LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

OCTOBER COMPOSER OF THE MONTH
EARLY LIFE

• Born 1770 in Bonn, Germany
• (Insisted he was born in 1772)]
• 2 Young brothers that survived to adulthood
• Mother (Maria Magdalena) was a beautiful, slender gentle woman
• Father (Johann) was a mediocre court singer better known for his alcoholism more than his musical ability.
CHILDHOOD

• Father started teaching him music when he was very young.
• Neighbors told stories of hearing him being hit by his father anytime he hesitated or made a mistake.
• Was flogged almost daily and kept in the cellar deprived of sleep until he spent extra hours practicing.
• Was VERY talented as young child.
• Gave first recital in 1778
• "Not a sign was to be discovered of that spark of genius which glowed so brilliantly in him afterwards."

• Father wanted him to be a childhood genius like Mozart, but it never happened.
VIENNA, AUSTRIA

• Moved to Vienna at age 16
• Hoped to study with Mozart
• Found out his mother was VERY sick and went back home to Bonn, Germany
BONN, GERMANY

• Mother died 2 months after Beethoven came back home.
• At age 18 he took over as the head of the household.
• Garnished father’s wages.
• Helped support the family by playing Viola in the court orchestra.
• Met with many prominent musicians during this time.
STUDYING

- Studied with Neefe at the organ
- Studied organ with the church court
- Moved back to Vienna the year after Mozart died. Joseph Hayden became Beethoven's teacher.
- Became known as a virtuoso pianist
- Known for his improvisational skills
COMPOSING

• 1795 – Debuted one of his piano concertos
• 1800 – Debuted Symphony No. 1
  • Grew to hate the piece (“In those days I did not know how to compose”)

Symphony No. 3 debuted in Napoleon’s honor (he later grew to hate Napoleon) “Eroica”
COMPOSITIONS

- 1 Opera
- 9 Symphonies
- MANY Piano Concertos (He often wrote these for himself to perform)
- Countless others: Mass, String Quartets, Solo Concertos, Trios, etc.
Beethoven’s hearing started fading, but his composing grew stronger.
Died in 1827
Public Funeral – 20,000 mourned his loss
Considered by many to be the greatest composer that ever lived.