

After Beethoven's father started drinking, the income his young son generated was the family's main source of support. The days were dark, and dreadful, for the young musician.

Sometimes rousing his child from sleep - to perform for his own friends - Beethoven's father could seem more like a fan than a parent.

"You have nothing more to teach me," an exasperated, impertinent Beethoven once told his father.

When her son experienced such personal torment, Ludwig's mother (according to the maestro's biographers) did not step-in to help. That, at least, was the case while her son was present.

Escaping the turmoil in his own house, Beethoven found peace at the home of friends - Eleonore and Stephan von Breuning - whose mother (Helene) understood the growing child was fragile, needing protection. "It's our job," she would say, "to keep the insects off the flower."

In Vienna, to further his studies, Beethoven was summoned back to Bonn. His mother was gravely ill. When she died, Beethoven lost his best friend.

Music lessons in Vienna were put on hold as Beethoven remained in Bonn (where his father's drinking-problem worsened). In order to keep Johann from wasting all his earnings, Ludwig - by now in his late teens - persuaded his father's employer to pay half-salary to him. With those funds, Beethoven kept the family's finances in reasonable shape.

By 1790, Bonn's leaders knew about Beethoven's skills. They selected him to write a cantata commemorating the death of Joseph II, the popular Hapsburg emperor.

The young musician was on his way.

Clip from "Beethoven," a 2005 [BBC television](#) production, featuring [Charles Hazlewood](#) and starring Paul Rhys as Beethoven.

Credits:

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Online, courtesy [BBC Worldwide](#) Channel at YouTube.

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

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Beethoven-Child-Composer1>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Beethoven-Child-Composer1>