bass singer at the court of Elector of Cologne andwas Beethoven's first music teacher. However, Beethoven was later trained by eminent music teachers including Gilles Van den Eeden, the court organist, Franz Rovantini and Tobias Friedrich Pfeiffer. Beethoven was a child prodigy and gave his first public performance at the age of seven,in 1778.(The posters of this performanceclaimed that he was only six years old).



•After 1779, Beethoven started learning composition and started working as an assistant organist with famous German composer, Christian Gottlob Neefe. In 1783, Beethoven published his first three sonatas 'Kurfürst' ('Elector'). In 1787, though he went to Vienna to meet Mozart; it is not yet known whether they actually met or not. However, he returned soon as his mother fell ill. With his mother passing away soon and his father becoming an acute alcoholic, Beethoven was forced to support his younger brothers financially. Spending his next five years in Bonn, he got acquainted with several famous personalities like Count Ferdinand Von Waldstein, Anton Reicha.*¹



(2) young Beethoven

1.2Returning to Vienna:

*In 1792, Beethoven went to Vienna again, to learn music from the well-known composer, Joseph Haydn. As he was not completely satisfied with the teachings of Haydn, Beethoven turned to other music teachers for additional classes and instructions. The following years witnessed Beethoven making his mark as an excellent keyboard composer. In 1795, Beethoven held his public piano concertos. This also marked the official launch of his career. Beethoven lived in Vienna from 1792 to 1827, until his death. He was unmarried, lived in a closed atmosphere among a few trusted friends, without handling any kind of official position or private service. He visited Northern Germany in 1796, and met King Frederick William of Prussia, who was an amateur cellist. In 1808, Beethoven received an offer to become the Director at Kassel in Germany but, chose to stay back in Vienna on receiving a guarantee from a group of supporters that he will be paid with a specific sum of annual pension. Thus, he became one of the first musicians in the history of music to live independently on income from music.*¹

¹Beethoven: The Man and the Madness behind music, By Philip Dehm, p 67

*In 1826, while he was coming back from his brother's place, he fell ill. On 26, March, 1827, Beethoven passed away, surrounded by his close friends. He was cremated at the Währing Cemetery near Vienna. Unlike Mozart, Beethoven was buried with great honour and over twenty to thirty thousand people are said to have attended his funeral.*¹



(3) Beethoven playing the piano.

1.3 Beethoven's authorships and achievements:

*Beethoven wrote nine symphonies, nine concertos, and a variety of other orchestral music, ranging from overtures and incidental music for theatrical productions to other miscellaneous "occasional" works, written for a particular occasion. Of the concertos, seven are widely known (one violin concerto, five piano concertos, and one triple concerto for violin, piano, and cello); the other two are an unpublished early piano concerto and an arrangement of the Violin Concerto for piano and orchestra.

Here's a look on his works in general.

○Symphonies:

- Symphony No. 1 in C major (composed 1799–1800, première 1800)
- Symphony No. 2 in D major (composed 1801–02, première 1803)
- Symphony No. 3 in E-flat major ("Eroica") (composed 1803/04, première 1805)
- Symphony No. 4 in B-flat major (composed 1806, première 1807)
- Symphony No. 5 in C minor ("Fate") (composed 1804–08, première 1808)
- Symphony No. 6 in F major ("Pastoral") (composed 1804–08, première 1808)
- Symphony No. 7 in A major (composed 1811–12, première 1813)

○Concertos:

- Piano Concerto No. 0 in E-flat major (1784)
- Piano Concerto No. 1 in C major (composed 1796–97)
- Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat major (first two movements composed 1787–1789, finale composed in 1795)
- Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor (composed 1800–01)
- Triple Concerto for violin, cello, and piano in C major (1803)
- Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major (composed 1805–06)
- Violin Concerto in D major (1806)
 - Romance in E minor for 3 soloists and orchestra
 - Piano Concerto No. 6 in D major (unfinished – performing version completed by Nicholas Cook) (1815)

○Other works for soloist and orchestra:

- WoO 6: Rondo for Piano and Orchestra in B-flat major (1793)
- Opus 40: Romance for Violin and Orchestra No. 1 in G major (1802)
- Opus 50: Romance for Violin and Orchestra No. 2 in F major (1798)
- Opus 80: "Choral Fantasy" (Fantasia in C minor for piano, chorus, and orchestra) (1808)

○Chamber music:

Beethoven wrote 16 string quartets and numerous other forms of chamber music, including piano trios, string trios, and sonatas for violin and cello with piano, as well as works with wind instruments.

○String quintets:

- Opus 4: String Quintet in E-flat major (1795)
 - Opus 29: String Quintet in C major (*The Storm*) (1801)^[3]
- Opus 104: String Quintet in C minor (1817)
- Opus 137: Fugue for String Quintet in D major (1817)
- Hess 40: Quintettsatz in D minor (1817)



○Violin sonatas:

- Opus 12: Three Violin Sonatas (1798)
 - No. 1: Violin Sonata No. 1 in D major
 - No. 2: Violin Sonata No. 2 in A major
 - No. 3: Violin Sonata No. 3 in E-flat major
- Opus 23: Violin Sonata No. 4 in A minor (1801)
- Opus 24: Violin Sonata No. 5 in F major ("Spring") (1801)

○Solo piano music:

In addition to the 32 celebrated sonatas, Beethoven's work for solo piano includes many one-movement pieces, more than twenty sets of variations, most unpublished in his lifetime or published without opus number, and over thirty bagatelles, including the well-known "Für Elise".

○Piano sonatas:

- Three Piano Sonatas (1795)
 - No. 1: Piano Sonata No. 1 in F minor
 - No. 2: Piano Sonata No. 2 in A major
 - No. 3: Piano Sonata No. 3 in C major
- Piano Sonata No. 4 in E-flat major ("Grand Sonata") (1797)
- Three Piano Sonatas (1798)
 - No. 1: Piano Sonata No. 5 in C minor
 - No. 2: Piano Sonata No. 6 in F major
 - No. 3: Piano Sonata No. 7 in D major

○Opera:

- Opus 72: *Leonore* (1805), first version in three acts
- Opus 72: *Leonore* (1806), second version in two acts
- Opus 72: *Fidelio* (1814), final version in two acts^{*1}

Lühning, Helga (1997). "Beethoven as a Lieder composer", p25¹

♥ Chapter two: Between being deaf and composing.

2.1 Beethoven's deaf turning into creativity:

*Beethoven put down his pen in frustration. It is a few months before his 30th birthday, and the constant buzzing in his ears is getting louder. It makes it difficult to hear, and the composer is growing more and more concerned. “How can I compose music if I can’t hear over this buzzing?” he asks himself. Over the next few years, Beethoven searches for doctors who say they can cure him. One pours milk and ground nuts into his ears. Another rubs ointment on his arms that causes them to blister, hoping to drain the infection from his ears. Nothing works. Beethoven would not give up. He adapted to his worsening disability by using “ear trumpets,” cone-shaped tubes that he held to his ears to amplify sounds.



- He was so focused on finding a way to keep composing that some people gossiped that he had the legs of his piano sawed off so he could sit on the floor and play, feeling the sound vibrations of the music in his body. It was as he began to lose his hearing that Beethoven started composing symphonies. He liked the idea that music without lyrics, or words, could communicate moods and paint pictures in the audience's mind. By his late 40s, Beethoven was completely deaf, but until his death, he composed some of the most joyful music for orchestras ever written. Even that he wrote his best and most famous symphonies (the fifth and the ninth symphony) at this period. Beethoven is still considered a revolutionary figure in the history of music.*¹

(5) Music is life:



¹A composer's life; Jancie Hughes, p 46

2.2 Hearing loss and his life after that:

* By 1815, he had to give up public performances as a pianist and situation worsened so much so that he could not even engage in conversations with others. Due to hearing loss Beethoven started conversing with friends and with other like-minded people through conversation books, which later became useful as written documents about his life. These books serve as an excellent source of Beethoven's thoughts regarding his perception of music and the way it must be performed. The loss of hearing also made a deep impact on the social life of Beethoven. It changed his personality which put him in a huge crisis regarding his musical and social life. As if all this were not enough, few personal problems began to haunt Beethoven. Beethoven had to take up the guardianship of his nephew Karl, after his brother's death. An already unstable man, Beethoven further stepped into trouble upon the arrival of Karl. Though Beethoven did win the battle for custody of Karl, the relationship with his nephew became extremely tense which made Karl attempt suicide in 1826.*¹



(6) Beethoven when he started to hear the buzzing sound

¹The life of Beethoven, David WYN Jones, p56,p57

♥ Chapter three: Between Classical and Romantic Eras.

3.1 Differences between Classical and Romantic music:

- **What is Classical music?**

*Classical music is the music of the classical period that began in 1730 to 1820 AD. Although that is the original reference to the classical music in the history of western music, the term is now being extensively used, rather colloquially, to refer to a variety of western music from the ancient times to the present; a kind of music which is neither modernized nor complex, but light, simple, and soothing. Classical music is linked to classicalism, a style of the arts, literature, and architecture in the mid-eighteenth century Europe. One main characteristic of classical music was that it gave more significance to instrumental music. The expression of classical music was mainly of emotional balance and restraint.*¹



(7) A group of people listening to music.

¹The Future Of Classical Music, Gery Sandow, p 22

• What is Romantic music?

*The term romantic music denotes an era of western music which was brought into being in the late 18th or early 19th century; to be specific, from 1815 to 1930 AD. Romantic music is associated with the movement Romanticism that occurred in the eighteenth century Europe. Romanticism was not only a movement related to music; it was a comprehensive movement of art, literature, music and intellect. The music of the romantic era had a number of features: themes of romantic music were often linked to nature and self-expression.*¹

(8) A note:



¹Music In The Romantic Era, Andrew Lesser, p 17

•*The distinction in philosophies is important in comparing the difference between the two styles. Classical composers were content to stay within a certain boundary of what constituted acceptable music. Chord resolutions were always the same, the relationship between movements, sections and keys maintained proportion. The Romantic composers stretched these boundaries, introduced new chords, unusual key changes and in many ways went against the procedures and policies that were developed in the Classical period. While the forms such as sonata, symphony and even fugue remained the same, the interpretation of these forms changed drastically by greatly expanding the length and character of these forms. Romantic music has its roots in the Classical music style. The development of forms and harmonic ideas that became prominent in the Classical period expanded in the Romantic period. This gave rise to both similarities and differences between the two periods of music. As composers were moving toward defining the individual as opposed to the group perspective of music, Romantic composers began to stretch boundaries of form and harmonic function*¹



(9) A piano and a violet.

¹Music In The Romantic Era, Andrew Lesse
The Future Of Classical Music, Gery Sandow

3.2 Beethoven bridged the gap between Classical and Romantic music:

*Beethoven is one of the most enigmatic composers of both periods. He is served as an important bridge between the Classical and Romantic. His music contradicts itself in terms of style. His early symphonies sound like Classical period pieces, specifically his first two symphonies. From there, the music changes into a Romantic style. The Classical period had a musical style that was consistent. Beethoven started writing in a Classical style only to abandon and lead the way toward a more Romantic style. The strict forms of Classical music started to disintegrate as he wrote the highly programmatic "Fifth Symphony." This symphony made use of a 4-note victory motive in which the music depicts a tale of victory in war. This contrasts with the absolute Classical period that dealt in musical themes and not necessarily human expression.*¹



(10) Beethoven leading a concert.

♥ Conclusion:

•At the end of this research we conclude how great Beethoven was, and that he was not an ordinary composer. He was also so creative by finding such solutions for a lot of problems he faced in his life. We know now about his childhood, and how did he started learning music first from his father, then from other great musicians. He preformed for the first time when he was seven. His mum died so he went back to Bonne, but he returned to Vienna a few years after to refresh his composing styles. He wrote nine symphonies –the last one was the most famous and important– , nine concertos, and a variety of other orchestral works and operas.

•In his 30ths, he started to hear a buzzing sound that effected his music and his career. He had to quit performing. All of that effected on him in a very negative way. By his 40ths, he became totally deaf. He started to be lonely and depressed. Communicating with people became so hard to him. Although he became deaf, at that period he composed his best music like the ninth symphony. He tried to find a lot of ways to keep on composing, and some of them were really strange and helpful.

•Romantic music was not so different from Classical music. They both had the same shape, but the way of composing was a little bit different. Some composers invented some new ways in writing But they did not move away from classical that much. So, romantic era was an extending for classical era.

•Beethoven made a great transforming point between the two eras" classical and romantic". His early music sounds like classical music, and from there it changed into a romantic style. The only reason that made him write in a classical style was just to get into a more romantic style.

However, he was successful in both types, and had a lot of fables works in them.

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