AWESOME stories

Beethoven

0. Beethoven - Story Preface

1. BEETHOVEN - UNHAPPY CHILDHOOD

2. LIFE IN VIENNA

3. LIVING WITH DEAFNESS

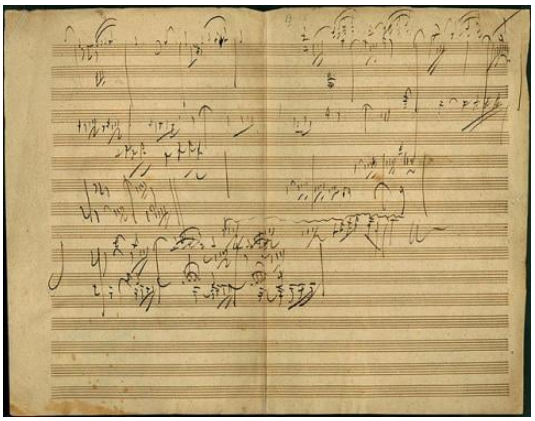
4. COMPOSING SYMPHONIES

5. FINANCIAL WORRIES

6. BEETHOVEN and HIS NEPHEW

7. ACHIEVING GREATNESS

8. DEATH AND LEGACY



This image depicts an 1816 manuscript sketch, in Beethoven's handwriting, for his Piano Sonata in A Major, op. 101, Allegro. Online, courtesy Library of Congress.

> *I have never thought of writing*
> *for reputation and honor.*
> *What I have in my heart must out;*
> *that is the reason why I compose.*
>
> Ludwig van Beethoven
> Remark to Carl Czerny

A vicious, early-spring storm darkened Vienna's late-afternoon sky. Suddenly, an enormous thunder-clap reverberated throughout the *Schwarzspanierhaus* ("House of the Black-Robed Spaniards"). Inside, a man was dying.

Although deaf and comatose, Ludwig van Beethoven seemed startled by the enormous thunder peal. Lifting his right arm—as though he were a general, commanding an army—the 56-year-old composer momentarily clenched his raised fist.

Seconds later, his arm fell back onto his bed, and Beethoven died. It was the 26th of March, 1827.

Some people thought Beethoven strange—or even hostile. Except for his servants, the maestro lived alone, like someone who had been banished.

In a way, he was banished. Separated from the hearing world—in which people listened to his music—Beethoven heard nothing as the sound of his compositions echoed throughout Europe.



1820 Beethoven Portrait, by Joseph Karl Stieler, online courtesy Wikimedia Commons

How could someone who penned great musical works—like the second movement of his 7th Symphony, or the 9th, or the 5th—create when he was profoundly deaf? How did *he* view his genius, coupled with his deafness?

More than two centuries later, Beethoven's music is still popular. His influence remains extraordinary. One of Google's best doodles ever—an interactive puzzle—celebrates his 245th birthday.

But ... who was Ludwig—as a boy, as a man and as a musician?

https://mars.nasa.gov/msl/https://mars.nasa.gov/msl/

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Beethoven

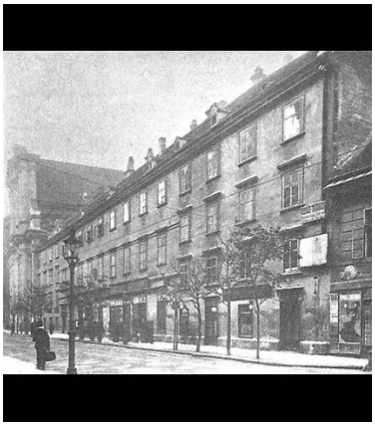
See Learning Tasks for this story online at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Beethoven

Media Stream



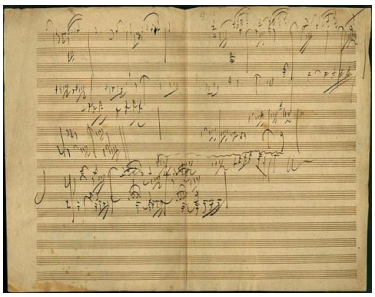
Carl Czerny

Image of Carl Czerny, online courtesy Beethoven House Museum, Bonn.
Quoted reference on Carl Czerny, also online courtesy Beethoven House Museum, Bonn.
View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Carl-Czerny



Beethoven's Death House

Image online, courtesy "Mad About Beethoven."
Quoted passage from Gerhard von Breuning, *Memories of Beethoven: From the House of the Black-Robed Spaniards*, pages 60-63 - English translation, Maynard Solomon (Editor, Translator). Online, courtesy Google Books.
View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Beethoven-s-Death-House



Beethoven

View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Beethoven1

Beethoven - Popular Composer

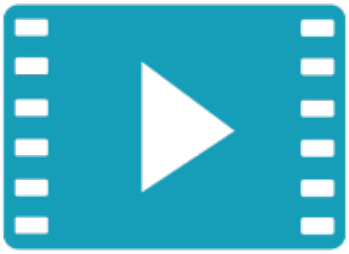
Clip from “Beethoven,” a 2005 BBC television production, featuring Charles Hazlewood and starring Paul Rhys as Beethoven.
Online, via BBC Worldwide Channel at YouTube. Copyright, BBC, all rights reserved. Clip provided here as fair use for educational purposes and to acquaint new viewers with the program.

Director:
Ursula Macfarlane

Key Cast Members:

Paul Rhys
Ludwig van Beethoven

Jack Shepherd
Joseph Haydn



David Bamber
Prince Lichnowsky

Alice Eve
Countess Giulietta Guicciardi

Nicholas Farrell
Stephan von Breuning

Tom Goodman-Hill
Anton Schindler

Gareth David-Lloyd
Older Karl

Casper Harvey
Young Karl

Sarah Hadland
Johanna van Beethoven

Christian Coulson
Archduke Rudolph

Charles Hazlewood
Himself - Presenter
View this asset at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Beethoven-Popular-Composer

Beethoven, Symphony No. 7 in A Major, Op. 92

Some lovers of classical music consider the second movement of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony to be one of the most beautiful pieces of music ever written.

See it performed, in this clip, by the Berlin Philharmonic (under the direction of Herbert Von Karajan who never looks at a score and keeps his eyes shut throughout).

The second movement begins at about 11:18 in this video clip. Move the video forward to hear it.

Karajan recorded his Beethoven Symphonies (for Deutsche Grammophon) between 1968 and 1973. This recording, of the 7th, was made in 1972.

NPR provides more information about the 7th Symphony and its second movement:

The Seventh Symphony's premiere concert [on December 8, 1813] was performed to benefit the soldiers wounded a few months earlier in the battle of Hanau. It was one of Beethoven's most successful concerts.

Viennese audiences, miserable from Napoleon's 1805 and 1809 occupations of Vienna and hopefully awaiting a victory over him, embraced the symphony's energy and beauty.

Even today, the second movement remains extremely popular and is often performed separately. The NPR history and analysis continues:

Occasionally, Beethoven wrote something that was immediately recognized as both artistically great and hugely popular. An example is the second movement of his Seventh Symphony, a piece that was often performed separately from the complete Symphony and that may have been Beethoven's most popular orchestral composition.

It also exerted extraordinary influence on later composers, as the slow movements of Schubert's "Great" C-major Symphony and E-flat Piano Trio, Mendelssohn's "Italian" Symphony, Berlioz's Harold in Italy, and other works attest.

After its premiere, the Seventh Symphony was repeated three times in the following 10 weeks; at one of the performances the "applause rose to the point of ecstasy," according to a newspaper account.

Clip from Karajan - Beethoven - The Symphonies. Online, via YouTube.

Quoted passage, regarding the 7th Symphony, from NPR.

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Beethoven-Symphony-No.-7-in-A-Major-Op.-92