



LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN



Timeline

1770	1778	1787	1794	1800	1812	1814	1827
Born in Bonn, Germany	At age 7, he plays his first public concert	Travels to Vienna, Austria and meets Mozart	He begins to notice signs of deafness	Composes his first ballet called the Prometheus Ballet and his first of nine symphonies	Composes the famous Piano Concerto Number 5	Beethoven loses his hearing completely	Beethoven dies in Vienna, Austria

Beethoven's 9 Symphonies

Symphony No 1	1800 - Quick volume changes, explosive energy and experimentation gained Beethoven quick popularity.
Symphony No 2	1802 - Beethoven's hearing was quickly disappearing. Many think the positive nature of the symphony represents his passion for overcoming his hearing problems.
Symphony No 3	1805 - The symphony which many believe changed much of classical music and moved it into the 'Romantic' period.
Symphony No 4	1807 - A much sadder and more moody piece of music which begins gently and is hugely different to his previous symphony.
Symphony No 5	1808 - Possibly the most well-known symphony in the world. The opening 8 chords are dramatic and memorable.
Symphony No 6	1808 - As a keen walker, Beethoven took his inspiration for this symphony from nature. The symphony moves from a babbling brook, birdsong, country-dancing to a full-on thunderstorm!
Symphony No 7	1813 - The highly enjoyable, haunting 2nd movement was often most encored (asked to be played again).
Symphony No 8	1814 - Beethoven was now composing completely deaf. This was his shortest and one of his own favourites.
Symphony No 9	1824 - His final masterpiece was his longest and most complicated. Beethoven was the first composer to include the human voice at the same level as the instruments. He used Friedrich Schiller's poem 'Ode to Joy' - a text the composer had been fascinated with for over twenty years.

In his earlier works when he could hear the full range of frequencies, he often used lots of high notes. But as his hearing began to worsen, he could no longer hear these high notes so instead he chose to use lower notes in his compositions which were easier for him to hear.

The Importance of Beethoven

The Greatest Composer in the World

Beethoven is seen by many as the greatest composer in the world. His work was emotional, complicated, broke musical rules and moved music from the Classical period to the Romantic period.

Determination

Against all the odds, he still composed while almost deaf or entirely deaf. During the first performance of his ninth symphony, he had to be turned around to see the five standing ovations he could not hear.

Ahead of His Time

At the time his 'Late Quartets' were described as 'uncorrected horrors' and audiences could not understand what they were listening to. They are now seen as masterpieces, way ahead of his time.

Beethoven in Space

More than 11 million miles away from Earth, the Voyager spacecraft is playing 2 pieces of Beethoven's music. They are intended for any alien lifeforms who may find them.

Famous Events

Meeting Mozart

Apparently, aged just 17, Beethoven played piano at Mozart's home in front of him. Mozart was ill and in no mood to be entertained. Beethoven played one of Mozart's concertos, but Mozart said, 'Anyone can play that'. Beethoven then played something of his own and Mozart was impressed and organised him to have lessons. Unfortunately, Beethoven's mother was dying so he left without ever having the teacher he dreamed of. Upon his return, Mozart had died aged just 35.

Deafness

Beethoven started to lose his hearing when he was 26 years old and by the last decade of his life it was completely gone. We do not really know what caused it. The most likely causes might be a disease from his early childhood like typhus or smallpox.

The Curse of the 9th

A famous composer and music theorist called Arnold Schoenberg began a superstition that great composers often seemed to die before completing a tenth symphony. Mahler, Beethoven and Schubert all died before completing their tenth but there is no evidence of a curse.