Composer Profile: Ludwig Van Beethoven

THE FACTS

1 Ludwig van Beethoven was born in Bonn. According to most scholars, his date of birth is 17 December 1770.

2 Beethoven died on the 26 March 1827 in Vienna.

3 Beethoven was a German composer and pianist.

4 Beethoven played a huge role in shifting classical music from the 18th Century Classical period to the 19th Century Romantic period.

5 Beethoven began to lose his hearing in his late 20s and was completely deaf by his mid forties.

Notable pieces:
- Symphony No. 3 ("Eroica")
- Symphony No. 9 ("Choral")
- Piano Sonata No. 14 ("Moonlight Sonata")
- Bagatelle No. 25 ("Für Elise")
- Piano Concerto No. 5 ("Emperor Concerto")
- Fidelio

Unlike some composers, like Mendelssohn, who produced compositions in a single draft, Beethoven would re-write his works extensively, often producing several versions of a piece.

Beethoven wrote long "development sections" in his compositions, which expanded the musical material more than any previous composers had ever done.

Ludwig Van Beethoven

Beethoven's music is divided into three distinct periods - early (up to 1802), middle or "heroic" (1802 to 1812) and late (1812 to death in 1827).

Beethoven invented the use of "germ motive", whereby the movements he wrote were based entirely around the first few notes.

Beethoven's father wanted him to be compared to Mozart, who was already established as a musical genius, so on the concert poster for Beethoven's first concert, his father lied about his age, saying he was 6 instead of 7.

6? — 7?

Beethoven's hearing loss was so severe by the premiere of his Choral Symphony that he didn't realise the orchestra had finished before him. He carried on conducting until a singer turned him around to see the audience applauding.

It is said that Beethoven would dip his head in cold water before composing.

Beethoven is said to have died at the moment of an enormous clap of thunder during a storm.