

RABINDRA BHARATI UNIVERSITY
VOCAL MUSIC DEPARTMENT

COURSE - B.A. (Compulsory Course) (CBCS) 2020

Semester - II , Paper - I

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History of Western Music

1) Short life sketches.

C) Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Austrian composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is widely recognised as one of the greatest composer in the history of western music. Unlike any other composers in musical history, he wrote in all the musical genres of his day and excelled in every one. His range of musical works have made him the most popular of all western composers.

Mozart was born in 27th january 1756 at Salzburg ,a city in Austria. His father Leopold was a composer, a well-known vocalist as well as a musician of local church. Mozart showed keen interest for music from his childhood; he can play violin at his six years of

age and not only so, he can also write fague and minuet at that time. His father took young Mozart and his sister who also was musically talented on tours throughout Europe in which they performed as harpsichordists, pianists, violinists and organists and received numerous commissions. In Paris, Mozart's first music was published and that is a sonata for keyboard and violin.

In London, when he was only eleven, he wrote his first symphony. In 1769, at Vienna, he wrote a music-drama in German language. In 1770, when he was in Milan, his new opera 'Mithuradates, king of Pontus' has been staged and achieved notable success. In 1772, he returned to Salzburg and again moved to Italy and wrote eight symphonies, several sacred music and a serenata, secular dramatic contata.

In 1773, he returned to Salzburg. The instrumental music of the period around the Italian journey included several symphonies, a few of them were in Italian style, but others were new from of orchestration and scale. There are also numerous string quartets and divertimentos also.

Leopold took Mozart to Vienna in 1773, where he produced a set of string quartets and soon after he returned to Salzburg he wrote a group of symphonies. In 1774, he composed numerous symphonies, concertos, serenades and several sacred musics. In this year, Mozart was commissioned to write an opera buffa, for the Musical carnival season, where it was duly successful.

In 1777, when he was in Mannheim, he composed several piano sonatas and some with violins. Mozart and his mother reached Paris in March, 1778, and Mozart soon started a new symphony and by the time of the symphony's premiere, his mother fell seriously ill, and on 3rd July, she died. Soon after, Leopold negotiated a better job for Mozart in Salzburg church, where he would be a concert-master and Mozart reluctantly returned home in January, 1780. At Salzburg he composed two piano concertos, two piano sonatas and several sacred music, including the best-known of his complete masses, 'The Coronation Mass'.

In 1781, when he was in Vienna, he married Constanze Weber and his new opera reached the

Burgtheatre stage on July, 1782, and the work enjoyed immediate and continuing success. Later in this year, Mozart worked on several piano-concertos, string quartets, mass etc. In 1782, when Mozart was in Vienna, he composed several piano-concertos, which he published in 1785. In 1786, He composed two operas 'The Marriage of Figaro' and 'Don Giovanni' and these two operas were warmly received not only in Vienna, but in Prague and Bohemia also.

In 1791, he received a commission for a requiem in Prague. But pressure of work made him ill and he returned to Vienna. In November, he died of a severe fever, before the requiem to be completed. That requiem had been completed by his pupil, Süssmayr.

D) Ludwig Van Beethoven

German composer Ludwig Van Beethoven was a bridge between the 18th century classical period and the new beginnings of Romanticism. His greatest breakthroughs in compositions came in his instrumental works including his symphonies.

Beethoven was born in 17th december, 1770 at Bonn, a well known city of Germany. His father and grand father worked as court musician in Bonn. His father was a singer and gave Beethoven his early lessons on music. Before he was 12 years old, he learnt to play piano, violin etc. and as a result he became a court organist. In 1783 at his thirteenth years of age , his own music piece was first published.

In 1786, he worked as an assistant of Mozart. Five years later he left Bonn and moved to vienna to study music under Joseph Haydn. But Haydn didn't have much time to help Beethoven. Beethoven's first public appearance in vienna was on March 1795, as a soloist in one of his piano-concerto. The first three piano sonata, Beethoven dedicated to Haydn. At the same time , he wrote numerous music pieces like piano trio, violin sonata, string quartet etc. In Vienna, young Beethoven soon accumulated a long list of aristocratic patrons.

In the late 1700s Beethoven began to suffer from early symptoms of deafness. Around the same time developed severe abdominal pain. By 1802, he was convinced that his deafness was not only permanent, but

was getting progressively worse. Beethoven was never married. Although his friends were numerous but he was rather a lonely man, prone to irritability and dramatic mood swings. He continued to appear in stage and increasingly focussed his time on his compositions. Living near vienna, he took long walks carrying sketchbooks, which became a repository of his musical ideas, by which , he perfected his melodies , harmonies and instrumentations.

In 1800, he published his first symphony. In 1802, he published his second symphony. The third symphony which he published in 1803, was devoted to Napoleon. This period upto 1814, includes much of Beethoven's improvisatory works. In between 1806 to 1808, he wrote numerous string quartets, overture, opera and three symphonies.

Many critics and listeners regard Beethoven as the finest composer who ever lived. He elevated symphonic music to a new position of authority in the western music tradition. He also made great strides with chamber music for piano, as well as for string quartets, trios and sonatas. Of his innovation in the symphony the most notable is

the application of scherzo, a vigorous, playful composition in a symphony or sonata. He enriched both the orchestra and the quartet with a new range and variety of texture.

In between 1808, he composed numerous piano-sonatas, 5 symphonies, piano-concertos, violin concertos etc. Beethoven holds an important place in the history of the Piano. In his days , the piano sonata was the most intimate form of chamber music, which was often performed in public. For Beethoven , the piano sonata was the vehicle for his boldest and most inward thoughts. Moonlight sonata is one of his most popular piano sonata.

His works include nine symphonies, 32 piano sonatas, five piano concertos, 17 string quartets, 10 violin sonatas, more than one operas, masses and numerous chamber musics. By 1819, he had become completely deaf but his creativity never finished until death. He died on 26th march 1827, in Vienna.