Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827), a German composer, grew up in Bonn where he studied the violin and piano. Beethoven's father, a chapel singer employed by the Archbishop-Elector of Bonn, was a stern taskmaster and drove young Ludwig to long hours of practice hoping he would become a child prodigy like Mozart. Although Beethoven was obviously talented, he did not become a "marketable" child prodigy. In 1787 he visited Vienna where he played for Mozart, who predicted an outstanding musical career for him. Beethoven hurried back to Bonn to attend his mother who became ill. After his mother's death, he remained at Bonn for five years as a viola player in the court opera orchestra. In 1792 he returned to Vienna and studied with Haydn for about a year. Around this time Beethoven began to earn his living from the sale of compositions and from teaching. He became an honored and respected musician to many royal families (Prince Lichnowsky, Count Waldstein, Count Rasumovsky, etc.), and he dedicated many of his works to these noblemen. In his early thirties, Beethoven experienced a hearing loss which later deteriorated into total deafness. The increasing deafness altered his character. He grew morose and suspicious and had frequent outbursts of temper. A prolific composer, Beethoven wrote 32 piano sonatas, five piano concertos, one violin concerto, an opera, a great quantity of chamber music, and many other works.

Russian Folk Song

STYLE: CLASSICAL

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN