LUDVIG VAN BEETHOVEN
BEETHOVEN WEEK!
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- Meet Sept. 9 & 11 in The Ira F. Brilliant Center for Beethoven Studies in the SJSU MLK Library
BEETHOVEN WEEK

• Tues. **September 9**, Group 1
• Thurs. **September 11**, Group 2

• Group 1 = last name **A - I**
• Group 2 = last name **J - Z**
GUEVARA LOCK OF HAIR

Located in The Ira F. Brilliant Center for Beethoven Studies at SJSU
LUDVIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

• Beethoven’s career is traditionally divided into three periods
• The **Early** period (1770-1802) his youth in Bonn and his early years in Vienna.
• The **Middle** Period (1803–1814) when Beethoven began to compose in a new style
• The **Late** Period (1815–1827) when Beethoven becomes increasingly isolated due to his deafness
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Beethoven’s Middle Period is the beginning of the “Romantic” era in Western Music
EARLY BEETHOVEN
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• Born in Bonn, Germany
Beethoven’s house in Bonn
EARLY BEETHOVEN

• Studied music with his father Johann van Beethoven (who was alcoholic) and other local musicians.
EARLY BEETHOVEN

• Entered the service of Archduke Maximilian Franz, elector of Cologne.
EARLY BEETHOVEN

- Attracted attentions as a **virtuoso pianist**. Praised by Franz Joseph *Haydn*, who urges the elector to send Beethoven to **Vienna**—one of the major musical capitals of Europe
Vienna in the 19th Century
Capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire
The Austro-Hungarian Empire
Beethoven’s house in Vienna
EARLY BEETHOVEN

• Studies with Haydn
• Beethoven establishes himself as a pianist and composer.
• Begins to earn additional income publishing his compositions.
• Most of Beethoven’s earliest works are for piano.
• His early works were aimed at amateurs, though he begins to compose more technically difficult works.
BAGATELLE IN A MINOR, OP. 59
“FÜR ELISE”

• Original manuscript dated April 10, 1810
• **Not published** during Beethoven’s lifetime
• Discovered by Ludwig Nohl, the original manuscript is now lost, though sketches survive
Sketch of “Für Elise”
Für Elise is a "bagatelle" ['nothing,' a short simple piece] or "albumblätt" ['album leaf,' a short piece to be put in a scrapbook album]
19th-century American album with visitor signatures
Album leaf by inscribed by Joseph Rubinstein
BAGATELLE IN A MINOR, OP. 59
“FÜR ELISE”

- Who is “Elise” is still in question
- Ludwig Nohl may have misread the name on the manuscript
- May be the name “Therese”
BAGATELLE IN A MINOR, OP. 59
“FÜR ELISE”

- German soprano Elisabeth “Elise” Röckel
  - A female friend of Beethoven’s
Therese Malfatti von Rohrenbach zu Dezza

- Was a piano student of Beethoven’s. He proposed to her, but was turned down
BAGATELLE IN A MINOR, OP. 59
“FÜR ELISE”

• Juliane Katharine Elisabet “Elise” Barensfeld
  • Was a female piano virtuoso, and knew Beethoven’s friend Johann Mälzel. Would have been 13 years old at the time of the composition
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“Bagatelle” [Fr. ‘a trifle’]
Short piece, usually for piano

“Für Elise” in rondo form: ABACA
- A Opening theme in A minor
- B Happier theme in C major
- A Return to opening theme
- C Dramatic section in D minor
- A Return to opening theme
“Big Mac” Rondo

A-B-A-C-A
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e4BysqPWgfc

“Für Elise” performed by Ivo Pogorelich
EARLY BEETHOVEN
EARLY BEETHOVEN

• Establishes himself as composer of piano music before turning to chamber music and orchestral works
• Premieres Symphony No. 1 in 1800
SONATA NO. 14
IN C-SHARP MINOR, OP. 27
“MOONLIGHT”: I, ADAGIO SOSTENUTO

• Composed in 1801
• Subtitles the sonata “quasi una fantasia” [like a fantasy]
• “Moonlight” is a nickname
  • Critic Ludwig Rellstab remarked that the first movement reminded him of moonlight reflecting off the surface of Lake Lucerne
Lake Lucerne at night during a thunder storm
SONATA NO. 14
IN C-SHARP MINOR, OP. 27
“MOONLIGHT”: I, ADAGIO SOSTENUTO

• Beethoven’s student Carl Czerny described it as:

  a “nocturnal scene, in which a ghostly voice sounds in the distance.”
SONATA NO. 14
IN C-SHARP MINOR, OP. 27
"MOONLIGHT": I, ADAGIO SOSTENUTO

• Piece **very popular** during Beethoven’s lifetime
• Beethoven exasperated by its popularity:

“Surely I’ve written better things!”
SONATA NO. 14
IN C-SHARP MINOR, OP. 27
“MOONLIGHT”: I, ADAGIO SOSTENUTO

- **Sonata** = Sound piece
- By nineteenth century =
  - **Instrumental piece**, usually for 1-2 **instruments**
  - In **3 movements**:
    - 1. Fast
    - 2. Slow
    - 3. Fast
SONATA NO. 14
IN C-SHARP MINOR, OP. 27
“MOONLIGHT”: I, ADAGIO SOSTENUTO

• The “Moonlight” unusual in plan
  • 1. Slow (Adagio sostenuto)
  • 2. Fast (Allegretto)
  • 3. Really Fast (Presto agitato)

• First movement has triplet ostinato [repeating figure] that occurs throughout the piece

• “Ostinato” = Italian for “obstinate”
“Moonlight” Sonata, movement I, Valentina Lisitsa
PIECES TO KNOW

• Beethoven, Bagatelle in A minor, “Für Elise,” (The 99 Most Essential Pieces of Classical Music, track 7)
TERMS TO KNOW

- “Early,” “Middle”, and “Late” period Beethoven
- Romantic Period
- Bagatelle / Albumblätt
- Elise / Therese
- Rondo (ABACA)
- Heiligenstadt Testament
- “quasi una fantasia”
- Ostinato
- Sonata