Frederic Chopin (1810 - 1849)

Chopin was a man who, from childhood, was prone to illnesses. Popular in Europe’s arts and music circles, Chopin had many romances in his short life, the most famous being one with the older French writer, George Sand (real name: Aurore Dupin). Theirs was a very tumultuous relationship, where she at times made fun of the composer’s weakened health, calling him “third child” and “beloved little corpse.” Hurt and disrespected by his lover, he ended their ten-year relationship shortly before his death.

Have you ever suffered a debilitating illness or been hurt by a beloved’s actions or words?

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827)

Sonata Op. 109

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PROGRAM NOTES

Hachidai Nakamura (1931 - 1992)

Ue o Muite Arukō (“I Look Up As I Walk”) (Arranged by Julie Lowe)

Lyrics:

I look up as I walk, so that the tears won’t fall
Remembering those spring days, but I am alone tonight
I look up as I walk, counting the stars with tearful eyes
Remembering those summer days, but I am alone tonight
Happiness lies beyond the clouds
I look up as I walk, so that the tears won’t fall
Though the tears well up as I walk,
For tonight I’m alone tonight
Remembering those autumn days, but I am alone tonight
Sadness lies in the shadow of the stars,
Sadness lurks in the shadow of the moon
I look up as I walk, so that the tears won’t fall,
Though the tears well up as I walk, for tonight I’m all alone

Have you ever felt alone?

Franz Schubert (1797 - 1828)

Impromptu Op. 90/1

Schubert came from a large family. Born in Vienna, he was twelfth out of 14 children, but nine of his siblings died in their childhood. Though not recorded in history books, knowing the family turmoil and sorrow that accompanies death, there were surely times when the young Schubert must have felt alone and unnoticed by his family members. He dearly wanted to marry a young soprano, but a new series of marriage laws in Austria made it extremely difficult for a man to wed without first showing he had the financial means to support a household. As a poor musician often dependent upon the generosity of his friends for lodging and food, Schubert was hence denied the hand of his beloved and never did marry.

Unfortunately, things did not improve for Herr Schubert, who, like all Vienna, revered the formidable Beethoven. As often with greatness, Schubert’s music was not widely acknowledged in his lifetime. Even today, often getting the short end of the comparison stick, Schubert’s music begs to be valued for the lyrical beauty only he could create.

Have you ever felt unappreciated or unfavourably compared to someone?

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)

Italian Concerto BWV 971

First movement (untitled)

Bach was a composer who knew death intimately. Orphaned by the age of 10, he was moved in with his older brother, also a musician. At 21 he married his second cousin, Maria Barbara. They had seven children, but three of them died. While abroad with his patron, Prince Leopold, Maria suddenly passed away. A year and a half later, Bach married again. With Anna Magdalena, they had 13 children, but seven of them died. In his last year, Bach began losing his sight and was totally blind at death.

Have you ever lost someone you loved? Has a tragic event hurt someone deeply care about?