



BEETHOVEN

Concerto for piano and Orchestra No. 5 “Emperor”

Ludwig van Beethoven (17 December 1770 – 26 March 1827) was a German composer and pianist. A crucial figure in the transition between the Classical and Romantic eras in Western art music, he remains one of the most famous and influential of all composers. His best known compositions include 9 symphonies, 5 concertos for piano, 32 piano sonatas, and 16 string quartets. He also composed other chamber music, choral works (including the celebrated *Missa Solemnis*), and songs. He was also a pivotal figure in the transition from the 18th century musical classicism to 19th century romanticism, and his influence on subsequent generations of composers was profound. During the late 18th century, his hearing began to deteriorate significantly, yet he continued to compose, conduct, and perform after becoming completely deaf. Beethoven's compositional career is usually divided into Early, Middle, and Late periods. In this scheme, his early period is taken to last until about 1802, the middle period from about 1803 to about 1814, and the late period from about 1815. In his Early period, Beethoven's work was strongly influenced by his predecessors Haydn and Mozart. He also explored new directions and gradually expanded the scope and ambition of his work. Some important pieces from the Early period are the first and second symphonies, the set of six string quartets Opus 18, the first two piano concertos, and the first dozen or so piano sonatas, including the famous *Pathétique* sonata, Op. 13. His Middle (Heroic) period began shortly after Beethoven's personal crisis brought on by his recognition of encroaching deafness. It includes large-scale works that express heroism and struggle. Middle-period works include six symphonies (Nos. 3–8), the last three piano concertos, the Triple Concerto and violin concerto, five string quartets (Nos. 7–11), several piano sonatas (including the *Moonlight*, *Waldstein* and *Appassionata* sonatas), the *Kreutzer* violin sonata and Beethoven's only opera, *Fidelio*. Beethoven's Late period began around 1815. Works from this period are characterized by their intellectual depth, their formal innovations, and their intense, highly personal expression. The String Quartet, Op. 131 has seven linked movements, and the Ninth Symphony adds choral forces to the orchestra in the last movement. Other compositions from this period include the *Missa Solemnis*, the last five string quartets (including the massive *Große Fuge*) and the last five piano sonatas.

The Piano Concerto No. 5 in E-flat major, Op. 73, by Ludwig van Beethoven, was his last piano concerto. It was written between 1809 and 1811 in Vienna, and was dedicated to Archduke Rudolf, Beethoven's patron and pupil. The concerto is divided into three movements. The first movement is deceptively complex. Despite its use of simple chords, including a second theme constructed almost entirely out of tonic and dominant notes and chords, it is full of complex thematic transformations. The complexity is intensified once the piano enters with the first theme, as the expository material is repeated with far more complex variations, virtuoso figurations, and complex modified chords. The second theme enters in the surprising key of B minor before moving to B major and at last the expected key of B-flat major several bars later. Aside from the opening cadenzas, the movement follows Beethoven's trademark three-theme sonata structure for a concerto. The orchestral exposition is a typical two-theme sonata exposition, but the second exposition with the piano has a triumphant virtuoso third theme at the end that belongs solely to the solo instrument. Beethoven does this in many of his concertos. The coda at the end of the movement is quite long, and, again typical of Beethoven, uses the open-ended first theme and gives it closure to create a satisfying conclusion. The second movement in B major is, in standard contrast to the first, calm and reflective. It moves into the third movement without interruption when a lone bassoon note B drops a semitone to B-flat, the dominant note to the tonic key E-flat. The final movement of the concerto is a seven-part rondo form (ABACABA), a typical concerto finale form. The piano begins the movement by playing its main theme, then followed by the full orchestra. The rondo's B-section begins with piano scales, before the orchestra again responds. The C-section is much longer, presenting the theme from the A-section in three different keys before the piano performs a cadenza. Rather than finishing with a strong entrance from the orchestra, however, the trill ending the cadenza dies away until the introductory theme reappears, played first by the piano and then the orchestra. In the last section, the theme undergoes variation before the concerto ends with a short cadenza and robust orchestral response.