

Discovering the Life of Beethoven | Small Group Tour

Reading List

Beethoven: Anguish and Triumph

by Jan Swafford

Jan Swafford's biographies of Charles Ives and Johannes Brahms have established him as a revered music historian, capable of bringing his subjects vibrantly to life. His magnificent new biography of Ludwig van Beethoven peels away layers of legend to get to the living, breathing human being who composed some of the world's most iconic music. Swafford mines sources never before used in English-language biographies to reanimate the revolutionary ferment of Enlightenment-era Bonn, where Beethoven grew up and imbibed the ideas that would shape all of his future work. Swafford then tracks his subject to Vienna, capital of European music, where Beethoven built his career in the face of critical incomprehension, crippling ill health, romantic rejection, and "fate's hammer," his ever-encroaching deafness. Throughout, Swafford offers insightful readings of Beethoven's key works. More than a decade in the making, this will be the standard Beethoven biography for years to come.

Beethoven: The Man Revealed

by John Suchet

Beethoven scholar and classical radio host John Suchet has had a lifelong, ardent interest in the man and his music. Here, in his first full-length biography, Suchet illuminates the composer's difficult childhood, his struggle to maintain friendships and romances, his ungovernable temper, his obsessive efforts to control his nephew's life, and the excruciating decline of his hearing. This absorbing narrative provides a comprehensive account of a momentous life, as it takes the reader on a journey from the composer's birth in Bonn to his death in Vienna.

Chronicling the landmark events in Beethoven's career—from his competitive encounters with Mozart to the circumstances surrounding the creation of the well-known Für Elise and Moonlight Sonata—this book enhances understanding of the composer's character, inspiring a deeper appreciation for his work. Beethoven scholarship is constantly evolving, and Suchet draws on the latest research, using rare source material (some of which has never before been published in English) to paint a complete and vivid portrait of the legendary prodigy.

Beethoven: The Music and the Life

by Lewis Lockwood

A recognized authority on Beethoven, Lockwood (music, emeritus, Harvard) concentrates primarily on his subject's music and development as a composer before dedicating separate chapters to biography and the historical, political, and cultural milieus. This particularly refreshing approach, modeled on Abraham Pasis's "Subtle Is the Lord": The Science and the Life of Albert Einstein and Nicholas Boyle's Goethe: The Poet and the Age, differs from other recent studies that focused more on Beethoven's life (e.g., Barry Cooper's Beethoven and Maynard Solomon's Beethoven). All of Lockwood's narrative, including the discussion of specific compositions, will be accessible to serious music lovers with only a modest technical background. This results partly from an interesting innovation, especially pleasing to specialists-100 additional musical examples are available on a companion web site (www.wwnorton.com/trade/lockwood), allowing the author to be far less technical in his discussion. Lockwood's study offers a new and authoritative interpretation of a prodigiously gifted and complex man and artist who saw himself as Mozart's heir. Highly recommended for public and academic libraries.

Beethoven's Symphonies: An Artistic Vision

by Lewis Lockwood

More than any other composer, Beethoven left to posterity a vast body of material that documents the early stages of almost everything he wrote. From this trove of sketchbooks, Lewis Lockwood draws us into the composer's mind, unveiling a creative process of astonishing scope and originality. For musicians and nonmusicians alike, Beethoven's symphonies stand at the summit of artistic achievement, loved today as they were two hundred years ago for their emotional cogency, variety, and unprecedented individuality. Beethoven labored to complete nine of them over his lifetime—a quarter of Mozart's output and a tenth of Haydn's—yet no musical works are more iconic, more indelibly stamped on the memory of anyone who has heard them. They are the products of an imagination that drove the composer to build out of the highest musical traditions of the past something startlingly new.

Lockwood brings to bear a long career of studying the surviving sources that yield insight into Beethoven's creative work, including concept sketches for symphonies that were never finished. From these, Lockwood offers fascinating revelations into the historical and biographical circumstances in which the symphonies were composed. In this compelling story of Beethoven's singular ambition, Lockwood introduces readers to the symphonies as individual artworks, broadly

tracing their genesis against the backdrop of political upheavals, concert life, and their relationship to his major works in other genres. From the first symphonies, written during his emerging deafness, to the monumental Ninth, Lockwood brings to life Beethoven's lifelong passion to compose works of unsurpassed beauty.

Beethoven, the man and the artist, as revealed in his own words

by Ludwig Van Beethoven

This anthology is a thorough introduction to classic literature for those who have not yet experienced these literary masterworks. For those who have known and loved these works in the past, this is an invitation to reunite with old friends in a fresh new format. From Shakespeare's finesse to Oscar Wilde's wit, this unique collection brings together works as diverse and influential as *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Othello*. As an anthology that invites readers to immerse themselves in the masterpieces of the literary giants, it is a must-have addition to any library.
