



From Minnesota Public Radio's Sound Learning (www.soundlearning.org)

Sound Learning Feature for January 2005

From American Public Media's [Saint Paul Sunday](#)

This month we revisit a special from American Public Media's *Saint Paul Sunday*.

What is it that makes this man's music so universally popular? The connoisseurs have always revered his music - the greatest musicians and scholars, but the common man loves Beethoven's work, too - the fellow who can recognize the Fifth Symphony on the radio and hum along with the great tune at the end of the Ninth - Beethoven's his man, too. What gives this music the power to reach so many different sorts of people?

The articles in this month's feature are of particular interest to teachers and students of Arts and culture, music, and art history.

Segment 1: "[Beethoven's Journey Still Captivates](#)"

In the following pages, find instructional ideas and study guides intended to aid in the teaching of:

- Reading comprehension.
- Listening comprehension.
- Critical thinking.
- Research and writing challenges.
- Key terms and topics.



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Questions are based on the feature "Beethoven's Journey Still Captivates" (http://saintpaulsunday.publicradio.org/features/9710_emerson/), from American Public Media's *Saint Paul Sunday* Web site, <http://saintpaulsunday.publicradio.org>. Sound Learning is a production of Minnesota Public Radio.



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Beethoven's Journey Still Captivates

Reading Comprehension

Read the abridged article by Read the article by [Bill McGlaughlin: *Beethoven's Journey Still Captivates*](#)

http://saintpaulsunday.publicradio.org/features/9710_emerson/

Answer the following questions:

- 1.) How does the author explain Beethoven's appeal to so many different sorts of people?
- 2.) What major change occurred in Europe during Beethoven's time?
- 3.) What major event occurred in America during this period?
- 4.) How is Romanticism described in the passage?
- 5.) What was Beethoven's personal challenge?

Read the article by [Bill McGlaughlin: *We'll Hear Quite a Lot of Him-Beethoven's Early Life: 1770-1792*](#)

http://saintpaulsunday.publicradio.org/features/9710_emerson/docs/upbringing_frameset.html

Answer the following questions:

- 1.) What reason does the author give for calling Beethoven's family dysfunctional?
- 2.) Who did Beethoven visit in Vienna in 1787? What happened?



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- 3.) After Mozart's death in 1791, with whom did Beethoven study? How did this person describe Beethoven?
- 4.) What 'contradiction' existed in Beethoven's work?
- 5.) Read the Timeline that accompanies the text:
 - Identify two major events that occurred before Beethoven was born, and two that occurred after he was born.
 - Identify three events from the list that occurred in North America.

Listening Comprehension Questions

Read the following questions, then listen to Bill McGlaughlin's narrative for "[A New and Striking Voice-Beethoven's Early Period \(1792-1802\)](#)" to find the answers.

http://saintpaulsunday.publicradio.org/features/9710_emerson/rfiles/971001_a2_early_28.ram

- 1.) Beethoven composed in a number of different musical forms in his early years. Name three of them.
- 2.) What musical form is considered to be the test of a composer's powers?
- 3.) Who created the string quartet form?
- 4.) Why was competition from Joseph Haydn particularly difficult for Beethoven?

Read the following questions, then listen to Bill McGlaughlin's narrative for "[Toward A Musical Landscape-Beethoven's Middle Period \(1802-1812\)](#)" to find the answers.

http://saintpaulsunday.publicradio.org/features/9710_emerson/rfiles/971001_a3_middle_28.ram

- 1.) Describe the conflict Beethoven experienced over his increased hearing loss. Could he share that information with others? Why or why not?
- 2.) The Eroica Symphony was originally dedicated to someone, but Beethoven later changed his mind. Who was this person, and why did Beethoven make this change?



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- 3.) Beethoven composed a great deal of music during his Middle Period. Name three of his major works from this time, otherwise known as Beethoven's _____ period.

Critical Thinking Questions

These activities are based on "[Quartets for the Non-Connoisseur](#)" and "[Music Beyond Space and Time-Beethoven's Late Period \(1819-1827\)](#)"

http://saintpaulsunday.publicradio.org/features/9710_emerson/docs/quartetsintro.html

http://saintpaulsunday.publicradio.org/features/9710_emerson/docs/late_frameset.html

Answer the following questions:

- 1.) What reasons are given that make the string quartet 'necessary and sufficient'? Do you agree? Why or why not?
- 2.) A number of reasons are given for Beethoven's decreased productivity in the later part of his life. Which reason seems the most reasonable to you and why?
- 3.) Many artists use their work as a way to reflect or comment on the world around them. Do you believe artists are obligated to do so? Can you think of a modern musician whose work reflects our culture today? Explain.
- 4.) Beethoven suffered from hearing loss; he began to notice signs that he was losing his hearing in his late twenties. How do you think this might have affected his composing?

Research Challenges

1. The fourth movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is known as "Ode to Joy." It includes choral parts and often performed around large celebrations, such as New Year's Eve. Find a translation of this movement, or information on its history. Do you believe it's appropriate for such events.



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2. A very long timeline of historical events accompanies the passages on the website. Choose three events or people, and find additional information on them.
3. The Minnesota Orchestra and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra are the two major classical music ensembles in the Twin Cities. Try to find information about the pieces they have performed or plan to perform in the future. Is Beethoven part of their programs? Contact someone at the organization and find out how they choose pieces for performance.
4. We read and/or heard a great deal of information about Beethoven's time. He is often described as being between the two great ages of Enlightenment and Romanticism, and his work as an artist reflected the great shifts happening in his society and culture. The same might be said of our own world - we have observed major events in politics, culture, and society at large. How have you observed artists - be they musical, visual, literary, dance - reflect current events?
5. Choose one of the string quartets from the Web site. Then find some art materials. As you listen to the music, draw or paint whatever it is you see or feel. An alternate exercise would be to write a story that reflects the music you hear.



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Key Terms and Topics

From "Beethoven's Journey Still Captivates "

- connoisseur
- abstract
- revolution
- clarity
- proportion
- hierarchy
- captivate
- debilitating
- quartet

From "We'll Hear Quite a Lot of Him "

- dysfunctional
- paternal grandfather
- integrity
- alcoholic
- sinister
- haven
- mogul
- province
- commission
- aristocracy
- contradiction



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