

Press release

Beethoven – Painting and Music – The *Beethoven Frieze* and the 9th Symphony

In 2020, the **Secession** will partner with the **Wiener Symphoniker** to celebrate Ludwig van Beethoven's 250th birthday with a singular multimedia experience. For the first time, our visitors will now be able to experience the *Beethoven Frieze* with musical accompaniment. Using headphones, they will hear the fourth movement of the Symphony No. 9 in D Minor, Op. 125 (*Finale Presto—Allegro assai*, duration ca. 20 min.) in an award-winning recording by the Wiener Symphoniker conducted by Philippe Jordan. This unique experience will enhance their enjoyment of Klimt's *Beethoven Frieze* by giving them an intuitive grasp of the musical inspiration that went into the work: Gustav Klimt's *Beethoven Frieze*, on permanent display at the Secession, was created as a translation of Beethoven's 9th Symphony into visual art.

For their project *The Road to Beethoven*, the **Wiener Symphoniker** have produced their first-ever complete set of recordings of Beethoven's symphonies. The works were performed in the Golden Hall of the Wiener Musikverein under the direction of the orchestra's principal conductor, **Philippe Jordan**. The final movement of the 9th Symphony also features the Singverein, conducted by Johannes Prinz, and the soloists Anja Kampe, Daniel Sindram, Burkhard Fritz, and René Pape.

Gustav Klimt created the *Beethoven Frieze* for the Secession's XIVth exhibition in 1902. Conceived as a total work of art with a unified theme, a guiding idea in the Secessionists' artistic program, the exhibition synthesized architecture, painting, and sculpture for a tribute to Ludwig van Beethoven on the 75th anniversary of his death. Around the turn of the century, Ludwig van Beethoven was an object of positively cultlike veneration as the embodiment of the divinely gifted suffering artist. Twenty-one members of the artists' association staged their contributions around Max Klinger's central statue of the composer. Gustav Klimt's monumental cycle of wall paintings was originally mounted in the left-hand-side nave of the Secession's main hall, facing the statue.

A key work of the creative awakening at the dawn of the twentieth century, the *Beethoven Frieze* unfolds a sprawling narrative across three walls that is propelled by man's yearning for happiness. In the final scene, female figures—allegories of the arts—guide the quester into the realm of the ideal. Klimt's apotheosis of art, which shows a couple kissing before the chorus of the angels of paradise, contains a direct reference to Beethoven. "Joy, beautiful divine spark!—This kiss for the whole world," the chorus sings in the fourth movement of Beethoven's 9th Symphony, which is based on Friedrich Schiller's *Ode to Joy*.

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Ludwig van Beethoven, fourth movement of the Symphony No. 9 in D Minor, Op. 125 / Finale Presto

Wiener Symphoniker, Conductor: Philippe Jordan

Soloists: Anja Kampe, Daniela Sindram, Burkhard Fritz, René Pape

Singverein der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Choirmaster: Johannes Prinz

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secession

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Hours

Tuesday–Sunday, 2–6pm

Permanent presentation

Gustav Klimt, *Beethoven Frieze*

2020: *Beethoven – Painting and Music* in partnership with the Wiener Symphoniker

Admissions

Adults € 9.50 | Students, seniors € 6 | Free admission for children under ten

Guided tours of the building and exhibitions

Every Saturday at 2pm in German, free of charge (no registration required)

Press images

Available for download at <https://www.secession.at/en/presstype/beethoven-frieze/>

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