

## Beer & Beethoven

Monday, May 28 – 7:30 pm

Alexander Prior, conductor

### BEETHOVEN

#### *Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op.67*

(31')\*

Allegro con brio

Andante con moto

Allegro

Allegro

program subject to change

\*indicates approximate performance duration

#### *Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op.67*

#### Ludwig van Beethoven

(b. Bonn, 1770 / d. Vienna, 1827)

First performed: December 22, 1808 in Vienna

Last ESO performance: September 2015

The work that begins with the most famous four notes in all of music was hinted at by Beethoven in sketchbooks in 1803, although the work eventually premiered at a massive all-Beethoven concert in 1808. The entire first movement, in fact, is built upon the seemingly insignificant foundation of those four very famous notes (three Gs and an E-flat, if you've always wondered) – and you can hear that motif echo in all four movements of the symphony.

The opening Allegro takes the motif and varies it, adds to it, and manipulates it with genius, creating variety with absolute continuity. The slow movement presents a theme which is given two major-key variations, bringing a sense of serenity following the opening movement's storm-tossed drama. The Scherzo is effectively dark, again in the minor key, and wandering away from the home key to wind up, near the movement's end, in E-flat minor. As C minor is again restored, Beethoven segues directly from this foreboding movement into the finale.

But the C of C minor is also the C of C Major, and Beethoven brings the symphony from shadows to brilliant sunlight as quiet timpani and strings burst forth with a triumphant brass fanfare. Piccolo, trombones and contrabassoons all make their symphonic debut in this final movement, one which shows two prominent aspects of the composer's personality – his noble, heroic nature as well as his

broad sense of humour. One can't help but think that Beethoven had a ready laugh at us as the symphony nears its end – he seems to bring logical conclusions (or places where you could easily think you see the end coming) a half-dozen times before he actually does let the work finish.

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