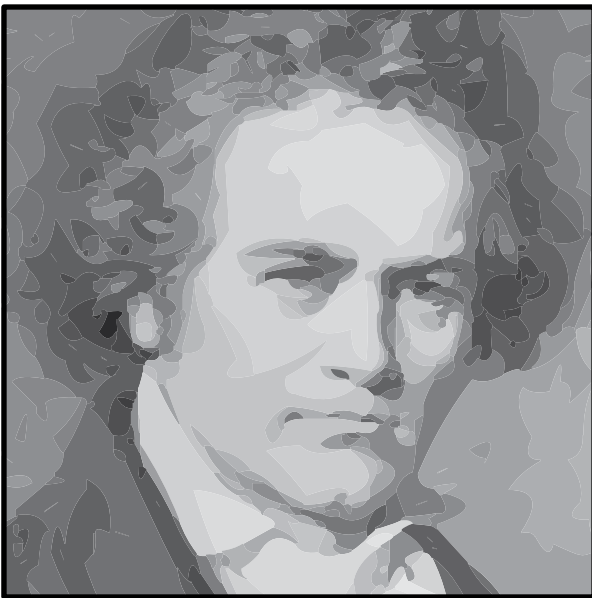




Deaf People and Their Accomplishments

Helen Keller

Helen Keller was born in 1880 and at 19 months old she suffered an unknown illness and as a result became both deaf and blind. When she was 7 years old, Anne Mansfield Sullivan became her teacher. She taught Helen by manually signing in her hand. She taught her how to spell the words for different objects. Anne began to teach Helen how to speak and read and with sheer determination, after attending college, Helen achieved a Bachelor of Arts degree. Helen progressed to become an author and wanted to inspire and give hope to people similar to her. As a result she spent the majority of her adult life raising money and awareness for people with disabilities, especially those who were deaf or blind.



Ludwig van Beethoven

Beethoven was a composer and pianist. He was born in Germany in 1770 and as a child was taught to play the piano by his father. From a young age he was declared a child prodigy and started to make public performances on the piano. Beethoven was taught composition by a court organist, and with him, he wrote his first published composition, in his early teenage years. By the early 1800s, Beethoven had become renowned for his piano and orchestral compositions. However, by the age of 26 Beethoven had begun to lose his hearing. He suffered from severe “tinnitus”, a ringing in the ears. Towards the end of his life he was so profoundly deaf, that when he conducted the performance of his Ninth

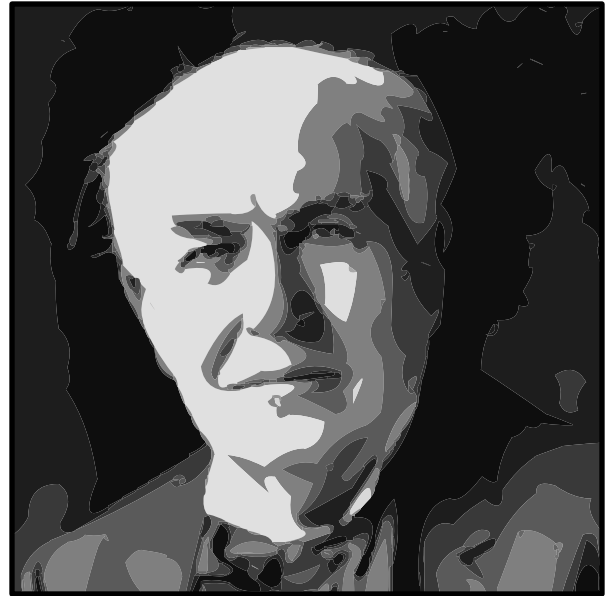
Symphony, he had to be turned to face the audience so that he could see their applause. Despite his hearing loss however, Beethoven continued to compose and play music for the rest of his life.

Thomas Edison

Edison was an American inventor. He was born in 1847 and at a young age contracted scarlet fever and had an accident, which left him with hearing difficulties. As a child, living near the railroad, he experimented in his own makeshift laboratory. He continued with his experiments and in 1869 his first invention, a stock ticker, was sold. In 1870 Edison invented the phonograph (a device for recording sound) and in 1880 he was granted a patent for his design of the light bulb. In 1896 Edison became the first person to project a motion picture and a few years later he attempted to blend sound and pictures together to make the first talking pictures.



Throughout his life, Edison's hearing became progressively worse, until he was left almost totally deaf, in his later years. However, Edison did not see this as a disadvantage, in fact he often told people that it helped him to concentrate and that he preferred reading to the babble of conversation. Indeed, Edison favoured communicating with others by writing notes in notebooks, often instead of verbal methods of communication. Some of Edison's notebooks are still around today and offer a great insight into this ingenious man's way of thinking. By the time he died at the age of 84 Thomas Edison had patented over 1000 inventions. His most significant accomplishment, being the creation of the first safe and economical system for generating and distributing light and power.



Pete Townsend



Pete Townsend has been a songwriter and guitarist for the rock group, The Who, from the 1960s to the present day. Having taught himself to play the guitar, he wrote the rock operas "Tommy" and "Quadrophenia" and well over 100 tracks for the band. In the 1960s The Who's drummer, Keith Moon exploded his drum kit on the stage. As a result of the explosion, and the continual high noise level from wearing studio headphones and stage performances, Townsend suffered severe hearing damage, leaving him completely deaf in one ear and suffering tinnitus in the other. Despite this, Townsend still performs and records music and is one of the most well-known and accomplished rock stars of all time.

Eric Clapton





Eric Clapton is an English musician, singer-songwriter and guitarist. He has performed as a solo artist and separately as a member of the Yardbirds and Cream. Clapton has been referred to as one of the most important and influential guitarists of all time. However, Clapton was renowned for turning his guitar amplifiers up to full volume when he played. As a result he suffers from tinnitus. Fortunately, he has been able to stop his tinnitus from worsening significantly by keeping the volume lower when he plays and protecting his ears with ear plugs.



Terence Parkin

Terence Parkin is a South African swimmer and cyclist and is one of the world's most accomplished deaf athletes. He won the silver medal at the 2000 world summer games in the 200 metre breaststroke. Deaf since birth, Parkin has competed in and won over 30 medals in the Deaf summer games and in the 2005 Deaf summer games alone, Parkin won 12 gold medals and one silver. When Parkin started swimming at the age of 12 he used sign language to communicate with his coach and had to rely upon him to indicate the start of a race. Today, the start of a race is indicated by both flashing lights and a tone.

