

Art *f*



beethoven
{visual inspirations}

in memory of Dan Schillaci

educator

friend


hero

journey to

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beethoven



a moonlit night

this small book documents a journey of discovery that began late one night on a ferry boat party in sausalito, ca. seeking escape from a dull party, i found refuge in a late night wine haze and the somber sounds of a solo piano. that was the first time i heard the moonlight sonata, but it was enough to move me to explore the music of beethoven.

some time later i decided to try and interpret the music visually. what follows are images that attempt to capture the feeling of his music. call them, then, visual inspiration. (for additional images: www.deanart.com/paint.html)

seeing beethoven's music

there is a characteristic intensity to the music of beethoven. it has a depth and honesty of feeling (sometimes violent) that sets it apart. rather than compose music as decor like his predecessors (cf. hayden and mozart), an idealistic beethoven instead penned music about events and things happening in the world. and the philosophical, political and social changes of his time fueled his unique heroic voice in classical music.

yet beethoven's music is also a document of personal struggles, of which he had many. nowhere is this more apparent as in his despair over his impending deafness, which in addition to ending both his careers as a piano virtuoso and conductor of his own works, left him feeling increasingly isolated from the outside world. eventually he rises up from his despair to continue his art, which in turn provides his redemption:

*there is a characteristic
integrity to beethoven.*

*"live alone in your
art! restricted though
you be by your
defective sense, this
is still the only
existence for you."*

this in turn transformed classical music. with beethoven music is now a vehicle for personal expression or statement. it will not sublimate personal feelings or thoughts, but will voice them.



piano sonata 14

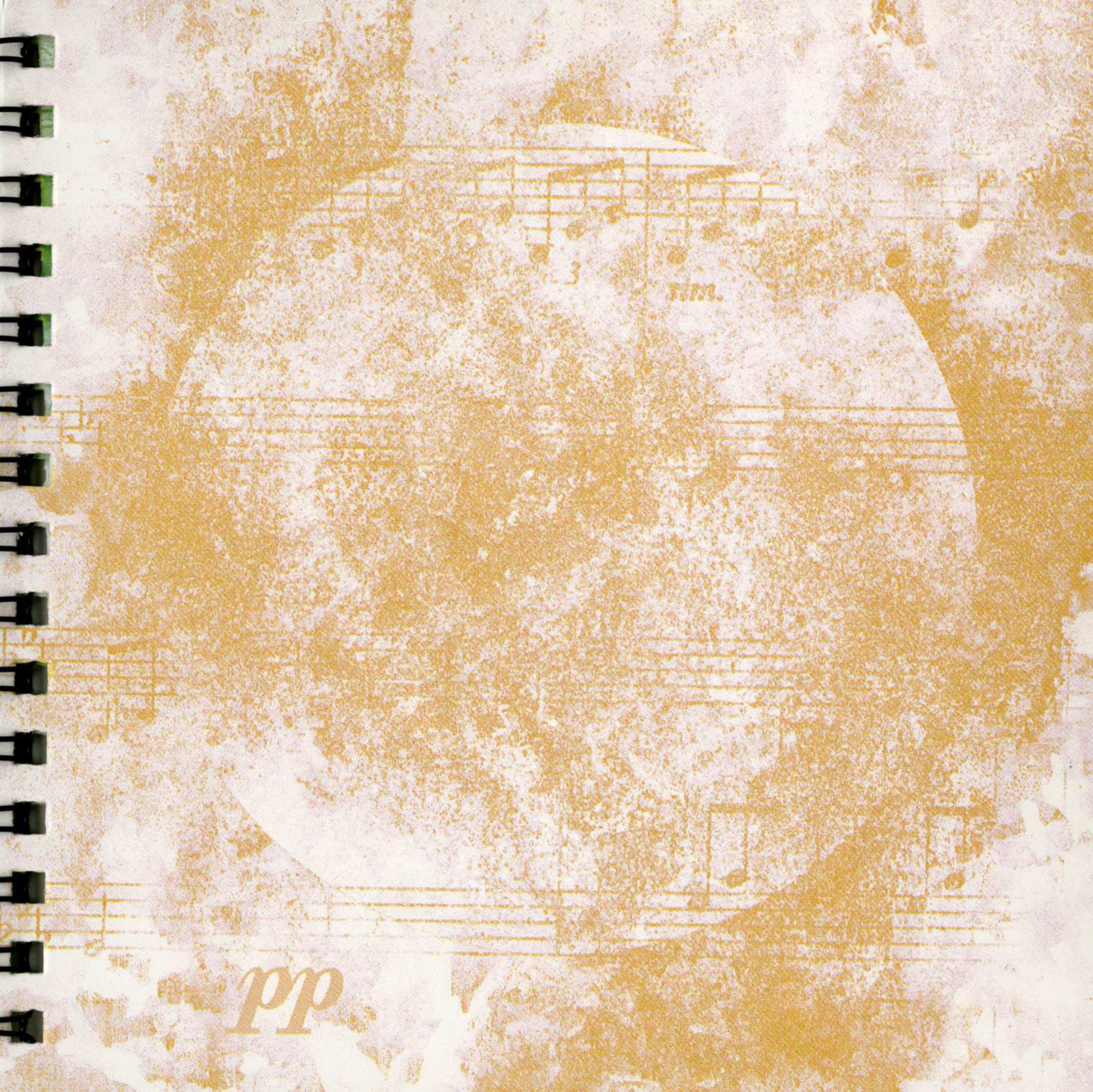
(moonlight sonata)

Opus 27 No. 2

a somber mood sets the tone in the slow first movement of the piano sonata 14 (opus 27, #2), which some years after it was penned was aptly described by a poet who envisioned "moonlight shining on a lake." the moonlight sonata features a great range of emotion and piano virtuosity. by the third movement the slow melancholy of the opening movement rapidly turns to menace.

as beethoven never participated in naming this piano sonata "moonlight"; nor could he share in its effect on audiences. initially found to be disturbing in its overall mood, it later became quite popular, and this perturbed beethoven, who didn't think it on a par with other works — "Surely I've written better." things.

beethoven is renowned as a composer, but he started out as a piano virtuoso. a great improviser, he was by some accounts one of the greatest pianists ever. he wrote 32 piano sonatas, more than any other genre.



tim.

pp

piano concerto ^(emperor) 5 _{opus 73}

the fifth piano concerto (Opus 73) typifies beethoven's heroic sound. from the dramatic opening movement, with piano passages of great tonal range, it slips quietly and tentatively into my favorite of all his pieces, the searing and slow string adagio of the second movement.

hard to imagine that it was written by beethoven at a difficult time, as he was hiding in a basement from the bombardment of vienna by conquering napoleonic forces. complaining of "drums, cannons, men and misery of all sorts," another piece subsequently nicknamed (by a publisher), this time ironically called the "Emperor Concerto"



(pastoral symphony)

symphony 6

Opus 68

On the heels of the brooding 5th symphony, the symphony #6 (Opus 68) is quite tame in comparison. This majestic symphony, which has an uncommon 5th movement, celebrates nature and the countryside. Beethoven composed it in the comfort of the Viennese countryside, and also provided descriptive titles for each movement. Beethoven intended this work to be more an impressionistic than realistic.

"how happy i am to be able to wander among bushes and herbs, under trees and over rocks; no man can love the country as i love it."

The stormy 4th movement is followed by the sublime melody of my favorite final movement ("happy feelings after the storm"). It begins lightly with the sounds of wind and horn instruments which are then joined and modulated by the strings.

Opus 68 (mvmt 5)



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