

A Comparison for the Ages

Throughout the course of time, music has changed in various aspects. From the day of yore, when music was listened to almost only at church, to the present where music is heard from anywhere to church, your car, or even an elevator. The actual music texture has changed as well. In a day when music was listened to through a chanting melody, to now where bubble gum pop hits the top of the charts week in and week out. During the many time periods of music over the ages, there have been music composers of all sorts, that in their own uniqueness have contributed a bit to society that no other artist has. The ground left uncovered currently in the music world is not yet known. Music has expanded over generations and generations, and music itself is like time in that it is always changing. Two time periods stick out in the minds of the common contemporary: the time known as the Classical era ranging back hundreds of years ago to the era just experienced in the second half of the twentieth century known as the Classic Rock period. Both era's and generations yielded some of the finest musicians known in mankind. Among some

of the famous musicians of these time periods are Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, John Lennon, and Johann Sebastian Bach. Another two men of these two vast and different era's, while completely different in music style, have a great amount of similarities between them. Ludwig Von Beethoven and James (a.k.a Jimi) Hendrix both unleashes a massive arsenal of aggression as well as loveliness in both their works. The two men are a mere image of music personalities, one in the time of the pianoforte and the other in the guitar age.

Child prodigy, Ludwig Von Beethoven was born in Bonn, Germany in 1770. His father acted very aggressive towards him, and some felt he exploited his son's gift and potential by forcing him to practice for many hours each and every day. Whenever young Ludwig made a mistake in playing it is said that his father would thrash him amongst his ears causing sever pain. Even with his abusive father, Beethoven simply loved music too much to give it up for any reason. Beethoven was fluent in playing the violin, organ, and the pianoforte. Beethoven read many books on music, and even the smallest things seemed to interest him in ways they did not for anyone around his age. Very much like his often compared to counterpart Mozart, Beethoven began playing professionally at the tender age of six years old,

as well as starting to tour full time at the young age of thirteen years old. When he turned eighteen years of age, Beethoven's father died. Beethoven took upon the responsibility of taking care of his two younger brothers. He played a Viola in a local orchestra to provide enough money to feed his family. Soon thereafter Joseph Haydn was passing through town and introduced himself to Beethoven and imply insisted that he go with him to Vienna, the music capital of the world. There he studied with Haydn as well as Bach, and performed all across town. Beethoven made enough money to support himself as well as send money back to his brothers in Bonn. In his late twenties, Beethoven began to experience lapses in his hearing. As he sat at his piano, he heard the notes but then felt that they faded. It is said that at times Beethoven pounded on the piano so hard and so often, that the piano lost sound and he would have to buy a new one. In very likelihood the deafness came from his fathers thrashing of his ears, and may have created tumor the over time grew to being quite big and possibly blocked out his hearing. Beethoven died at the age of 56 after complications from a cold. His music is forever remembered as well as forever played. Perhaps the most famous symphony that he composed was his fifth, and almost everyone recognizes it after the very first bar.

James Marshal Hendrix was born in Seattle, Washington, on November 27, 1942. Hendrix was of African American, European, Cherokee Indian and Mexican descent. An unsettled home environment made Hendrix spend much of his early years staying with his grandmother, a full-blooded Cherokee Indian, in Canada. His mother died when he was twelve years of age. After his mother's death he became very interested in music and got his first electric guitar. The electric guitar would be the instrument that would change Hendrix for the rest of his life. In High School at the age of sixteen he was allegedly kicked out for holding the hand of a Caucasian girl. At seventeen he joined the army, and was a paratrooper for fourteen months. After a severe injury, Hendrix was discharged from the army and began to try and pursue a musical career. In 1965 Hendrix formed the band that was eventually called Jimmy James and the Blue Flames. They worked the Village clubs five days a week. Hendrix was soon after recognized by many famous musicians, and before he knew it former Animals bassist Chas Chandler. Chas became fond of Hendrix very quickly, and after only a few weeks of knowing him, he offered Hendrix a place to stay and work in London. The Jimi Hendrix Experience was the name of Hendrix's newest band (formed in London) with Noel Redding on bass and Mitch Mitchell behind

the drums. At a time when The Who and The Beatles were rampaging the charts in the U.K, the Jimi Hendrix Experience took a while before it picked up. Hendrix was first known as a rare African American in the scene who was doing unheard of things with his mass talent. The band toured Europe for the next several years, and Hendrix became very well known. He was a huge star in both the United States as well as the United Kingdom. Hendrix died at thirty years of age when he choked on his own vomit. There was no doubt that drugs posed a very influence on his later career, as well as his very sad demise. Hendrix was and still is remembered for his innovative style of playing the electric guitar, and his legions of fans. At a time when the counterculture was running through the United States, James Hendrix was one of the few former soldiers who actually stood by for his beliefs and against the Vietnam War.

Hendrix and Beethoven? A very interesting pair of names to associate with musical similarities indeed. Both men had a fraternal parent die at a very young age. Beethoven's mother and of course Hendrix's mother. Hendrix and Beethoven, like most famous musicians started playing at a very young age. In a strange twist of fate, both Beethoven and Hendrix had to take care of themselves while

in their teenage years. Beethoven of course had two brothers to take care of as well. However, there are other similarities that even far exceed these previous ones. While Beethoven was still in Bonn, he was confronted by Haydn who convinced the talented young Beethoven to go Vienna and play music in the music capital of the World. Hendrix, while in his hometown, was confronted by rocker Chas Chandler (former member of the group animals). Chandler convinced the young Hendrix to go to London, which was the center of popular music at the time. Chandler, like Haydn to Beethoven, wanted Hendrix to make a name for himself in London where he could easily be recognized for all his talents. However there was a part to both Beethoven and Hendrix that not many people were able to associate with their on stage performances. After a disappointing failed marriage proposal to Countess Giletta, Beethoven became depressed and drank heavily. He also with that depression manages to write the very famously known "Moonlight Sonata". Hendrix often times during shows smashed his guitar against the stage. Contrary to popular belief this was not for show, but rather an act of angerment. However, the fans applauded in delight and thus guitar smashing became a big hit, no pun intended. Jimmi Hendrix did a lot of drugs that stimulated his creative

side, and some of his most famous songs were written under such circumstances. While it is said Beethoven died from a common cold, a folk legend argues he was caught in a hail storm and died from the cold straight on. Jimmi Hendrix's death remains somewhat of a mystery, as many famous musicians seem to follow this trend. His death was any combination of overdosing to being purposely overdosed by a colleague of his.

Hendrix and Beethoven alike, contributed infinitely numbers of inspiration for their fellow generations. Both men are forever remembered in music, and even though they will never go down in history together...they still share many common bonds along the way. Heavy metal rock and Classical music doesn't have the same ring to it, but both are major parts of music history. I don't think one can compare what they would rather listen to between "Voodoo Child" and Beethoven's 5th Symphony. In both senses of their legacies left upon society today, both Hendrix and Beethoven struggled through their lives to achieve their ultimate goals, and eventually they did just that, and in the process they were remembered for it.

