

The Beethoven Delusion

by Andrew Kenneally

An intense, steely eyed, morose figure crouched over a modern desk lit by a perfunctory lamp. Cigarette smoke invaded all corners of the room. A poster with clung onto the nearest wall; bold accusatory letters pronounced; "Life Begins at Fifty- LOSE THAT GUT." Close by, a yellowed page less confidently pronounced, "Smoking is Irrational." He suddenly leapt from his intentionally uncomfortable seat(an aid to clear thinking) triumphantly raising a large sheet in the unhealthy air. He clenched his other fist and devoured whatever was written with his hungry, mad, intellectual eyes. He placed the page back on the desk, clenched his fist again and strode downstairs. Seeing as he's gone, we'll take a closer look at this mysterious sheet.

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It is my argument that a pious fraud has been perpetrated so as to subject mankind to the most humiliating of intellectual enslavements. I will restrict myself to examining a musical universe known as *The Pastoral Symphony*, or alternatively *Beethoven's Sixth Symphony*. The work is the same despite the confusion of the two titles, and both are declared to be the work of an extraordinary genius by the name of Beethoven; someone supposedly far beyond the reach of mere mortals like you and me. Can you feel the insult in this claim? Is it not demeaning to you and I this notion of a higher being inhabiting this legendary realm of genius? You cannot but concur since if we are to accept this higher realm, then our version of reality is a bland falsehood; an appalling vista not to be countenanced. I have made it my task to refute this vile hypothesis, and I am proud to announce I have succeeded.

In short, what I have discovered is that this alleged work with its

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wild claims of supposed unfathomable depths ultimately amounts to nothing but the vibration of air molecules at varying degrees of intensity. There is no need to bring a composer - call him Beethoven, call him anything you like - into the equation; air molecules are sufficient. I have so far restricted my scientific investigations to the Pastoral work, but I am confident that were other alleged works of greatness subjected to the same empirical rigour, then similar conclusions would be reached.

