

## Digital Learning

# Egmont Overture, Op.84

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

### COMPOSER:

Ludwig van Beethoven was born in the German city of Bonn in 1770. He is well known to this day as one of the most well-known composers of the orchestral repertoire. Beethoven's life spanned two of the more important stylistic epochs of musical history, the classic and romantic eras, during a time when the arts and Western Europe were particularly influenced by the American and French Revolutions of the late eighteenth century.

Beethoven came from a family of court singers, but his early family life was rather unhappy because of the abuse from an alcoholic father and the need for Beethoven at an early age to take on the role of caregiver to his mother and two younger brothers. In his early teen years, he was already working as a chapel organist, and at the age of seventeen, he traveled to Vienna to play for Mozart. Beethoven's talents continued to evolve, and by the age of twenty-two, Beethoven decided to permanently move to Vienna and study with Haydn. His career in Vienna demonstrated his great talent as a solo pianist and included an additional commitment to composition. He was welcomed into the homes of the music-loving aristocracy of Vienna, and through the influences of those wealthy patrons, Beethoven was able to receive support and commissions from a series of counts and princes, many of whom received dedications in Beethoven's compositions. By his early thirties, Beethoven had achieved fame as a serious and successful composer with several publishers competing for his compositions.

### Composition:

*Overture to Egmont* is the opening composition for incidental music Beethoven composed to accompany the tragic play about the story of Egmont, written by Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749-1832), German poet, dramatist, novelist, and scientist whose genius embraced most fields of human endeavor. The story of Egmont describes the final years of Count Lamoral Egmont (1522-1568), the Flemish general and statesman who was executed by the Spanish. As a general of the Habsburg Emperor Charles V, Egmont had won victories over the French, which made him a popular hero. The story and music of *Egmont* speaks to Beethoven's commitment to democracy, freedom, and the battle against tyranny.

The overture is in F minor, is in one movement, and lasts approximately eight minutes and thirty seconds to nine minutes. The overture has three sections: an opening slow section in 3/2 meter, *Sostenuto ma non troppo*; a middle section, *Allegro*, in 3/4 ; and the final 4/4 section, *Allegro con brio*.

## **FORM and STRUCTURE: “Sonata” Form**

<b>SECTION</b>	<b>MEASURES</b>
Introduction:	m.# 1
<b>EXPOSITION</b>	
Allegro/Theme A	m.# 25
Theme B	m.# 82
<b>DEVELOPMENT</b>	m.# 124
<b>RECAPITULATION</b>	
Theme A	m.# 193
Theme B	m.# 225
<b>CODA</b>	m.# 287

### **What is a Sonata Form?**

– Please research it yourself so that you can share at next session! We can have a great discussion with about it. Also, we will look at samples of well-known pieces that are in this “Sonata” form.