COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Title: Beethoven 250: Celebrating the Anniversary of the Master Composer’s Birth

Instructor: Betsy Schwarm; betsy.schwarm@gmail.com
Music historian Betsy Schwarm is a familiar face and voice in the Denver performing arts world, giving pre-performance talks for the Colorado Symphony and Opera Colorado, and teaching general interest appreciation classes around the area. She is also the author of eight books on classical music and spent a dozen years on the air with the vintage KVOD-fm, “The Classical Voice of Denver.”

Course Times: Wednesdays 9:30-11:30 (January 15 - February 5, 2020)

Course Location: Ruffatto Hall, Room 305

Course Description:
Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827): there may be no more famous name in all of music history. From Peanuts© cartoons to pop music re-imaginings to tens of thousands of classical performances, the man's name and his music have not been out of the spotlight since he appeared on the scene. In 2020, the world celebrates the 250th anniversary of Beethoven’s birth, and for this OLLI class, music historian Betsy Schwarm will offer insights on the man and his music. We’ll explore Beethoven’s life and works in the context of his time, as well as considering how he changed the styles that came before him and influenced the styles that came afterward. Thanks to his published correspondence, we’ll even hear from Beethoven himself, and there’ll be lots of opportunities for discussion. Be part of this early investigation of the Beethoven Anniversary, and you’ll be that much better prepared for other Beethoven recitals and concerts as the year continues.

Session #1 – Classical Music before 1800: Influences upon Beethoven
Including Haydn and Mozart, as well as Beethoven’s “Pathetique” Sonata

Session #2 – Reinventing the Symphony
Including Beethoven’s Symphonies no. 1, 5, and 9

Session #3 – Smaller-Scale Beethoven is Still Beethoven
Including string quartets, piano trios, and late piano sonatas

Session #4 – Beethoven and Beyond: His Influences upon Others
Including Chopin, Brahms, and even composers of the 20th and 21st centuries