

Music Histories and Stories

Every month we will look at the story behind one of our anthems or hymns or we will learn about a composer/lyricist who provided us with an anthem or hymn from the month. This will give us the opportunity to learn more about what we are singing, listening to, or the people behind the musical gift.

2020 is a very special year as we celebrate Ludwig van Beethoven's 250 birthday. It only takes a short trek through any internet search engine to learn that there are special events happening all year long in Vienna, Bonn, San Diego, New York, Chicago, Spokane, Istanbul and here in Charlotte. The world is pulling out all of the batons to celebrate this man who left us with amazing music.



In case you don't know much about this grand figure of classical music, here is a little information you might find interesting.

In a nutshell, Beethoven reinvented the symphony, reshaped string quartets, and redefined piano sonatas – but there's much more to learn about Ludwig van Beethoven, the deaf composer who changed music forever.

One biography says this: Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) was a German composer and pianist, who is arguably the defining figure in the history of Western music.

- Ludwig Van Beethoven was born in December 1770, but no-one is completely sure on which date. He was baptized on the 17th.
- The earliest recorded piece that Beethoven composed is a set of nine piano variations, composed in 1782.
- Beethoven moved to Vienna in 1792, where he met influential composers like Haydn and began to compose in earnest.
- By 1796, he had begun to suffer from tinnitus and was losing his hearing.
- Beethoven composed his Piano Sonata No. 14 ('Moonlight') in 1802.
- The Third Symphony, known as the 'Eroica', was completed in 1804. It went on to redefine the symphony as a genre.
- The opening motif to the Fifth Symphony from 1808 is one of the most famous musical excerpts in history.
- The 'middle period' of Beethoven's career also saw him compose piano works like the Waldstein and Appassionata sonatas, as well as his only opera, *Fidelio*, which went through countless rewrites and revisions.
- Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the 'Choral' from 1824, is another work of his that has remained infinitely popular. It was the first time that a composer had used choral voices in a major symphony.
- Ill health and increasing deafness caused a drop in productivity at the end of Beethoven's life, but he still managed to produce important works like his 'Late Quartets' in 1825, which were wildly inventive for the time.
- Beethoven died in Vienna on the 26th March 1827 after a long illness that has variously been attributed to alcohol, hepatitis, cirrhosis and pneumonia.

Did you know?

Beethoven composed only one opera, *Fidelio*, which took years to get right. He re-wrote one aria no fewer than 18 times and came up with four different overtures before deciding upon the one he liked.