

Beethoven biography

[Literature](#), [Autobiography](#)



Beethoven, who was a great composer and pianist of German origin was born in the 1770 and died in 1827. On the same note, he is grouped among the very influential composers and played a very great role in Western classical music especially due to the fact that he existed during the transition period between the famous classical and romantic eras (Beethoven: biography, 2001).

Although he was born in Bonn which was the capital city of Cologne, currently known as Germany, he later migrated to Vienna where he got occupied in studying as well as learning to play piano.

It bears noting that though he developed a hearing problem, this did not deter him from his music career since he continued to perform and compose even after becoming completely deaf. Although he did not live for long, he made notable contribution in the field of music. With this background, this paper will objectively describe his biography, laying more emphasis on his life history as well as his major accomplishments.

2. 0 Background Information

Beethoven was born in the family of musicians since his grandfather Lodewijk van Beethoven was also a musician of Flemish origin who was employed as a bass singer and ended up becoming a music director (Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827)). More to that, his grandfather still had a son by the name Johann van Beethoven who was also talented in music since he was employed as tenor in the same place with his father. The son used to teach violin and piano lessons part time as a means of supplementing his income. Johann married a lady by the name Maria Magdalene and the two became the parents of the famous Ludwig van Beethoven.

<https://assignbuster.com/beethoven-biography/>

Although studies record that the parents of Beethoven had seven children, it is only Beethoven together with two younger boys who survived past infancy stage. He was the second born in the family and even though his exact date of birth is not known as there are no records, it is assumed that he was born 16th December 1770. This is due to the fact that it is evidently known that he was baptized on 17th December 1770 and by then children were being baptized a day after birth (Lane, 2005). Moreover, most studies indicate that he used to celebrate his birthday on 16th December.

Beethoven talent in music was discovered quite early in life and his father who was a music teacher was the first person to start teaching him how to play keyboard. Although his father used to teach him, he still had other local teachers like Tobias Friedrich who taught him how to play piano, Franz Rovantini who taught him how to play violin as well as Gilles van den Eden. In the year 1779, Beethoven began to study music seriously with the help of Christian Neefe who helped him compose and publish his first composition in the year 1783.

He was first employed in the year 1784 at Court Chapel although before then he used to work as Neefe assistant without any pay. He was later appointed as an assistant organist and the people who used to work closely with him like Maximilian Fredrick noticed his talent in music and encouraged him to pursue further studies in music. Although studies illustrate that Beethoven had attempted to travel to Vienna in 1787, he was forced to go back to Bonn to take care of his siblings especially after his mother's death.

His father who was becoming a worse alcoholic day by day could not be trusted with caring for the family, this is denoted by the fact that he used to

<https://assignbuster.com/beethoven-biography/>

do it through a court order. However, in the year 1792, Beethoven travelled back to Vienna through the help of Elector. At Vienna, he trained under Haydn and managed to compose lots of work that was not published even though the works displayed his development in the music career. Similarly, these works by then indicated that he had learnt a lot from Haydn's since they displayed a lot of Mozartean flavor.

Nevertheless, Beethoven did not first concentrate on composing but on learning to play piano under the instruction of Haydn as well as playing violin. He was also occasionally taught on Italian vocal composition style by Antonio Salieri for some few years. Even though after sometime Elector ceased to finance him, he continued to stay in Vienna because some people from the same place who had noticed his talent in music continued to support him financially (Crowest, 2009, p. 120). 3. 0 Beethoven's Music Career

Beethoven's Music career began to flourish in 1800. It is noteworthy that his first music performance at Vienna was in 1795 after which he planned for the publication of his initial compositions, piano trios of Opus 1 which were dedicated to his patron. He continued to compose in many forms such as symphony, quartet and string. Although his works were greatly influenced by Mozart and Haydn, he emerged to be unique due to his music development, his use of modulation and texture, as well as his unique characterization of emotion.

Beethoven was not only a composer, but a music teacher as well. Further studies indicate that he also taught Ferdinand Ries who became a composer and went a head to write a book entitled ' Beethoven Remembered' which <https://assignbuster.com/beethoven-biography/>

explained about their encounter. Carl Czerny who was a music teacher was also a Beethoven student for two years from 1801-1803 (Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827)). Just at the height of his career, Beethoven developed a hearing problem which was quite discouraging since he could no longer be able to appreciate music.

Even if the exact cause of the problem is not known, it has been assumed that the problem was attributed by lead poisoning, syphilis, his habit of immersing his head in water in order to stay awake and typhus. However, the doctor's report indicated that it was as a result of distended inner ear. The evidence of his deafness is not only from his works which record his written conversation with his friends, but also from a large collection of his hearing aids which have been preserved in Beethoven House Museum in Bonn. He completely became deaf at 1814 but still continued with his music career (Davies, 2001, p.

234) and (Udvarhelyi, 2003). Much as Beethoven used to obtain money from his compositions and his performances, he also depended heavily on financial help from his patrons like Prince Lichnowsky and Archduke Rudolph who was the last born son of Emperor Leopold II. As years progressed, he continued to develop his career and by 1810, he had managed to be recognized as a great composer. However, due to family and personal as well as financial problems, a slight decline was noted in his music career. He also had numerous illicit love affairs which may have contributed to the decline of his performance.

In addition, he also started to experience ill health and his brother who was also ailing died in the year 1815. Albeit during this time he was still

composing, his health did not stabilize and in 1825, he became bedridden. Nonetheless, he composed the fifteenth Quartet and still compiled the sixteenth, fourteenth and the thirteenth quartet while still in poor health. In 1826, his health deteriorated further (Kinderman, 1997, p. 238). Further studies illustrate that he latter died in 26th March 1827 and his funeral service which took place in the Holy Trinity Church was attended by more than ten thousand people.

Beethoven was buried at Währing cemetery located in Vienna, but latter his remains were exhumed in 1862 for study purposes. Further studies indicate that the exact cause of his death is not known although it has been projected that he might have died of infectious hepatitis, syphilis, lead poisoning, Whipple's disease or Sarcoidosis. However, the analysis that was done after his body was exhumed point out that he could have died from excessive lead poisoning administered by his doctors (Beethoven: biography, 2001). 4. 0

Beethoven Major Accomplishments

Beethoven's composition represents several music genres and also contained a variety of music combinations. He wrote a total of sixteen string quartets, five string quintet, seven works for piano trio, five string trios and a lot more works containing a variety combinations of wind instruments. In addition, he also wrote nine symphonies and nine concerti and some vocal works with orchestral accompaniment. The first and the second symphonies and the first set of the six string quartets as well as some few other works were written in his early life when his music was greatly influenced by Mozart and Haydn (Kinderman, 1997, p.

284). Most of the major works of Beethoven that identified him as a hero was written when he started experiencing hearing problem. Such works include the six symphonies, the very last piano concertos, five string quartets, Fidelio which was his only opera and some piano and violin sonatas. In his last stages of life, he began composing works that displayed high personal expression, formal innovation and his intellectual depth. His very last works include the last five quartets, ninth symphony and the last five piano sonatas.

However, there are some of his works which were still very significant and may not have been recorded or published. 5.0 Conclusion Whereas studies indicate that Beethoven managed to become one of the renowned giants of classical music, some of his character traits did not display a very strong personality. For instance, his deafness made him to contemplate suicide and was frequently described as an impatient as well as a highly irritable person. He had some close friends who stayed by his side especially during his illness which led to his death.

However, most studies indicate that he found it quite hard to get along with people the main reason why he was never legally married. His works remain to be a strong indication of his contribution in music arena. References
Beethoven: biography. (2001). Retrieved July 10, 2010, from <http://www.lvbeethoven.com/Bio/BiographyLudwig.html>
Crowest, F. J. (2009). Beethoven: With Illustrations and Portraits. Charleston: BiblioBazaar, LLC.
Davies, P. J. (2001). Beethoven in person: his deafness, illnesses, and death. West Port: Greenwood Press.
Kinderman, W. (1997). Beethoven's Childhood. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Lane, W. (2005). Beethoven's <https://assignbuster.com/beethoven-biography/>

Childhood . Retrieved July 10, 2010, from <http://www.lucare.com/immortal/childhood.html> Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827). (n. d.). Retrieved July 10, 2010, from <http://library.thinkquest.org/22673/beethoven.html> Udvarhelyi, G. B. (2003). Beethoven in Person: His Deafness, Illnesses, and Death (review). *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* , 77 (1), 196-197.