



Ludwig van Beethoven

(1770-1827)

### Beethoven as innovator

- ▶ Beethoven was one of the first composers to be able to maintain his financial independence (from the aristocratic court) by publishing his own music successfully
- ▶ Beethoven opened new pathways for Romantic composers by using cyclical and programmatic elements in his music, expanding orchestral forces, and introducing the chorus and words into his influential Ninth Symphony
- ▶ He greatly expanded sonata form principles by changing the traditional order and number of movements, using greater thematic and tonal contrasts, and integrating all of the movements of a composition into a single unified conception

### Beethoven's style

- ▶ Beethoven started out as a virtuoso pianist as well as a composer, but his growing deafness ended his performing career and increasingly isolated him from society—these struggles give his music a defiant, confident feeling
- ▶ Beethoven's music is characterized by daring heroic themes and powerful rhythmic drive, rigorous thematic development and clear motivic unity
- ▶ His later style featured greater intimacy and lyricism with more use of compositional extremes and a frequent focus on contrapuntal forms

### Beethoven's works

- ▶ Beethoven's works were models that inspired (and sometimes intimidated) composers for decades to come
- ▶ These works include:
  - ▶ Sonatas: 32 Piano sonatas, 10 violin sonatas and 5 cello sonatas
  - ▶ Chamber music: 16 string quartets, 3 string quintets and 9 piano trios
  - ▶ Orchestral music: 9 symphonies and 11 overtures
  - ▶ Concertos: 5 piano concertos, 1 violin concerto, and 1 concerto for piano, violin, and cello
  - ▶ Miscellaneous: 1 opera, 2 masses, 1 oratorio, 4 cantatas, songs, piano variations, and folksong arrangements