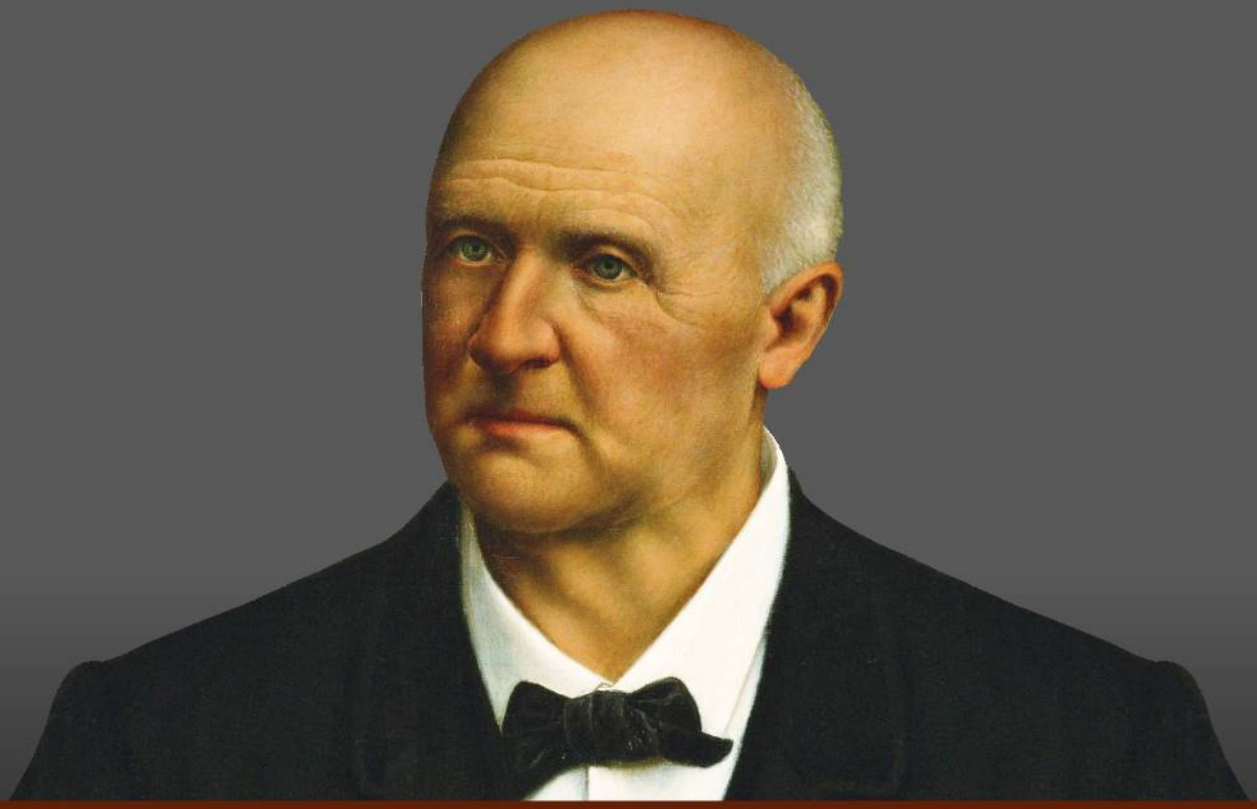


35

Ludwig van Beethoven



Beethoven's grave, Währing Cemetery

Thursday, 21 June 1888 4:00 pm

The remains of Ludwig van Beethoven are exhumed from the Währing Cemetery. The casket is opened for inspection by experts (doctors and scientists) . Prior to a reburial in a belated « grave of honour » at the Central Cemetery, skeletal measurements are taken by seven anthropologists - their calipers ascertain curvature and depth of the brain cavity. The skull is photographed and a plaster cast is made. A commemorative appreciation is pronounced by the mayor's representative.

Anton Bruckner, tenor Benedict Randhartinger, Carl Hrubý, Ludwig Grande and other pupils are attending.

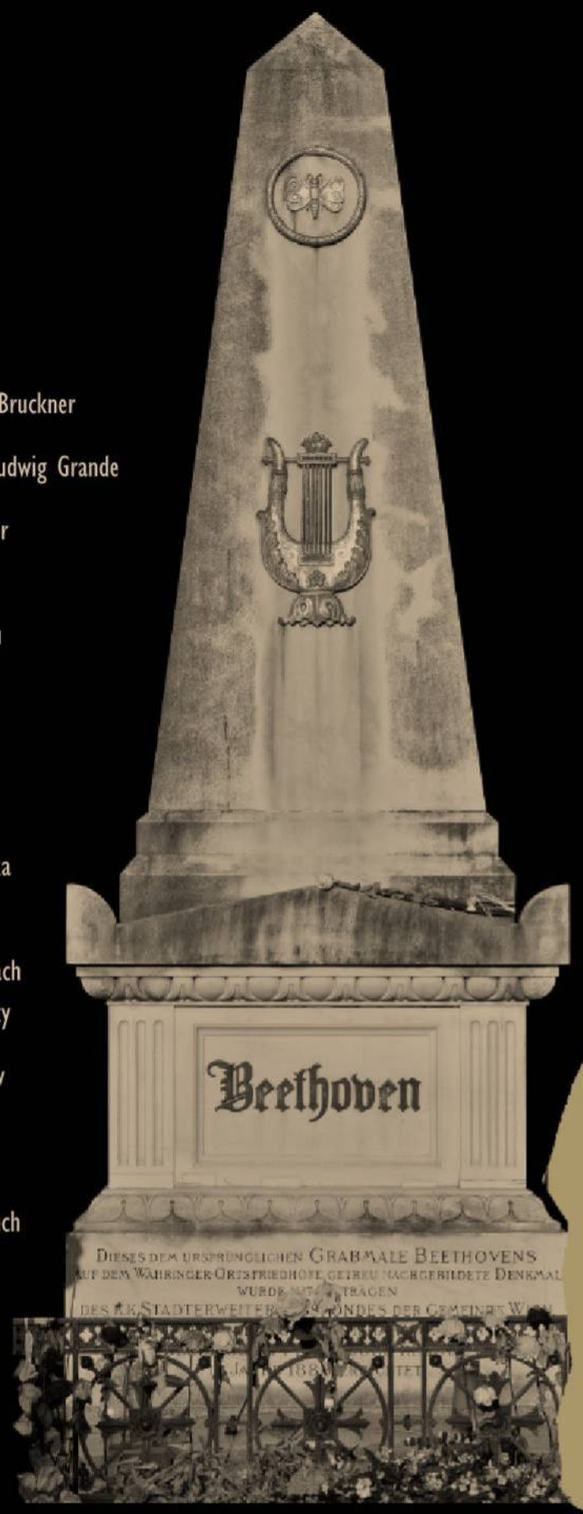


Beethoven's skull

photographed by Johann Batta Rottmayer (1863)

Exhumation of Beethoven's remains





Amongst others, in attendance :

- Imperial Court organist Anton Bruckner
- His students Carl Hrubý and Ludwig Grande
- Hans Kreuzinger, concert master of the Court Opera orchestra
- Composer Koch von Langentreu
- Tenor Benedict Randhartinger
- Pianist Theodor Leschetitzky and his wife Anna Yesipova
- " Kapellmeister " Alfons Czibulka
- Professors Theodor Meynert, Carl Toldt and Augustin Weißbach from the Anthropological Society
- Beethoven's great-grand-nephew Dr. Hermann Weidinger
- Court actor Josef Lewinsky delivers a commemorative speech written by court councillor Joseph Ritter von Weilen



Thursday, 21 June 1888, Währing Cemetery, northwest of Vienna (4:00 pm)

The remains of Ludwig van Beethoven are privately exhumed from the Währing Cemetery, northwest of Vienna. The casket is opened for inspection by experts (doctors and scientists) . Prior to skeletal measurements taken by seven anthropologists - their calipers ascertain curvature and depth of the brain cavity. The skull is photographed and a plaster cast is made. A commemorative appreciation is pronounced by the Mayor's representative. Court organist Anton Bruckner and his students Carl Hrubý and Ludwig Grande are attending. At half past five, the officials want to replace the remains in the coffin. Against the protest of a policeman, an uninvited Bruckner already barged into the Währing chapel. When he sees Beethoven's open casket, he brushes past horrified specialists at work, greatly excited, and insists on touching the head of the « Master » . Clamping on his « pince-nez » , he grasps with both hands the forehead. A doctor tries to interfere but Bruckner, at sixty-four, still has the single minded enthusiasm of a boy. Staring into the empty sockets of the skull as if he is trying to divine the sublime riddle of genius, he declaims in his heavy Upper-Austrian dialect : « Ain't it true, dear Beethoven, that if you were alive today, you'd allow me to touch you ? And now, them strange gentlemen here want to forbid me that ! » Bruckner must be removed by using force.



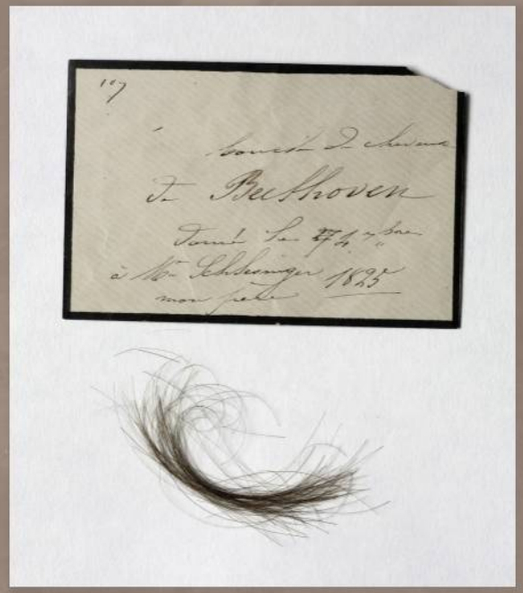
Beethoven exhibit room

The « interior » has a very clear thematic dramaturgy ranging from his youth to his adult life and, then, to his death, and can also be interpreted as the staging of his three creative periods a common narrative strategy in musicology for depicting the life and works of composers. Within these displayed phases, there are several objects that stage Beethoven as a genius figure and highlight personal aspects alongside his compositional achievements.

« Ain't it true, dear Beethoven, that if you were alive today you'd allow me to touch you ? » (Bruckner)

Beethoven room

The « Beethoven room » has a very clear thematic dramaturgy ranging from his youth to his adult life and, then, to his death, and can also be interpreted as the staging of his three creative periods a common narrative strategy in musicology for depicting the life and works of composers. Within these displayed phases, there are several objects that stage Beethoven as a genius figure and highlight personal aspects alongside his compositional achievements.



Beethoven's lock of hair, with certificate of authentication

« Ain't it true, dear Beethoven, that if you were alive today you'd allow me to touch you ? » (Bruckner)

Beethoven room

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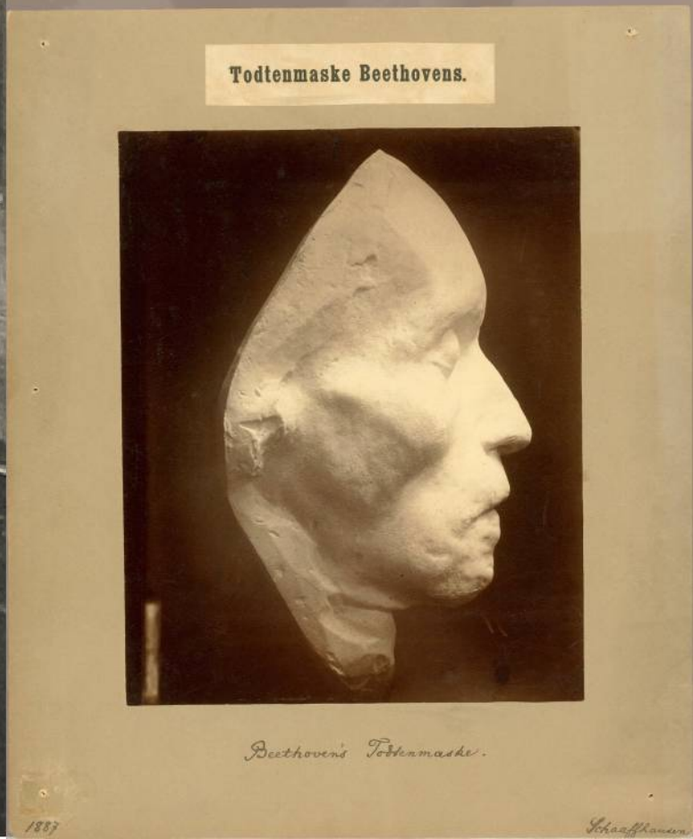


Beethoven's medium-sized ear trumpet

« Ain't it true, dear Beethoven, that if you were alive today you'd allow me to touch you ? » (Bruckner)

Beethoven room

Picture of Beethoven's death mask (1887)



« Ain't it true, dear Beethoven, that if you were alive today you'd allow me to touch you ? » (Bruckner)



Beethoven room

Pictures of Beethoven's death mask

plaster cast after the one by Josef Danhauser (1827)



« Ain't it true, dear Beethoven, that if you were alive today you'd allow me to touch you ? » (Bruckner)

Beethoven room

Pictures of Beethoven's death mask

plaster cast after the one by Josef Danhauser (1827)





« Ain't it true, dear Beethoven, that if you were alive today you'd allow me to touch you ? » (Bruckner)

Beethoven room

Stand VI is mostly dedicated to Beethoven's death, containing an invitation to his wake ; a depiction of his remains being exhumed and buried again ; two famous poems dedicated to his death by Karl Schlechta ; and one by Friedrich August Kanne. It also shows his song cycle « An die Ferne Geliebte » (To the distant beloved) , Opus 98 ; and his Piano sonata No. 29 in B major, Opus 106 - the so-called « Hammerklaviersonate » . Images and portraits of him include Beethoven taking a walk ; « his hands » by the Austrian painter Josef Danhuser ; his apartment on « Schwarzspanierstraße » in Vienna's ninth district (Alsergrund) ; one of his ear trumpets ; his death mask ; and an image that depicts him composing in the forest near Bonn. Scantily dispersed portraits of Franz-Josef Lobkowitz and Countess Therese Brunswick can also be found. Last but not least, his grand piano by John Broadwood from London.



Plaster cast after the one by Josef Danhauser (1827)