Ludwig van Beethoven was one of the world's greatest composers. He wrote many symphonies, overtures, and pieces for piano and other instruments. He started studying the piano and violin when he was 4 years old. His father, a singer, was his first teacher. His next teacher, Christian Neefe, was very patient with him and he began to do well. He wrote his first composition when he was 11. When he was 12, his teacher let him direct the orchestra part of the time. He moved to Vienna and studied with Joseph Haydn. He liked taking long walks during the day. During these walks he planned his music. He would make notes in a notebook. Then in the evening after dinner, he would write music from about 7:30 to 10:00 p.m. Beethoven began to lose his hearing when he was in his 20's. He became very suspicious of people and hard to get along with. But he was still able to hear the songs in his mind and write them down. He did not get along with his two brothers. When his brother Karl died, Beethoven took his 9 year-old son to raise. It was an unhappy time for the child and his uncle. The boy rebelled against him and caused him a lot of grief. In 1826 he caught a cold. It developed into pneumonia and he died. The world lost a great composer, but his music lives on today.