

Ludvig van Beethoven – Fidelio (Solti)

Written by bluesever

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1. Act / 2. Act II Leonore - Hildegard Behrens Florestan - Peter Hofmann Pizarro - Theo Adam Rocco - Hans Sotin Marzelline - Sona Ghazarian Jaquino - David Kuebler Fernando - Gwynne Howell Erster Gefangene - Robert Johnson Zweiter Gefangene - Philip Kraus Chicago Symphony Chorus Chicago Symphony Orchestra Georg Solti – conductor

Fidelio (Op. 72) is a German opera in two acts by Ludwig van Beethoven. It is Beethoven's only opera. The German libretto is by Joseph Sonnleithner from the French of Jean-Nicolas Bouilly which had been used for the 1798 opera *Léonore, ou L'amour conjugal* by Pierre Gaveaux, and for the 1804 opera *Leonora* by Ferdinando Paer (a score of which was owned by Beethoven). The opera tells how Leonore, disguised as a prison guard named "Fidelio", rescues her husband Florestan from death in a political prison.

Like many other works in Beethoven's career, *Fidelio* went through several versions before achieving full success. The opera was first produced in a three-act version at Vienna's Theater an der Wien, on 20 November 1805, with additional performances the following two nights. The 1805 and 1806 versions are referred to, by academic convention, as *Leonore* in order to distinguish them from the final two-act version. However all three versions were premiered as *Fidelio*.

In 1814 Beethoven revised his opera yet again, with additional work on the libretto by Georg Friedrich Treitschke. This version was first performed at the Kärntnertheater on 23 May 1814, under the title *Fidelio*. The 17-year-old Franz Schubert was in the audience, having sold his school books to obtain a ticket.

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Fidelio was Arturo Toscanini's first complete opera performance to be broadcast over the NBC radio network, in December 1944, by the NBC Symphony Orchestra.

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