

# Beethoven – A Life Story of “Joy Through Suffering”

## Debasish Das

“The hammer is not all: the anvil also is necessary. Had destiny descended only upon some weakling, or on an imitation great man, and bent his back under this burden, there would have been no tragedy in it, only an everyday affair. But here destiny meets one of its own stature, who “seizes it by the throat,” who is at savage grips with it all the night till the dawn – the last dawn of all – and who, dead at last, lies with his two shoulders touching the earth, but in his death is carried victorious on his shield; one who out of his wretchedness has created a richness, out of his infirmity the magic wand that opens the rock”.- Romain Rolland on Beethoven.

Beethoven was born in December 1770 in Bonn to a family of musicians: his father Johann and his grandfather were musicians in Cologne.



(Portugal, 2020 | Beethoven's House in Bonn where he was born in 1770 | Mi: PT 4589)

Many innovative issues were released in 2020 to commemorate the 250th birth anniversary of Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827). Such as the Spanish stamp on a vinyl disc of his Fifth Symphony.

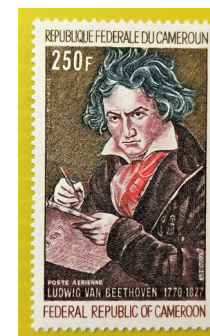


(Spain, 2020 | Beethoven 250-sheetlet can be played on a record player for Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67 | ES 4481)

German painter Joseph Karl Stieler's portrayal of Beethoven in 1820 remains his most reproduced work and finds its way to many philatelic issues. The painting is striking because one can see Beethoven's determined face, defeating his sufferings.



(Germany, 2020 | Beethoven 250 | Mi: DE BL85)



(Cameroon, 1970 | Beethoven, based on painting by Joseph Karl Stieler | C153)

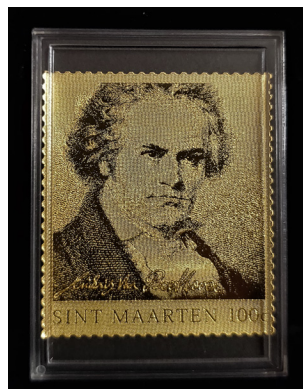


(Austria, 2020 | Beethoven 250 | Mi: AT 3553)

Beethoven moved to Vienna in 1792 at the age of 21 to become a musician. But at the age of 30, a hearing problem began to trouble him, threatening to stop his career as a musician. It was deeply frustrating. Although he could no longer work as a pianist, it prompted him even more to be remembered as a great composer. Beethoven wrote to a friend: “I want to grasp fate at the throat – it shouldn't bring me down completely.”



(Armenia, 2020 | Beethoven 250 | AR 1243)



(Sint Maarten, 2020 | Beethoven 250, printed in gold)



(Azerbaijan, 2020 | Beethoven 250 | Mi: AZ 1615)



(Niger, 1970 | Beethoven, The Ode to Joy | NE C144)

At 46, Beethoven became completely deaf. At the age of 53, he composed the Ninth Symphony, based on the poem written by Schiller in 1785. At its premiere, as he was facing the orchestra with his back towards the audience, he was unaware of the audience breaking into a thunderous applaud, which he realized when he finally turned around. The Ninth Symphony represented freedom and democracy in a time when resentment was frowned upon by the authorities. Romain Rolland describes the voices of the orchestra as: “a paean of dynamic, youthful joy; a march of headlong challenge; a kind of La Marseillaise.”