

Ludwig van Beethoven 1770-1827

**Van Beethoven was probably born in Bonn and died in Vienna.
The story of his birth and how the Beethoven festival Zutphen was born.**

Throughout Beethoven's life he was very uncertain whether the date of his birth was correct. For a long time it was believed, even in circles of musicologists, that he might have been born in Zutphen, the Netherlands, in *the French Auberge* at Laarstraat.

This story has some plausibility because the composer's father was a singer at the court of the bishop of Cologne and during summertime he travelled along castles and estates in the Lower Rhine region. Because



Beethoven, 13 years old

the castles and estates in the neighbourhood of Zutphen are especially picturesque, it is plausible that Beethoven's parents stayed in *the French Auberge* that summertime.

Additionally, documents have been found in the archives of Zutphen proving that his birth might have taken place there. The discovery of these documents were the inspiration for the founding of the first Beethoven festival in the Netherlands: the Zutphen Beethoven festival.

Other European Beethoven festivals are held in the Czech Republic (Teplice), Italy (Sutri), Bonn (Germany) and in Poland. The Zutphen Beethoven festival is cooperating with those festivals to give young musicians the opportunity to play at the different festivals.

The Zutphen Beethoven festival 2016 will consist of live performances of not only Beethoven's music, but also of his peers', composers who inspired him and of composers who were inspired by him. Additionally, the festival will present other forms of arts as well as cultural and educative events, workshops, etc. The festival will be held on the 26th, the 27th and the 28th of August 2016. The program will be announced on the website as soon as possible. Ticket sales will start on the first of July 2016.

Beethoven: the revolutionary.

Beethoven is a revolutionary composer. His early works were very similar to for instance those of Haydn and Mozart, two other composers of his time. However, around his third composition Beethoven's music became less technically perfect, but more emotionally expressive, which marked the beginning of the "romantic era" in classical music. This contribution to the art caused him to gain great respect as a composer.

Beethoven was deeply involved in the big changes of his era. Like many in his time, he was interested in the ideas of the French Revolution, the feeling of freedom, the upcoming civil society and the success of Napoleon Bonaparte. Great opportunities arose for ambitious people. As a liberal and a humanist Beethoven underlined, already at the early age of 22, the big issues of the French revolution: liberty, equality and fraternity. He translated these issues into his music.

Although Beethoven admired Napoleon at first, when Napoleon had coronated himself Emperor of France in 1804, Beethoven had been so disappointed and furious that he struck out the name of Napoleon, to whom he dedicated his third symphony, and named it simply EROICA .



Beethoven writing the manuscript of Missa Solemnis

Beethoven's music speaks very much of the changes of his time. The entirety of Europe was on the move, old values were no longer in fashion and a new world was born. His music contributed greatly to that process of changes.

Beethoven: composer, musician and innovator.

Beethoven's compositions are full of power and are considered genius. His sonatas, piano forte concerts, symphonies, songs, operas, ouvertures and choir works demonstrate this.

Though not only was Beethoven a great composer, he was also one of the first master pianists and a great improviser on the piano forte.

Additionally, he contributed a great deal to the new technical improvements of the piano. He got one of the first Erard piano's at his disposal.

Though he only wrote one opera on it, *Fidelio*, Beethoven initiated a new way of music and made many improvements to the keyboard and the piano forte.

Beethoven: his contemporaries.

Beethoven visited the court of William V in the Hague and Rotterdam with his mother in 1781. Shortly after visiting the Netherlands, he visited Vienna, where he met fellow composer W.A. Mozart, who was working on the opera *Don Giovanni* at that time. He also met the count of Wallenstein who later became his most important Maecenas and one of his greatest admirers.

Beethoven admired the poets Goethe and Schiller and brought about sixty of their poems to life in musical form. He even met Goethe once in Teplice where they were both residing for their health.

Even before his residence at Teplice, Beethoven had problems with his hearing. He underwent various treatments, but those only worsened the problems. He spent the last decade of his life being practically deaf.

In 1793 Beethoven moved to Vienna, where he got lessons from Haydn and others. Most of them already recognized the genius of the maestro he became later on in his life.

Beethoven: his love life.

Beethoven's love life was unsuccessful. He constantly fell in love with noble female piano students, but in the eye of nobility he was never seen as a serious suitor, but merely as a servant to teach the art of piano. It is speculated that the failures in his love life might have been the source of inspiration for many of his love songs.

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