

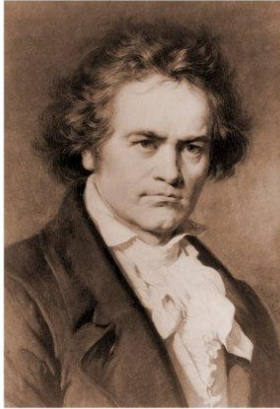
## American Philharmonic – Sonoma County

### Program notes for 2011-2012 Season

May 6, 2012 – *Emperor and King*

Piano Concerto No. 5, "Emperor"

Ludwig von Beethoven (1770-1827)



Beethoven was born in Bonn to working-class parents in September of 1770. He showed musical talent while very young, so his father had him start a grueling musical education at age five. His father failed to turn Ludwig into a box-office star in the footsteps of Mozart, but his efforts in this direction gained the young Beethoven a good early education, even if his father's motives might have been misguided. With his first composition published when he was thirteen, Beethoven began to build a reputation for his bold and inventive compositions, as well as for his rough and outspoken manner with people at every level of society.

This concerto's nickname, "Emperor," was given to it by Johann Cramer, the English publisher of the piece. This piece has the characteristics of a "military concerto" popular in the early 1800s such as sections in march rhythm, trumpet fanfares, and drumroll motifs, particularly in the first movement. The second movement is based on a hymn tune. The last movement, in rondo form, contrasts heroic ideas and graceful ideas that sound like improvisation. Beethoven never played the solo part of this concerto in public, as he did with his other concertos. This concerto only became popular in the later 1800s when played by the great pianist Franz Liszt.

Symphony No. 3, "Organ"

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)

A six-year-old boy received a gift of the score of a famous opera. He was (of course) delighted, spending hours poring over it. He was, even at this tender age, composing songs and little piano pieces. The score was Mozart's "Don Giovanni," and the boy was Camille Saint-Saëns. He started piano and harmony lessons the next year, and by 1852 had won prizes for both organ playing and composition. This was the year he met Franz Liszt, a great and influential friend for a young musician. In that same year, he competed for the coveted prize for composers, the Grand Prix de Rome, but was unsuccessful; the prize was won by someone now considered a nonentity.



This symphony, premiered in 1886, was dedicated to Franz Liszt. The organ appears as a member of the orchestra rather than as a concerto soloist, lending the power and grandeur no other single instrument can muster. The piece is divided into two main parts. A slow introduction leads to a fast section, a restless and serious development of contrasting themes. The second section of Part I is a peaceful meditation. Part II begins with a scherzo that occasionally repeats material from Part I. The second section of Part II highlights the organ in a hymn-like chorale. You may find yourself humming tunes from this piece.

Notes by R. M. Teplitz