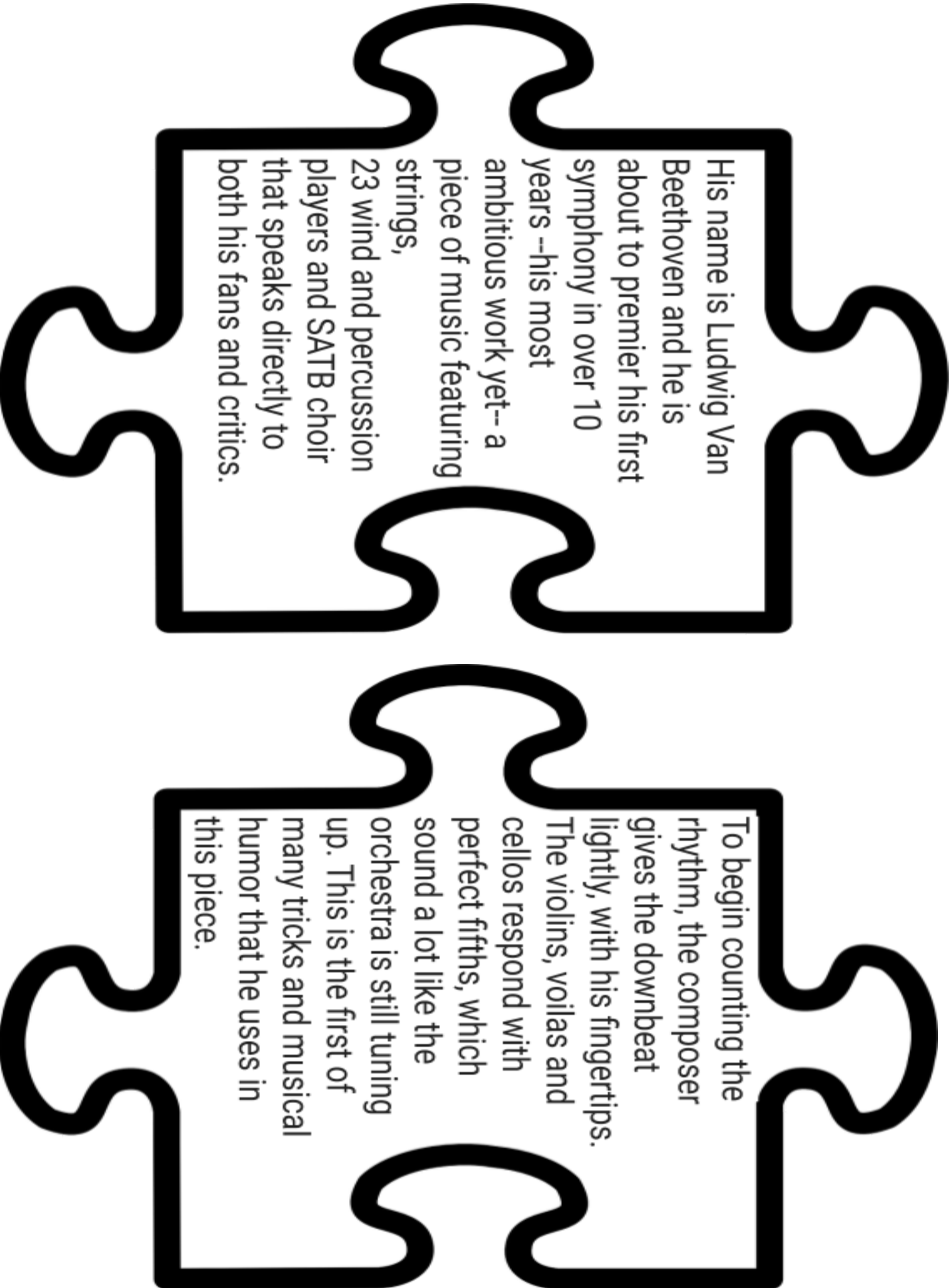


The date is May 7th, 1824. A man in his mid-fifties stands on a podium with his back turned to a full house. On this date the *Theater am Kärntnertor* is already more than a hundred years old and is frequented by people of all social classes in Vienna.

There is also a full orchestra on stage and a full chorus waiting at the sides. Each member deeply respects their conductor. Many had performed his other 8 symphonies and they knew his artistic vision and deep passion. News he'd gone deaf gave them a plaintive feeling of the end of an era.

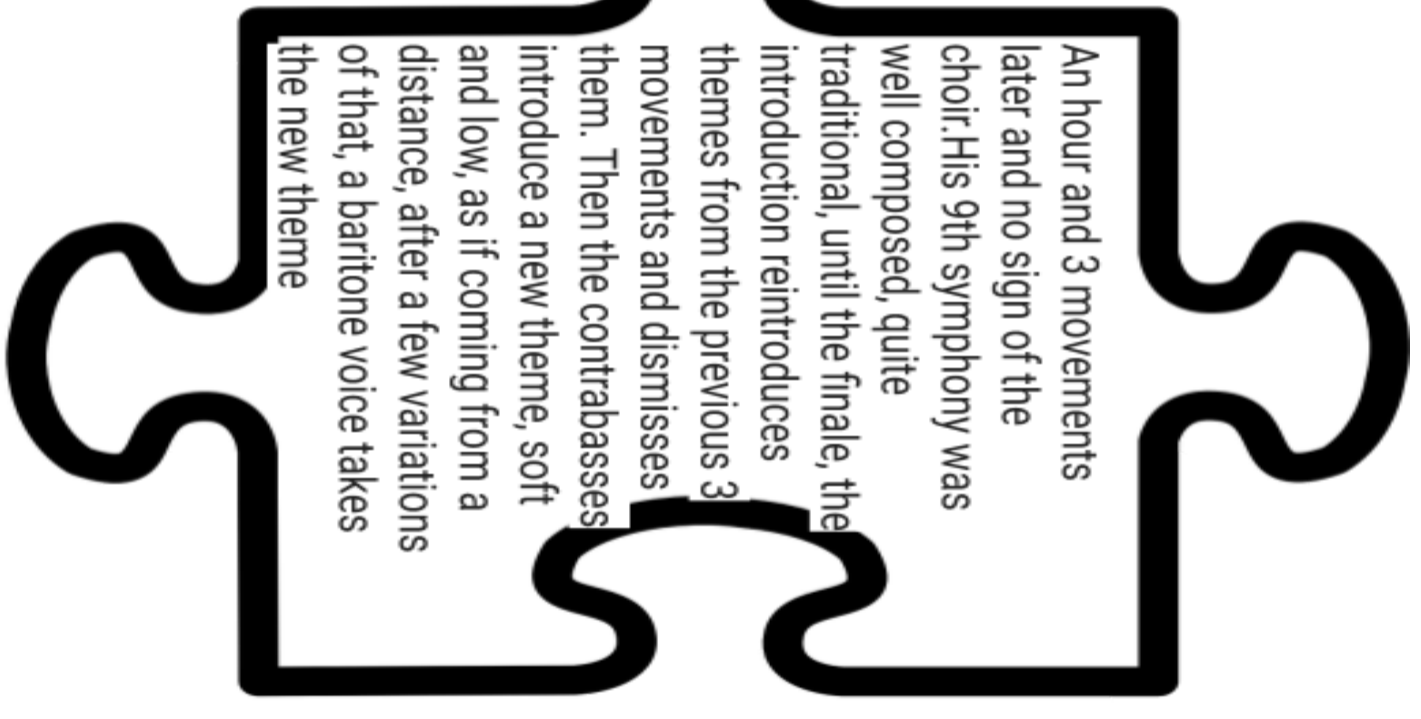


His name is Ludwig Van Beethoven and he is about to premier his first symphony in over 10 years --his most ambitious work yet-- a piece of music featuring strings, 23 wind and percussion players and SATB choir that speaks directly to both his fans and critics.

To begin counting the rhythm, the composer gives the downbeat lightly, with his fingertips. The violins, violas and cellos respond with perfect fifths, which sound a lot like the orchestra is still tuning up. This is the first of many tricks and musical humor that he uses in this piece.



The first movement is in sonata form, and the orchestra introduces the Napoleonic theme. Rumours that the poem *Ode an de Freud* by Friedrich Schiller was being used in this symphony. The audience expected it but for the next hour, 3 orchestral movements.



An hour and 3 movements later and no sign of the choir. His 9th symphony was well composed, quite traditional, until the finale, the introduction reintroduces themes from the previous 3 movements and dismisses them. Then the contrabasses introduce a new theme, soft and low, as if coming from a distance, after a few variations of that, a baritone voice takes the new theme