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This oil painting, by an anonymous artist, was rediscovered in 1952. It is believed to depict Beethoven in 1784, when he was thirteen. Online via Wikimedia Commons.

Ludwig von Beethoven was born in December of 1770, in the attic of his family home in Bonn, Germany. His exact birthday is still a mystery. As a child, Beethoven was an impressive keyboardist, and was greatly encouraged by his teacher. It was lucky that he inherited his grandfather's musical talent because when his family was almost out of money, he brought in income with his skills. 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." Because of his love in music, Ludwig went to Vienna where he would be able to study with the best teachers. But then, his mother became very ill, so he had to go back to Bonn where his family was. After his beloved mother died, Ludwig's father's drinking problem got worse. Realizing his father was incapable of managing the family's finances, Ludwig persuaded the Elector of Bonn (his father's employer) to pay him half the earnings, so he could care for the family's obligations. By 1790, the leaders of Bonn knew about Ludwig's talents. They picked him to compose a piece to honor the death of Joseph II, an emperor. The result was a piece called *Cantata on the Death of Joseph II*. This piece would lead him onto the rest of his musical career.

Beethoven went to Vienna again when he was twenty-one. Soon after he arrived in Vienna, Ludwig lost his father. He did not return to Bonn for the funeral - or for anything else. Getting on with his life, Beethoven must have thought that nothing (or no one) could hold him back. He didn't want to go to his father's funeral because he wanted to start a new life. It was a good break for him. at Bonn, Beethoven had fallen in love with his friend, Eleonore von Beuning, but she didn't like him in the same way and just wanted to be friends. So friends they remained. When Beethoven left for Vienna, he was happy that Joseph Haydn wanted to be his teacher, because Haydn knew that Beethoven was brilliant. The two composers didn't always agree, but Haydn still believed that, someday, people everywhere would recognize Beethoven's name. Haydn thought that Beethoven's work was a little complex and thought the public might not be prepared for it yet, so he was shocked when Beethoven stormed out of a performance. Beethoven's skill was amazing. He was interested on making his own pieces and not copying others. He was idolized by the public in Vienna, and he thought that his life had changed for the better. Eventually, Beethoven fell in love with one of his pupils but she didn't want to marry him and only wanted to be his friend. So his love life was still in shambles.

One day in Vienna, Beethoven was talking with his friend, the friend commented on the sounds of a flute filling the air. Beethoven didn't hear anything and asked his friend what he was talking about. "The sounds of a flute," his friend replied. "So simple, yet so beautiful." Beethoven still couldn't hear anything, so he concluded that he was going deaf. He heard buzzing and humming all day. This was a disaster for a musician building a career. Beethoven didn't become deaf right away, his deafness came gradually. When he couldn't hear what people said to him clearly anymore, he started to panic. His way of dealing with this was to write symphonies one after the other, or sometimes he worked on many at once. His Second Symphony reflected on his inner struggle while dealing with his deafness. Because he was going deaf, Beethoven stopped having a good social life, so he moved to Heiligenstadt, a village outside the city. He didn't try to make contact with anyone and dedicated his life to composing. Beethoven, as he had done before and would do again, was transforming his internal emotions into stunning music.

When Beethoven was writing the Appassionata, Europe was in chaos. He was often asked to perform in public, but he resented it. Beethoven personally performed his 4th Piano Concerto at the concert. In the piece, we can hear bits of the 5th Symphony. In a way, it's like the two works are having a conversation (albeit, with pieces of discord between them). Perhaps that is the reason why Beethoven performed the works back-to-back (separated by an intermission) during that famous 1808 concert. Although the evening was a success, Beethoven never played the piano, with an orchestra, in public again. Beethoven died on March 26, 1827 and his legacy still lives today.

Ludwig van Beethoven was a musician and composer who was deaf. Even though he couldn't hear, he still managed to create and compose amazing pieces of music. He had many women that he loved, but none of them got married to him. His grandfather was a really talented musician, and Beethoven inherited his talent. With his skill, Beethoven helped his household, by making money. His mother was very sick when she passed, and afterwards his father's drinking habits got worse. His father died soon after Beethoven arrived in Vienna. Beethoven was a great man, amazing at making music. His pieces are still listened to and known today.

Footnotes:

1) Carole D. Bos, J.D., Beethoven,

<https://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/BEETHOVEN-UNHAPPY-CHILDHOOD-Beethoven>, Mar/01/2016, May/25/2016, <https://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/BEETHOVEN-UNHAPPY-CHILDHOOD-Beethoven>

2) Carole D. Bos, J.D., Beethoven,

<https://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/BEETHOVEN-UNHAPPY-CHILDHOOD-Beethoven>, Mar/01/2009, May/26/2016, <https://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/BEETHOVEN-UNHAPPY-CHILDHOOD-Beethoven>

3) Carole D. Bos, J.D., Beethoven, <https://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/LIFE-IN-VIENNA-Beethoven>, Mar/01/2009, May/27/2016, <https://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/LIFE-IN-VIENNA-Beethoven>

4) Carole D. Bos, J.D., Beethoven,

<https://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/LIVING-WITH-DEAFNESS-Beethoven>, Mar/01/2009, May/31/2016, <https://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/LIVING-WITH-DEAFNESS-Beethoven>

5) Carole D. Bos, J.D., Beethoven,

<https://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/COMPOSING-SYMPHONIES-Beethoven>, Mar/01/2009, May/31/2016, <https://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/COMPOSING-SYMPHONIES-Beethoven>

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Beethoven at Thirteen

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