



Let me tell you that my most prized possession, my hearing, has greatly deteriorated... The symptoms are said to be caused by the condition of my abdomen... When I am playing and composing, my affliction still hampers me least; it affects me most when I am in company... my ears continue to hum and buzz day and night. I must confess that I lead a miserable life. For almost two years, I have ceased to attend any social functions, just because I find it impossible to say to people: I am deaf. If I had any other profession I might be able to cope with my infirmity; but in my profession it is a terrible handicap... At a distance I cannot hear the high notes of instruments or voices... I can hear sounds, it is true, but cannot make out the words. But if anyone shouts, I can't bear it!

Beethoven's doctors tried many cures. They poured milk and ground nuts into his ears. They rubbed ointment on his arms to produce blisters that might drain any infection. None worked, and Beethoven continued to seek help for his malady right up to two weeks before his death. Medical experts now say that his deafness was more likely due to damaged nerve endings than to any external causes.

## Discussion and Activities



Questions to ask:

- Halfway through this recording, can you see a change in the relationship between Christoph and Beethoven?
- It is reported that Beethoven would wait out a storm under a tree. Have you ever been caught in a big storm? What happened? Is this a good strategy?
- What do you do during grown-up parties at your house? What does the rest of your family do during your parties?
- Beethoven had great courage to continue composing while he was deaf. How do you define courage? Discuss other examples of courage shown by someone with a disability. In what way can a disability sometimes be seen as an opportunity?
- Any artist lives a rich inner life. Talk about imagination. Is everyone's imagination different or are there common themes? How do you think your imagination differs from your family or friends?

## More Sound Effects



In both audio and video productions, sound effects are essential for creating a sense of place.

- Ask your class to list the sound effects they hear in the party scene. Imagine they are creating the sound for a film that includes a child's party. What effects would they add into the mix? [Suggestions: "Happy Birthday" song, running, cutlery noises, clapping, laughing, crying.]
- Try to find a book on how to make sound effects. Experiment with the ones below or make up some new ones. Record them if you can, and see if a friend can guess what they are.