

Ludwig van Beethoven



was born into a family of court musicians in Bonn, Germany in 1770. His father, Johann van Beethoven was a singer and music teacher. Beethoven's first music instruction came from his father Johann who was a harsh instructor. Beethoven's mother, Maria Magdalena was always a loving and warm mother. Although Beethoven's exact birth date is not known, his family celebrated it on December 16.

Beethoven's talent was recognized early on, and by 1778, he was learning to play the organ and viola in addition to his piano studies. His newly appointed music teacher guided Beethoven and his development.

In 1787, at the age of 17, the young Beethoven decided to travel to Vienna, hoping to meet and study composition with other famous composers of his time. A few years later, during his twenties Beethoven began to suffer from hearing loss. However, he continued to compose, conduct, and perform. As his hearing loss worsened to complete deafness, his music on the contrary continued to expand and break barriers in monumental ways.

Ludwig van Beethoven's most popular pieces are his Fifth Symphony, *Für Elise* for piano solo and his Ninth Symphony, which includes the melody *Ode to Joy*. He is remembered as one of the most famous and influential composers of all time.

Beethoven so widened the horizon of music, so filled it with the power of his genius, that all music after him somewhere and somehow bears his stamp. Beethoven is a wonderful role model who demonstrates perseverance, strength, and passion for life.



Beethoven Beckons

After reading your Beethoven biography, please answer the following questions:

1. When and where was Beethoven born?
2. When is Beethoven's birthday celebrated?
3. Name two instruments Beethoven played.
4. What city did Beethoven travel to in hopes of studying with other great composers?
5. Beethoven suffered from a medical condition. What was this medical condition?
6. Name three of Beethoven's most popular pieces (songs).