



# LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

(1770–1827)

Neighbours said that they would often see a small boy being pushed up to a piano by his father, and that the boy would cry as he was forced to play. They said the boy was so small he had to stand on a stool to reach the keys.

The boy was beaten by his father, locked in a basement and stopped from sleeping, even when he was so tired he could barely keep his eyes open.

At school, things weren't much better. The boy had dyslexia, which meant he struggled with words. For him, music always came much more easily and, despite the harsh treatment from his father, he couldn't wait to get back and lose himself in it.

The boy got older and became a man. He wrote new music every day, hardly lifting his hands off the piano. Even as an adult, though, he was so shy it hurt, and that shyness kept him from ever getting married or having children.

One day, the man discovered that he was going deaf. It threw him into a deep, dark sadness. How would he compose music if he couldn't hear? And what would he do if he couldn't compose music?

Amazingly, even when he lost his hearing completely, the man carried on writing music. In fact, he composed some of his most beautiful music without being able to hear at all.

The boy that cried on to the piano, and the man that he became, was named Ludwig van Beethoven, and he's considered by many people to be the greatest composer who ever lived.