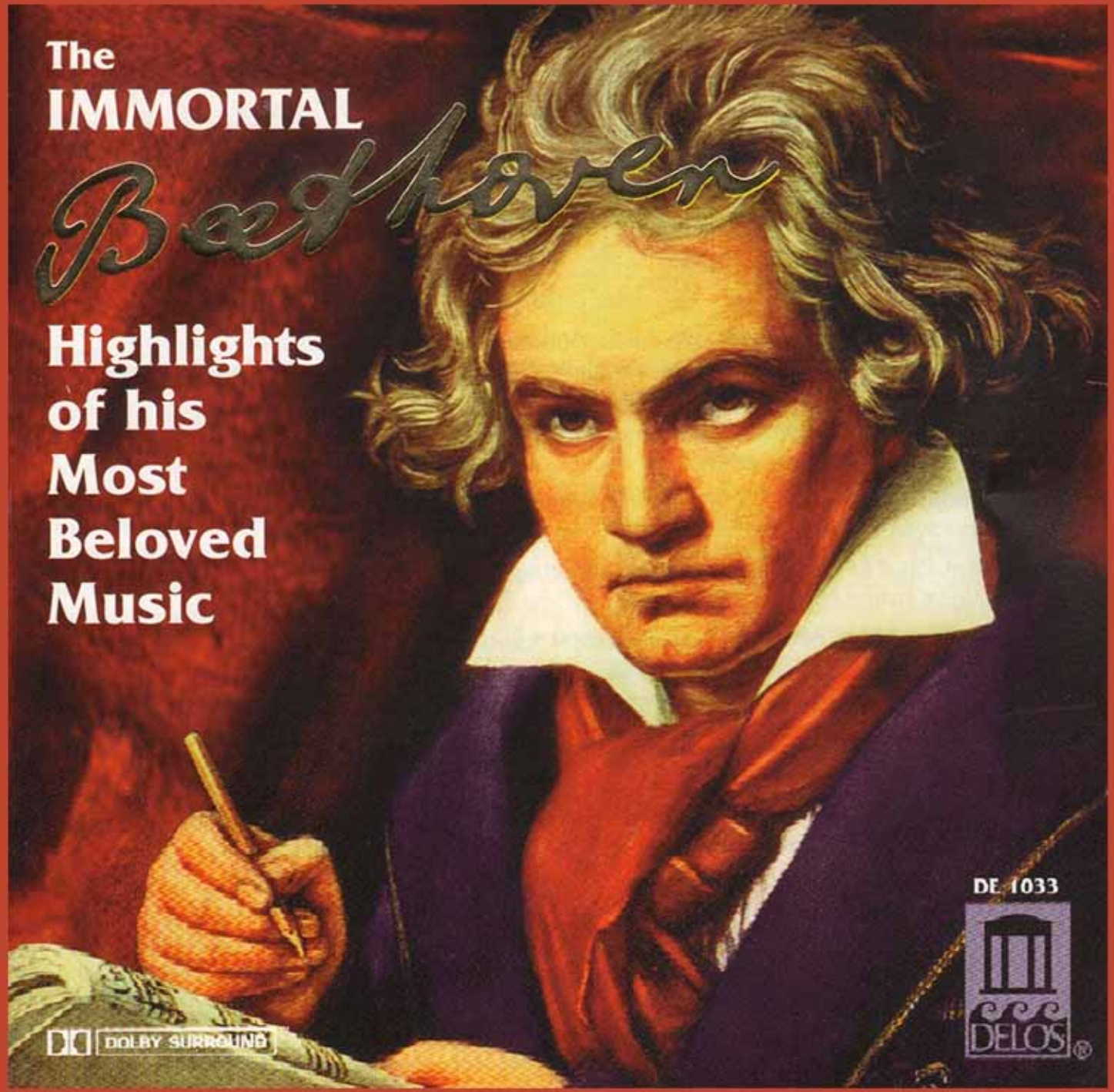

DELOS

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The Immortal Beethoven

Highlights of his most beloved music

1. **Symphony No. 6, "Pastorale,"** II. "Scene By the Brook" • Gerard Schwarz, conductor; New York Chamber Symphony [12:25] • *From Delos DE 3016*
2. **Concerto No. 4, Op. 58,** III. Rondo: Vivace • Carol Rosenberger, piano; Gerard Schwarz, conductor; London Symphony Orchestra [9:50] • *From Delos DE 3027* *
3. **Quintet for Piano and Winds, Op. 16.** II. Andante cantabile • David Shifrin, clarinet; Allan Vogel, oboe; Robin Graham, French horn; Ken Munday, bassoon; Carol Rosenberger, piano [7:59] • *From Delos DE 3024*
4. **Sonata Op. 13, "Pathétique,"** II. Adagio cantabile • Carol Rosenberger, piano [5:23] • *From Delos DE 3079*
5. **Symphony No. 5, Op. 67,** I. Allegro con brio • Gerard Schwarz, conductor; London Symphony Orchestra [7:50] • *From Delos DE 3027* *
6. **Quartet Op. 74 "Harp,"** II. Adagio ma non troppo • Orford Quartet [10:35] • *From Delos DE 3035* †
7. **Sonata Op. 101**, I. Allegretto, ma non troppo • Dickran Atamian, piano [3:30]
8. **Symphony No. 8, Op. 93,** II. Allegro scherzando • Gerard Schwarz, conductor; Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra [3:51] • *From Delos DE 3013*
9. **Sonata Op. 57, "Appassionata,"** I. Allegro assai • Carol Rosenberger, piano [9:24] • *From Delos DE 3009*
10. **Overture to The Creatures of Prometheus, Op. 43** • Gerard Schwarz, conductor; London Symphony Orchestra [5:05] • *From Delos DE 3027* *

Total Playing Time: 76:47
* recorded in England
† recorded in Canada

Design: Tri Arts; Graphics: Steven Dudeck, Bruce Dizon, Mark Evans

"You will hear nothing of me here [in Vienna]," lamented Beethoven to a visitor. The year was 1822 and five years before his death, the man whose name has since become synonymous with "composer" was out of fashion.

This is not to say that the master was not revered. He was, in fact, generally recognized at the time as the greatest living composer. But he had achieved in his compositions an end point, his had been the last word, so to speak, on classicism. It was as if, pressing the available technology to the limit, he had constructed the world's largest monument, beyond which it would be impossible to venture without developing a new technology. Just as J.S. Bach had done in the middle of the previous century by developing Baroque style to the height of its intensity and expressivity, and just as Wagner would do at the end of the 19th century in his exploitation of chromaticism, Beethoven, by the very thrust and power of his genius, had created a demand for something new. And the music that was to come—that of Schubert, Brahms and Wagner, for example—would owe much to the legacy of Beethoven.

It may very well have been that, at the time of Beethoven's lament, his works had become little more than a fading echo in the concert halls of Vienna. But the plight of the aging artist who no longer feels the rush of relevance is understandable: that place at the pinnacle of achievement where genius stands is surely a lonely one. That this apparent abandonment would be only temporary, the composer could not know. Fashions live and die, but imbued as they are with a relevance for all time, the masterworks of Beethoven breathe the breath of immortality.

The selections offered here reflect the great diversity of Beethoven's compositions throughout his creative life. Each of the three style periods is represented. And although each work clearly delineates its stylistic origins, each is in its own way a prototype, a model of originality.

The originality with which Beethoven expresses his sensitivity to the dictates of fashion is perhaps nowhere more evident than in his **Symphony No. 6, Pastorale** (1808). Writing in *The Classical Style*, Charles Rosen points out that the "*Pastorale* is, for the most, part a true classical symphony strongly influenced by the then fashionable doctrine of art as the painting of feelings or sentiments..." Even though the music is descriptive, it is not to be considered programmatic in any real sense. Beethoven himself commented that the symphony "is more a matter of feeling than of painting in sounds." Thanks to Anton Schindler, Beethoven's friend and one of his early biographers, there

exists the following account of Beethoven's inspiration for "Scene by the Brook":

"Passing through the pleasant meadow-valley [around] Heiligenstadt, which is traversed by a gently murmuring brook which hurries down from a near-by mountain and is bordered with high elms, Beethoven repeatedly stopped and let his glances roam, full of happiness, over the glorious landscape. Then seating himself on the turf and leaning against an elm, Beethoven asked me if there were any yellowhammers [orioles?] to be heard in the trees around us. [By the date of this conversation, Beethoven would have been completely deaf.] But all was still. He then said: 'Here I composed the *Scene by the Brook* and the yellowhammers up there, the quails, nightingales and cuckoos round about, composed with me.'"

Just two years before the Pastoral Symphony, Beethoven wrote his lyrical **Piano Concerto No. 4 in G**, Op. 58, probably the best loved of the five piano concertos. 1806 was also the year that produced the *Three String Quartets*, Op. 59 (Razumovsky), *Leonore* overtures 2 and 3, the violin concerto, and the fourth symphony.

Composed in 1796-97, the **Quintet for Piano and Winds**, Op. 16, appears to be modeled after Mozart's quintet for the same group of instruments, also in the key of E-flat. The "Andante Cantabile" is a songful, concerto-like slow movement in which the instruments alternate between solo and obbligato, gently and subtly varying each repetition of the theme in ways so characteristic of Beethoven's genius.

A contender for the most famous of all Beethoven's melodies is the lovely second movement of the **Piano Sonata in C Minor**, Op. 13, "Pathetique" (1798-99). Haunting in its songful resignation, the Adagio Cantabile spins its magical spell in a manner suggestive of mid-century romantic composers.

If the Adagio Cantabile of the "Pathetique" sonata is among the most famous of Beethoven's melodies, the opening motto of the composer's **Symphony No. 5 in C Minor**, Op. 67 (1808), is his signature. Many composers have written a fifth symphony, but a reference to "the" fifth symphony clearly invokes Beethoven's. Fueling the fires of speculation on the nature of the symphony's intense emotional conflicts, Beethoven, according to Schindler, remarked, "Thus fate knocks at the door." (And indeed, the notion of fate as a participant in the symphonic drama takes on new significance as, during World War II, it became apparent to the British that the opening three-shorts-one-long was Morse Code for V, as in victory, and the piece was not often absent from the air waves. The fact that the symphony was the work of a German

composer gives credence to the idea that great art is universal and transcends politics.)

By the following year, 1809, the relative calm and sense of well-being in Beethoven's life has turned to near despair. The French army had driven the Viennese forces back to the Danube and lay siege to the city. The peace of that bucolic scene by the brook is shattered. Abandoned by his noble patrons, for two months Beethoven endured the deprivation of poverty and the ear-shattering bombardment of cannons. Hiding in the cellar with pillows pressed to his ears, the composer feared the noise would worsen his encroaching deafness. On the title page of the Op. 69 cello sonata Beethoven had added in his own hand, "amid sorrow and tears," and it is in this spirit of melancholy that he composed the **String Quartet in E-flat**, Op. 74 "Harp." (The nickname "harp" derives from pizzicato passages in the first movement.)

"Here we find none of the outward brilliance of effect," writes Joseph di Marliave in *Beethoven's Quartets*. "Here one sees mirrored in the music the dark places of the artist's own soul; here at last Beethoven finds expression for all his pent-up love and sorrow, plumbing the depths of his unsatisfied longings, laying bare the secret beauty of his inmost thoughts." The second movement, "Adagio ma non troppo," with its seamless melody, is just such an expression. "Music must spring from the heart of a man," wrote Beethoven, and this movement is a monument to that sentiment. It has been said of the opening that "every note is a tear."

Dedicated to Baroness Dorothea Ertmann, the **Piano Sonata No. 28 in A Major**, Op. 101, (1816) begins abruptly, without introductory fanfare, as if, as Martin Cooper puts it in *Beethoven: The Last Decade*, "a door were suddenly opened and we overheard a conversation that was not meant for our ears, a conversation in this case of unearthly tenderness and warmth."

According to the autograph score, the **Symphony No. 8 in F Major**, Op. 93, was completed in the city of Linz in October of 1812. Just three months earlier Beethoven had penned the famous letter referred to as the "Immortal Beloved" (probably never sent): "...my thoughts go out to you, my Immortal Beloved, now and then joyfully, then sadly, waiting to learn whether or not fate will hear us—I can live wholly with you or not at all.." The letter ends, "Be calm—love me—today—yesterday—what tearful longings for you—you—you—my life—my all—farewell.—Oh continue to love me—never misjudge the most faithful heart of your beloved." Curiously, nowhere in the sunny eighth symphony are such expressions of ardor and longing suggested. On the

contrary, the famous "Allegretto scherzando," according to legend as handed down by Schiller, grew out of a fascination for Johann Mälzel's newly invented metronome, hence the regularly marked pulse in the winds.

Beethoven interrupted work on his opera *Fidelio* in order to complete the **Piano Sonata in F Minor**, Op. 57, "Appassionata" (1805). Among the piano pieces, this sonata is the one that, perhaps more than any other, conjures up the familiar image of Beethoven as the unkempt, driven artist, wandering distractedly through the woods raging at the heavens. The wild and passionate contrasts of the "Allegro assai" seem to mock the constraints of classical form.

On the 28th of March, 1801, Beethoven's ballet **The Creatures of Prometheus** received the first of its 14 performances that season, benefiting and featuring prima ballerina Fraulein Casentini, with choreography by Salvatore Vigano. With this composition, Beethoven elevated the genre to a position that, by mere association with his name, commanded new respect. Previously, music for the ballet had been considered trivial, and was treated almost with disdain. The Overture to the Creatures of Prometheus has survived on its own and enjoys a well-deserved place in the current repertoire.

Neil Stannard

Young People's Notes

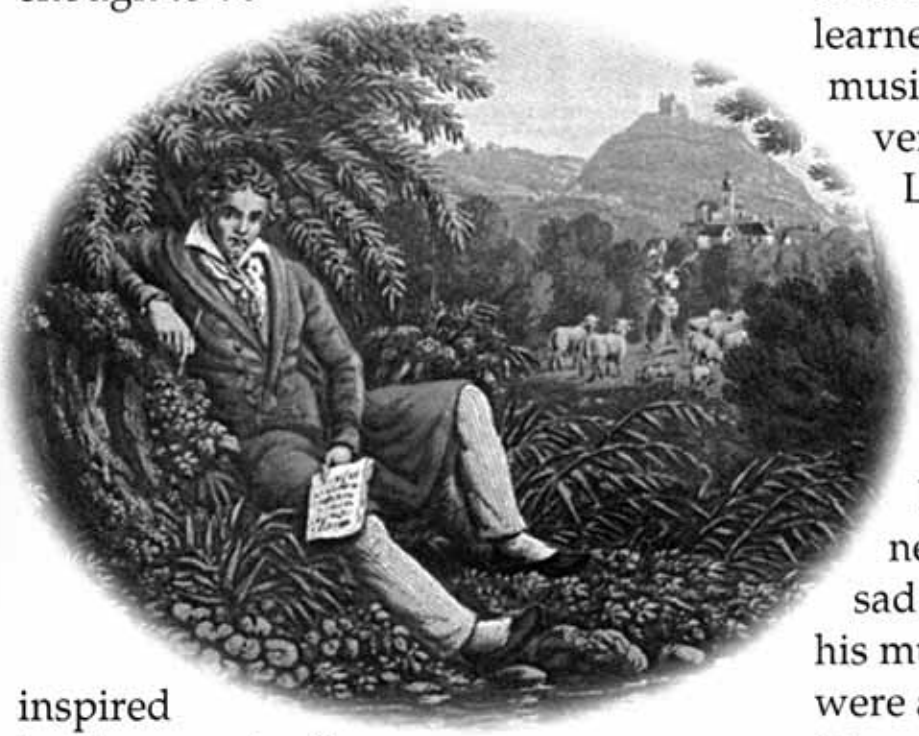
If you are asked to think of a color, you might say "red." If you are asked to think of a flower, you might say "rose." And if you are asked to think of a composer, well, most adults would say "Beethoven." This is how famous he is. In fact, he is so famous that when someone says "fifth symphony," most people think of Beethoven. You can recognize Beethoven's Fifth Symphony instantly from the three short notes and one long note that you hear at the beginning. Beethoven told a friend that this was "Fate knocking at the door." Three shorts and one long is Morse code for the letter V, which became a symbol for "victory" during World War II.

Ludwig van Beethoven was born in Germany in 1770, just six years before the signing of the Declaration of Independence in America, which turned the 13 British colonies into the United States of America. This time in the history of music is called the *classical period*. Of course, the new Americans were busy learning how to be a country. But in Europe, particularly in Germany and Austria, music flourished. And in some ways music was having a revolution of its own, with Beethoven its leader.

During the first part of his life Beethoven became very famous as a pianist who also composed beautiful music. But early in the 19th century, around 1801, he began to lose his hearing. Imagine how difficult life would be for a musician who could not hear music. Try closing your eyes. What do you see? Maybe a few "mind pictures." Now try covering your ears as completely as you can. What do you hear? Probably nothing from outside your head. But if you try to sing silently inside your head you can probably make "mind music." Beethoven became very good at this. In fact, some of his greatest and most famous music he composed while completely deaf. This may have been part of the reason why Beethoven became the leader of a musical revolution.

One of the great pieces he wrote during the time he was beginning to lose

his hearing was the Pastorale Symphony (symphony about life in the country). At that time he was still able to hear well enough to be



inspired by the sounds of the birds singing in the forest. Once when Beethoven was walking with a friend near a gently murmuring brook, he said, "Here I composed the *Scene by the Brook* and the yellowhammers up there, the quails, nightingales and cuckoos round about, composed with me."

After he became deaf and heard only his own mind music, the music he wrote was different from the music he had written when he could hear. He made music with many strong contrasts, like a painting with very strong colors right next to softer ones. Also, he learned to listen so carefully to his mind music that sometimes his music was very peaceful, like a silent prayer. Listen to the movement from the Piano Sonata No. 28 in A Major, Op. 101.

By the end of his life in 1827, Beethoven was known as the greatest composer in the world. But, partly because of his deafness, he felt alone and sometimes sad. When he conducted concerts of his music he didn't even know people were applauding until someone turned him around so he could see the audience. He was also sad because he thought his music was not being played very much. What he could not know was that many, many years into the future his music would be played all over the world and loved by millions of people. He could not know that his music would live forever, that he would become immortal.

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