

*Beethoven Overture Coriolan, Op. 62*

By Ludwig Van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Ludwig Van Beethoven was a German composer and pianist born into a family of professional musicians. In his early years, Beethoven moved to Vienna to study with well-known personalities in the world of music such as Joseph Haydn. His personal life was marked by a constant struggle against deafness since the age of 28 and most of his prominent works were composed throughout this struggle. Despite his deafness, Beethoven was an influential figure in the transition from the Classical to Romantic era and remains one of the greatest and most radical composers of all times.

Beethoven's *Overture Coriolan, Op. 62* was written for Heinrich Joachim von Collin's drama *Coriolan*, and was composed and first performed in 1807, belonging to the so called "heroic period" in Beethoven's output. Coriolan, a Roman general banished from Rome despite his service to the people, seeks vengeance by leading an army against the city. His mother and wife convince him to withdraw, so he puts his fate in the hands of the Roman mob, choosing suicide as the only solution. The dilemma of a heroic political leader torn among patriotism, family, and personal pride greatly appealed to Beethoven.

The Overture focuses on the hero's moment of decision with agonizing chords, flexible rhythms, and lurching accents. Beethoven's Overture is full of power, tragedy, and original harmonic twists and turns. The opening chords in C minor suggest the power and determination of the general while the second theme contrasts in a lyrical and imploring manner, representing the appeals of his mother and his wife. These two themes interplay and conflict with each other throughout the piece. No triumph emerges from the hero's struggle and the music ends in a murmur as Coriolan dies.

By Leslie Gair