

I thought today I would talk about the two greatest musical geniuses who ever lived - WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (pronounced 'Moats - art') and LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (pronounced 'Lood - vig van Bate-hove-en'). Mozart was born in 1756 and died in 1791. Beethoven was born in 1770 and died in 1827. (You can work out their ages when they died from that - for Mozart, do 1791 minus 1756; and for Beethoven, do 1827 minus 1770. You'll see Mozart died when he was still quite young, and Beethoven didn't die young but he didn't die that old either.) So from 1770 (when Beethoven was born) until 1791 (when Mozart died) - for 21 years - the world had in it the two greatest musical geniuses who ever lived or would ever live. It's like having Messi and Ronaldo playing at the same time.

Mozart was born first. His middle name was 'Amadeus', which means 'loved by God'. And he certainly seemed to be loved by God from a very early age when it came to music. He was a child prodigy (pronounced 'prod - ih - jee') - a genius at playing the piano who performed in concerts from the age of six. His father would take him around all the royal courts in Europe to perform. This brought him to the attention of the Austrian Emperor, JOSEPH II, and in 1781 when Mozart was 25 he was summoned to the Austrian capital, VIENNA, to become one of the Emperor's composers - Mozart would be paid a certain amount every year and in return would be expected to compose music that would make Vienna the centre of the musical universe. Mozart didn't know it, but he only had 10 years left to live. But what a 10 years! While in



Vienna he composed some of the greatest pieces of music ever written. In 1786, when he was only 30 he wrote what is possibly the greatest opera (a play which also involves songs) ever written - THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO. He apparently wrote it out without needing to make any corrections - the music was all in his head and he just wrote it out. He also wrote some of the greatest symphonies (41 in all) ever written. At the very end of his life, he started work on a REQUIEM MASS - he never got to complete it, but it is still one of his most popular pieces of music.

Beethoven was 21 when Mozart died. He also showed a lot of musical talent when he was a child, and his father thought that he could make money by having his son perform for other people, just like Mozart's father did with Mozart. But Beethoven was not as talented as Mozart, and Beethoven's father used to beat Beethoven when he did not play as well as expected. This may have contributed to Beethoven having problems with his hearing later in his life, from the age of 30 onwards. Beethoven became more and more deaf as he grew older, and was almost completely deaf from the age of 42. This is an AMAZING fact about Beethoven - that one of the top two musical geniuses ever to live could NOT HEAR HIS OWN MUSIC when he composed it. He had to hear it in his head and write it down. Despite



his deafness, Beethoven can claim to have written some of the greatest pieces of music ever written - the greatest symphony ever (SYMPHONY No 9), the greatest piano concerto (PIANO CONCERTO No 5), the greatest string quartet (STRING QUARTET No 14), the greatest piano sonata (PIANO SONATA No 32), the greatest Mass (MISSA SOLEMNIS).

While Mozart's music is so beautiful it seems to be telling us something about what heaven is like, Beethoven's music is about what it is like to be a human being, how difficult life can sometimes be for people, and how if they persist and fight, they will eventually be victorious. So Beethoven's is often described as heroic (do you remember that his THIRD SYMPHONY, which he wanted to dedicate to NAPOLEON, was called the 'EROICA SYMPHONY'?) and inspires people to do heroic things. For example, the opening of Beethoven's FIFTH SYMPHONY was played over the radio during WORLD WAR II to inspire people fighting the Germans to keep on going.

Here are some links to allow you to listen to a little of some of the greatest music ever written:

Here is the opening to Mozart's opera 'The Marriage of Figaro' set to the opening credits of a film called 'TRADING PLACES' that was really popular when your mummy and I were younger than Ines is now - no other piece of music better describes the hustle and bustle of a new day dawning and people going to work (at least when they are not under a lockdown):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lCubTHR5vpY>

There was a brilliant film about Mozart called 'AMADEUS' (only watch the original version, not the Director's Cut). Here is a scene from it where a composer called SALIERI describes the first time he saw a piece of music by Mozart:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYHJRhRym1U>

And this scene shows Mozart on his sickbed, dictating some of his Requiem Mass to Salieri:

<https://youtu.be/USe-wZ0AOQQ?t=67>

This clip is from a good film about Beethoven called 'Immortal Beloved', showing so much - the first performance of his Symphony 9 (and the final, most famous movement, the 'ODE TO JOY'), how deaf Beethoven was, how Beethoven's father abused him, and how Beethoven was always reaching in his music for something greater, something that would unite him and God. WATCH THIS CLIP!

<https://youtu.be/7fQG4CcoRuM?t=44>