

Ludwig van Beethoven was a German composer who was born in the 16<sup>th</sup> of December 1770 in Bonn, Germany. His grandfather, Ludwig van Beethoven was the music director to the Archbishop-Elector of Cologne. Beethoven's father, Johann van Beethoven was a tenor singer in the court of the Elector of Cologne who was bad tempered and was an alcoholic. Although it is said that Johann is mentally unbalanced, he still recognized young Beethoven's talent in music and soon becomes his first music teacher.

Johann's music lessons were often very harsh and senseless as he thinks that Beethoven should follow the footsteps of Mozart. Beethoven was usually made to practice for hours, and is sometimes being pulled out of bed late at night to practice until dawn when his father returned home drunk. The only shield that Beethoven could get was from his gentle, warm hearted mother Magdalkna Kewerich who gave birth to eight children in which only three survived with Ludwig van Beethoven being the eldest.

Apart from his father, Beethoven is also given piano and violin lessons from Franz Rovantini. Chrisrian Gottlob Neefe, the director of the national theater was the first noteworthy teacher that Beethoven got as he knew that Beethoven cannot be taught by inflexible systems. Beethoven's first compositions - A set of keyboard variations, was also organized and published by Neefe. Three sonatas were also published in 1783 which led to Beethoven being appointed as the second court organist in 1784.

Beethoven was suggested to travel to Vienna to take lessons with Mozart in 1787 by Neefe. Although Mozart was impressed by Beethoven, the trip to Vienna was short because of the news of his mother's serious illness. Beethoven was given half of his father's salary as well as his own at the court by 1788 as he is now the responsible for his family after his mother's death of tuberculosis.

Beethoven arrived in Vienna again in 1792 as he is permitted by elector who got persuaded by Count Ferdinand Waldstein, an influential patron to study with Haydn. Although his lessons with Haydn were not very successful, he still made a name as a pianist and is very popular with his improvisation.

On 29<sup>th</sup> of March, 1795 Beethoven gave his first public concert of his new piano concerto at the Burgthraater which surprised his audiences by his new emotional style of music. By

1796, Beethoven had earned enough money to set up his own apartment and had published a set of piano trios and three sonatas that were beyond the style of classical music. He gave occasional concerts and issued his works in print such as the pathetic sonata over the next four years. The first nine symphonies written in 1800 had shown Beethoven's desire of pushing the boundaries of customary compositional techniques, and to extend the sonata form. The classical symphonies were usually in four movements and relies more on rhythmic dynamism rather than lyrical themes such as minuet and trios. But Beethoven replaced them with more dynamic and rhythmic scherzo while remaining a tripartite structure with a slower and lyrical section.

Beethoven reached the lowest point in his life when he had to face the fact that he is going deaf at around 1800. He was tempted to commit suicide and wrote a letter to his brothers saying how miserable his life is. The letter was never sent and he never committed suicide as he concluded that he had to accomplish what he has to do before he leaves this world. This can be seen through his works such as the powerful and tragic Eroica symphony originally dedicated to Napoleon.

Beethoven was also having trouble finding a partner for the fact that they were either married or was above him in social station such as Countess Giulietta Guicciardi in which the moonlight sonata was dedicated to. He seemed to despise women of the lower social classes which led to rows with his brother of bad choices of wives. Battle Symphony was composed in 1813 by Beethoven to celebrate the defeat of Napoleon's defeat on the Iberian Peninsula. In 1815 after his brother's death, Beethoven had a long lawful fight to earn the guardianship of his nephew Karl. But they had a rough relationship.

Beethoven became very anti-social after becoming completely deaf in 1818 but still kept on composing. He had never really paid attention to sacred music, but Missa solemnis was composed in 1822 to celebrate Archduke Rudolph's enthronement as archbishop of Olmütz. Parts of it were performed along with the ninth symphony in 1824 at a concert. Beethoven's nephew Karl tried to commit suicide while Beethoven is very ill with liver disease in 1826.

Beethoven died on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March 1827. 10000 people were estimated to attend Beethoven's funeral procession with Franz Grillparzer delivering the funeral oration about him who would live to the end of time.

Beethoven is placed between the Classical and Romantic eras in musical history as classical and romantic elements are both revealed within his works. Although his early

works clearly showed the influence that Mozart and Haydn had made on him, his heroic characteristic style slowly develops in his composition in his later works. This style is finally developed into a transcendent style in which he tried to combine the baroque ideas with classical ideas.

His works were well structured with lots of contrast such as dynamics and tempo; these elements would place him into the categories of a classical composer. Even though classical characteristics can be found in Beethoven's works, his unique styles of work still stand out compared to the other composer's works. Unlike his contemporaries Mozart and Haydn, who focused more on exposition in a sonata form, Beethoven focused more on development, making it both longer and more structured. Beethoven also has the ability to rapidly create solidity in putting together different keys and surprising notes to join them; these elements would place him into the categories of a romantic composer. But most of his works are very well structured. Therefore, Beethoven is considered to be a classical composer.