



It was in the spa town of Teplitz (known today as Bad Teplice in the Czech Republic) that Beethoven began composing his famous Seventh Symphony. While there, in 1812, he met the poet Johann von Goethe.

Although Beethoven greatly admired Goethe's work, the two men did not get on. Their personalities and attitudes about various issues differed greatly. One example is their view of royalty. Goethe respected the imperial family while Beethoven, apparently, did not:

Goethe wrote to his wife that Beethoven had "an absolutely uncontrolled personality"; Beethoven wrote to his publisher that Goethe delighted far too much in the court atmosphere.

On one occasion the two men were walking in the park immediately behind the castle in the centre of Teplitz. Goethe suddenly noticed that the Empress was walking with her retinue on the other side of the park. He hurried over, insisting Beethoven come with him.

Goethe positioned himself in front of the Empress and as she passed executed a deep bow. Beethoven pushed his top hat firmly on the back of his head, crossed his arms and strode past the Empress, intentionally snubbing her. Goethe was appalled, and their friendship was irretrievably damaged.

Later in his life Beethoven wrote to Goethe, hoping to rekindle their relationship. Goethe did not reply. The two men did not meet again.

This 1887 painting - "The Incident at Teplitz" by Carl Rohling - depicts the famous encounter between Beethoven, Goethe and the imperial family.

Despite what could be considered impertinence toward the Empress, in 1812, Beethoven received a gift from her not long after. It was significant enough for him to mention it in a January 14, 1815 letter to Herr Kauka:

Farewell! I cannot write another syllable; such things exhaust me. May your friendship accelerate this affair! - if it ends badly, then I must leave Vienna, because I could not possibly live on my income, for here things have come to such a pass that everything has risen to the highest price, and that price must be paid. The two last concerts I gave cost me 1,508 florins, and had it not been for the Empress's munificent present I should scarcely have derived any profit whatever.

Credits:

Image of "The Incident at Teplitz," by Carl Rohling, online courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

[Quoted passage](#), about Goethe and Beethoven, from Mad About Beethoven.

Quoted passage, letter from Beethoven to Kauka, [Beethoven's Letters \(1790-1826\) from the Collection of Dr. Ludwig Nohl](#), page 170 - online, courtesy Google Books.

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Beethoven-Absolutely-Uncontrolled...->

Media Stream



Beethoven - "Absolutely Uncontrolled..."

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/>