



Ludwig van BEETHOVEN

Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125

Ludwig van Beethoven (11 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 piano concertos, 1 violin concerto, 32 piano sonatas, 16 string quartets, his great Mass the *Missa solemnis*, and one opera, *Fidelio*. Born in Bonn, then the capital of the Electorate of Cologne and part of the Holy Roman Empire, Beethoven displayed his musical talents at an early age and was taught by his father Johann van Beethoven and by composer and conductor Christian Gottlob Neefe. At the age of 21 he moved to Vienna, where he began studying composition with Joseph Haydn, and gained a reputation as a virtuoso pianist. He lived in Vienna until his death. By his late 20s his hearing began to deteriorate, and by the last decade of his life he was almost totally deaf. In 1811 he gave up conducting and performing in public but continued to compose; many of his most admired works come from these last 15 years of his life.

The **Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125** (also known as "the Choral"), is Ludwig van Beethoven's final complete symphony. Completed in 1824, the symphony is one of the best-known works in classical music. Among critics, it is almost universally considered one of Beethoven's greatest works, and many consider it one of the greatest compositions in the western musical canon. The symphony was the first example of a major composer using voices in a symphony (thus making it a choral symphony). The words are sung during the final movement by four vocal soloists and a chorus. They were taken from the "Ode to Joy", a poem written by Friedrich Schiller in 1785 and revised in 1803, with additions made by the composer. Today, it stands as one of the most performed symphonies in the world. In 2001, Beethoven's manuscript of the score, held by the Berlin State Library, was added to the United Nations Memory of the World Program Heritage list, becoming the first musical score so honored.