Ludwig van Beethoven (baptized 17 December 1770 – 26 March 1827) was a German composer and pianist. The crucial figure in the transition between the Classical and Romantic eras in Western art music, he remains one of the most famous and influential composers of all time. Beethoven's father, Johannes, was a court Tenor and pianist and was the first person to instruct young Ludwig in music. He taught him the piano, violin, and also possibly the viola. He went to elementary school in the Neugasse until his first public performance at the age of 7, where his father, seeing the latent talent that his son possessed, sought out for him other teachers, more suited for his talent. The most notable of his teacher was Christian Gottlob Neefe, who was responsible for introducing young Ludwig to the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. By 1782, Beethoven was already assisting Neefe as deputy court organist in Bonn, and it was in the same year that his first work, a set of variations on a march theme by Dressler, was published. He then played viola in the Bonn symphony until he went to Vienna in 1787, with the idea of studying with Mozart. His plan was cut short though, by the sudden death of his mother, and thusly he being recalled back to Bonn to be at her bedside when she finally passed on. He returned to Vienna in 1792, to study with Haydn, (Mozart having died in 1791). He was to remain in Vienna for the rest of his life, where he was to write his most remembered, and popular pieces, including Symphonies 4, 5 and 9. He became well known at first, for his piano playing, having attained the level of virtuoso, and became well known among the aristocracy for his ability to improvise. By 1802, he was to have written 32 of his piano sonatas, his first 2 symphonies, 18 string quartets, and his first 3 piano concertos. Sadly though, it was around this time, that the deafness, that he had noticed coming on 5-6 years previously, began to hit him even harder. This was a time of great despair for him, as is seen in the letters he wrote to his brothers in the Heiligenstadt Testament, which were never sent, but were found among his possessions along with the Immortal Beloved letters, after his death. During this middle period of his life, he wrote symphonies 3-8, piano concertos 4 and 5, and his violin concerto, to name a few. His involvement in the custody dispute of his nephew Karl, slowed his musical output, and his production of music until around 1816 was almost stagnant. But the years following 1816 are arguably his most productive, with his 9th symphony, his final 7 piano sonatas, and a set of string quartets, which unlike their predecessors, have 6 and 7 movements, instead of the usual 4. He was able to complete these masterful creations, including the extended finale in the 9th symphony, Ode to Joy, while being almost completely deaf. He continued to compose late into his life, until his death. He was buried with honors in Vienna, and his funeral was said to have been attended by more than 10,000 people, which shows the true following that his music created among the people who were blessed with being able to hear, enjoy and experience it.

Egmont, Op. 84, is a set of incidental music pieces for the 1787 play of the same name by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. It consists of an overture followed by a sequence of nine additional pieces for soprano, male narrator and full symphony orchestra. Beethoven wrote it between October 1809 and June 1810, and it was premiered on 15 June 1810. The subject of the music and dramatic narrative is the life and heroism of a 16th-century Dutch nobleman, the Count of Egmont. It was composed during the period of the Napoleonic Wars, at a time when the French Empire had extended its domination over most of Europe. Beethoven had famously expressed his great outrage over Napoleon Bonaparte’s decision to crown himself Emperor in 1804, furiously scratching out his name in the dedication of the Eroica Symphony. In the music for Egmont, Beethoven expressed his own political concerns through the exaltation of the heroic sacrifice of a man condemned to death for having taken a valiant stand against oppression. The overture, powerful and expressive, is one of the last works of his middle period and would later become an unofficial anthem of the 1956 Hungarian revolution. It has also become as famous a composition as the Coriolan Overture, and is in a similar style to the Fifth Symphony, which he had completed two years earlier.