

The Sound of Music

PART I

Evelyn Glennie Listens to Sound without Hearing It

Introduction

This lesson is a biographical piece on Evelyn Glennie written by Deborah Cowley. Evelyn Glennie lost her power of hearing when she was eleven years old. She achieved success and recognition through determination, hard work and courage. She became the world's most sought after multi-percussionist with mastery in around thousand instruments.

Summary

Evelyn Glennie is a deaf percussion maestro. She was born at a Scottish farm. Gradually, she lost her hearing power. By the age of eleven her hearing was severely impaired due to gradual nerve damage. She was advised to use hearing aids and sent to a school for the deaf. But she was determined to lead a normal life and pursue her interest in music. It was Ron Forbes, her school percussionist, who spotted her potential. He helped her to continue with music. She learnt to open her mind and body to sounds and vibrations.

When she was sixteen, she toured the United Kingdom with a youth orchestra and auditioned for the Royal Academy of Music in London and scored one of the highest marks in the history of the Academy. She completed her three year course at the Academy and captured most of the top awards. She gradually moved from orchestral work to solo performances and gained mastery in around thousand instruments. She performs internationally.

In 1991, she was presented with the Royal Philharmonic Society's prestigious 'Soloist of the Year' Award.

Apart from regular concerts, Evelyn also gives free concerts in prisons and hospitals. She also gives high priority to classes for young musicians. She is a shining inspiration for deaf children.

Message

The story conveys the message that nothing is impossible if one has the will and the ability to work hard. One can achieve phenomenal success even with physical disabilities only if one strongly aspires to do so.



Extract Based Questions ↘

1. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

Rush hour crowds jostle for position on the underground train platform. A slight girl, looking younger than her seventeen years, was nervous yet excited as she felt the vibrations of the approaching train. It was her first day at the prestigious Royal Academy of Music in London and daunting enough for any teenager fresh from a Scottish farm. But this aspiring musician faced a bigger challenge than most: she was profoundly deaf.

(a) The girl got nervous and excited on:

- (i) reaching the platform and waiting for train
- (ii) realising that the train is about to come
- (iii) dreaming of doing something in London
- (iv) the thought that she is leaving Scotland for London

(b) The scene here is about a train platform which is

(c) State whether the given statement is True or False. The girl was from Scotland.

(d) Complete the analogy with a word from the extract. aspiring : longing : : anxious :



Answers

- (a) (ii) realising that the train is about to come
- (b) underground
- (c) True
- (d) nervous

2. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

Evelyn Glennie's loss of hearing had been gradual. Her mother remembers noticing something was wrong when the eight-year-old Evelyn was waiting to play the piano. "They called her name and she didn't move. I suddenly realised she hadn't heard," says Isabel Glennie. For quite a while Evelyn managed to conceal her growing deafness from friends and teachers. But by the time she was eleven her marks had deteriorated and her headmistress urged her parents to take her to a specialist.

(a) Evelyn's mother suddenly realised that she:

- (i) didn't want to play piano
- (ii) didn't hear her name being called out
- (iii) didn't want to respond
- (iv) didn't like her name to be called out

(b) When Evelyn was called to play the piano, she didn't respond due to gradual

(c) State whether the given statement is True or False.

Evelyn's teacher requested her parents to take her to another city.

(d) Complete the analogy with a word from the extract.

conceal : reveal :: rapid :

Answers

- (a) (ii) didn't hear her name being called out
- (b) loss of hearing
- (c) False
- (d) gradual

3. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

Most of the teachers discouraged her but percussionist Ron Forbes spotted her potential. He began by tuning two large drums to different notes. "Don't listen through your ears," he would say, "try to sense it some other way." Says Evelyn, "Suddenly I realised I could feel the higher drum from the waist up and the lower one from the waist down." Forbes repeated the exercise, and soon Evelyn discovered that she could sense certain notes in different parts of her body. "I had learnt to open my mind and body to sounds and vibrations." The rest was sheer determination and hard work.

(a) 'Try to sense it' refers to:

- (i) listen through ears
- (ii) make different sounds
- (iii) feel the music
- (iv) listen some other kind of music

(b) Ron Forbes tuned each drum to different notes so as to produce

(c) State whether the given statement is True or False. Ron Forbes spotted Evelyn's deafness.

(d) Give a word that is opposite in meaning to the word 'discouraged'.

Answers

- (a) (iii) feel the music
- (b) different sounds
- (c) False
- (d) encouraged/supported

4. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

It is intriguing to watch Evelyn function so effortlessly without hearing. In our two-hour discussion, she never missed a word. "Men with bushy beards give me trouble," she laughed. "It is not just watching the lips, it's the whole face, especially the eyes." She speaks flawlessly with a Scottish lilt. "My speech is clear because I could hear till I was eleven," she says. But that doesn't explain how she managed to learn French and master basic Japanese.

(a) State whether the given statement is True or False.

The men with bushy beards give Ron Forbes trouble.

(b) Evelyn's speech was clear because

(c) 'It's the whole face, especially the eyes' means:

- (i) lip movements of the person's face
- (ii) expression of the eyes
- (iii) entire expression on the face along with eyes
- (iv) identifying the person

(d) Complete the analogy with a word from the extract.

effortlessly : easily :: perfectly :

Answers

- (a) False
- (b) she could hear till she was eleven.
- (c) (iii) entire expression on the face along with eyes
- (d) flawlessly

5. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

Not surprisingly, Evelyn delights her audiences. In 1991 she was presented with the Royal Philharmonic Society's prestigious 'Soloist of the Year' award. Says master percussionist James Blades, "God may have taken her hearing but he has given her back something extraordinary. What we hear, she feels—far more deeply than any of us. That is why she expresses music so beautifully."

(a) State whether the given statement is True or False.

God has given Evelyn a strong power of sensing sounds.

(b) Evelyn was presented with the prestigious 'Soloist of the Year' award for giving

(c) Evelyn's strong sensation of sounds enabled her to become a great

- (i) singer
- (ii) poet
- (iii) dancer
- (iv) musician

(d) Complete the analogy with a word from the extract.

prestigious : honourable :: remarkable :

Answers

- (a) True
- (b) solo performances
- (c) (iv) musician
- (d) extraordinary



6. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

Evelyn Glennie has already accomplished more than most people twice her age. She has brought percussion to the front of the orchestra, and demonstrated that it can be very moving. She has given inspiration to those who are handicapped, people who look to her and say, "If she can do it, I can." And, not the least, she has given enormous pleasure to millions.

(a) State whether the given statement is True or False.

Evelyn has brought guitar and violin to the front of the orchestra.

(b) When Evelyn performs Solo, she gives special performances with

(c) 'I can' refers to those who have been inspired from Evelyn's story.

- (i) physically disabled people
- (ii) dumb people
- (iii) blind people
- (iv) poor people

(d) An antonym of 'enormous' is

Answers

- (a) False
- (b) percussion instruments
- (c) (i) physically disabled people
- (d) tiny/little

Short Answer Type Questions

Q1. When and how was Evelyn's hearing problem noticed?

Ans. Evelyn was only eight-year-old when her hearing problem was noticed by her mother. One day she was waiting to play the piano. Her name was called but she didn't move. Her mother then realised that it was because she hadn't heard her name being called.

Q2. How did percussionist Ron Forbes help Evelyn in her career?

Ans. Ron Forbes, the percussionist, tuned two large drums to different notes. He then asked Evelyn not to listen through her ears but try to sense the vibrations made by the drums in some other way. This helped Evelyn to train herself to sense notes in different parts of her body.

Q3. What did Evelyn accomplish at the Royal Academy of Music?

Ans. When Evelyn was seventeen, she was admitted in the Royal Academy of Music in London. She scored the highest marks in the history of the Academy. She was one of the most brilliant students of the academy and won many awards during her three year course.

Q4. What does Evelyn say about her connection with music?

Ans. According to Evelyn, music pours through every part of her body. It tingles her skin, her cheekbones and even her hair. When she plays the xylophone, she can

feel the sound passing up the stick into her fingertips. By leaning against the drums, she can feel resonances flowing into her body. On a wooden platform, she removes her shoes so that the vibrations pass through her bare feet and up into her body.

Q5. Describe how Evelyn inspired the deaf children?

Ans. Evelyn is herself a deaf girl but she never let her handicap come in her way. She became a world renowned multi-percussionist. She is an inspiration for deaf children who say, 'If she can do it, then I can also.'

Q6. Evelyn is a self-proclaimed workaholic. Discuss.

Ans. Evelyn confesses that she is a workaholic. She works harder than classical musicians. Apart from the regular concerts, she also gives free concerts in prisons and hospitals. She also conducts high priority classes for young musicians.

Q7. State the accomplishments of Evelyn Glennie.

Ans. Evelyn Glennie has brought percussion to the front of the orchestra. She has also demonstrated that percussion can be very moving. She has inspired the handicapped. She was presented with the Royal Philharmonic Society's Prestigious 'Soloist of the Year' award in 1991.

Q8. Name the various places and causes for which Evelyn performs.

Ans. Evelyn performs free in prisons and hospitals. She also conducts high priority classes for young musicians.

Long Answer Type Questions

Q1. Who helped Evelyn Glennie to continue with music? What did he do and say?

Ans. One day Evelyn Glennie noticed a girl playing a xylophone at her school. She wanted to play it too. But most of the teachers discouraged her. School percussionist Ron Forbes spotted her potential. He decided to help her. He began by tuning two large drums to different notes. He instructed Evelyn to try to sense music in some other way. Evelyn realised that she could feel the higher drum from her waist up and the lower one from her waist down. She learnt to open her mind and body to sounds and vibrations. This helped her to continue her music.

Q2. How does Evelyn hear music?

Ans. Evelyn is a deaf musician. But she has learnt to open her mind and body to sounds and vibrations. Music pours in through every part of her body. Music tingles in the skin, her cheekbones and even her hair. When she plays the xylophone, she can sense the sound passing up the stick into her fingertips. By leaning against the drums, she can feel the resonances flowing into her body. On a wooden platform, she removes her shoes so that the vibrations pass through her bare feet and up her legs. So, Evelyn basically feels music.

PART II

The Shehnai of Bismillah Khan

Introduction

This lesson presents the life journey of India's illustrious son Bismillah Khan, an ordinary man who rose to be the legendary Shehnai Maestro. His dedication, hard work and mastery over his craft helped him to get 'Bharat Ratna', the highest civilian award of India.

Summary

The story goes that Emperor Aurangzeb had banned the playing of *pungi* in the royal residence because it had a shrill unpleasant sound. A barber decided to improve the tonal quality of the *pungi*. He chose a pipe with a natural hollow stem that was longer and broader than the *pungi* and made seven holes on the body of the pipe. When he played it, closing and opening some of these holes, soft and melodious sounds were produced. He played it in the Shah's chambers for the first time and everybody was impressed. This instrument was named as shehnai.

Shehnai has been played in temples and North Indian weddings. The credit for bringing this instrument onto the classical stage goes to Ustad Bismillah Khan.

Bismillah Khan was born on 21 March, 1916 at Dumraon in Bihar. He belonged to a well-known family of musicians. At the age of six he moved to Benaras where his maternal uncle Ali Bux taught him to play the shehnai. He would sit practising throughout the day. His favourite haunts were the temple of *Balaji* and *Mangala Maiya* and the banks of the Ganga. He practised hard in loneliness. He invented many *raagas* which were considered to be beyond the range of the shehnai.

With the opening of the All India Radio in Lucknow in 1938 came Bismillah's big break. He started playing shehnai on radio.

When India gained independence on 15 August, 1947, Bismillah Khan became the first Indian to greet the nation with his shehnai.

Bismillah Khan gave many memorable performances both in India and abroad. His first trip abroad was to Afghanistan where king Zahir Shah was greatly impressed by the maestro. He was also successful in the cinema world but he did not like that life.

Bismillah Khan became the first Indian to be invited to perform at the Lincoln Centre Hall in the USA. He also took part in the World Exhibition in Montreal, in the Cannes Art Festival and in the Osaka Trade Fair. He was recognised internationally. An auditorium in Teheran (Iran) was named after him.

National awards like the Padmashri, the Padma Bhushan and the Padma Vibhushan were conferred on him. In 2001, he was awarded the Bharat Ratna. He said, "All I would like to say is: Teach your children music, this is Hindustan's richest tradition; even the West is now coming to learn our music."

He loved Benaras and the holy Ganga. His life is a perfect example of the rich cultural heritage of India.

Message

The story conveys the message that music is above caste, religion or boundaries. It is a unifying force which is loved and appreciated by all human beings.



Extract Based Questions

1. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

Emperor Aurangzeb banned the playing of a musical instrument called *pungi* in the royal residence for it had a shrill unpleasant sound. *Pungi* became the generic name for reeded noisemakers. Few had thought that it would one day be revived. A barber of a family of professional musicians, who had access to the royal palace, decided to improve the tonal quality of the *pungi*. He chose a pipe with a natural hollow stem that was longer and broader than the *pungi*, and made seven holes on the body of the pipe. When he played on it, closing and opening some of these holes, soft and melodious sounds were produced.

- (a) State whether the given statement is True or False.

Many had thought that *pungi* would be revived.

- (b) Fill in the blank with one word only:

Pungi is a musical instrument which has a like as flutes, clarinets, etc.

- (c) The barber made holes in the pipe so as to blow into it and thus to produce soft and melodious sound.

- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| (i) water | (ii) stones |
| (iii) soil | (iv) air |

- (d) The word 'shrill' means the same as

Answers

- (a) False
- (b) reed
- (c) (iv) air
- (d) sharp/harsh



2. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

The sound of the *shehnai* began to be considered auspicious. And for this reason it is still played in temples and is an indispensable component of any North Indian wedding. In the past, the *shehnai* was part of the *naubat* or traditional ensemble of nine instruments found at royal courts. Till recently it was used only in temples and weddings. The credit for bringing this instrument onto the classical stage goes to Ustad Bismillah Khan.

- (a) Earlier shehnai was part of the *naubat* and was among the nine musical instruments played at:
(i) many temples
(ii) weddings
(iii) classical stage performances
(iv) royal courts
- (b) The credit for using shehnai on all good occasions goes to Ustad Bismillah Khan who was a legendary
- (c) The word 'auspicious' means the same as:
(i) unsuitable (ii) favourable
(iii) ominous (iv) unfortunate
- (d) Complete the analogy with a word from the extract.
royal : monarchical :: essential :

Answers

- (a) (iv) royal courts
(b) shehnai player
(c) (ii) favourable
(d) indispensable

3. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

As a five-year old, Bismillah Khan played *gilli-danda* near a pond in the ancient estate of Dumraon in Bihar. He would regularly go to the nearby Biharji temple to sing the Bhojpuri 'Chaita', at the end of which he would earn a big laddu weighing 1.25 kg, a prize given by the local Maharaja. This happened 80 years ago, and the little boy has travelled far to earn the highest civilian award in India—the Bharat Ratna.

- (a) What was the distance that the little boy has travelled far?
(i) From childhood to adulthood
(ii) From a poor child to the richest man
(iii) From a small award of 1.25 kg laddu to the highest civilian award in India
(iv) An amazing journey from 8 years to 80 years of age
- (b) As a five-year old, Bismillah Khan played *gilli-danda* near a pond in the ancient estate of Dumraon
- (c) The antonym of 'ancient' can be:
(i) obsolete (ii) recent
(iii) former (iv) bygone
- (d) State whether the given statement is True or False.
Bismillah Khan would regularly go to the nearby Biharji temple to sing the Bhojpuri 'Chaita'.

Answers

- (a) (iii) From a small award of 1.25 kg laddu to the highest civilian award in India
(b) in Bihar
(c) (ii) recent
(d) True

4. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

When India gained independence on 15 August, 1947, Bismillah Khan became the first Indian to greet the nation with his *shehnai*. He poured his heart out into *Raag Kafi* from the Red Fort to an audience which included Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who later gave his famous 'Tryst with Destiny' speech.

- (a) The event when Bismillah Khan greeted the entire nation with his shehnai for the first time was historic as it was the day when:
(i) Bismillah played shehnai for the first time
(ii) India gained independence from the British rule
(iii) Bismillah played shehnai from Red Fort
(iv) Bismillah gave his best ever performance
- (b) The Raag played by Ustad Bismillah Khan on the occasion of the Independence of India was
- (c) Bismillah's performance from the Red Fort was followed by the historic speech given by.....
(i) Gandhiji (ii) Dr. Rajendra Prasad
(iii) Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru (iv) Lal Bahadur Shastri
- (d) Which part of speech is 'became'?
(i) Verb (ii) Noun
(iii) Adjective (iv) Adverb

Answers

- (a) (ii) India gained Independence from the British rule
(b) Raag Kafi
(c) (iii) Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru
(d) (i) Verb

5. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

Awards and recognition came thick and fast. Bismillah Khan became the first Indian to be invited to perform at the prestigious Lincoln Centre Hall in the United States of America. He also took part in the World Exposition in Montreal, in the Cannes Art Festival and in the Osaka Trade Fair. So well known did he become internationally that an auditorium in Teheran was named after him—*Tahar Mausique Ustad Bismillah Khan*.

- (a) 'Thick and fast' here refers to:
(i) only awards
(ii) a lot of recognition and honour with awards to Bismillah Khan
(iii) Recognition at many places
(iv) a lot of prestige for best performance
- (b) Bismillah Khan performed in Montreal in the World Exposition and in Japan at

(c) Bismillah Khan became the first Indian to be invited to perform at the:

- (i) Lincoln Centre Hall in the USA
- (ii) World Exposition in Montreal
- (iii) Cannes Art Festival
- (iv) Osaka Trade Fair in Japan

(d) The word 'prestigious' means the same as

Answers

- (a) (ii) a lot of recognition and honour with awards to Bismillah Khan
- (b) Osaka Trade Fair
- (c) (i) Lincoln Centre Hall in the USA
- (d) esteemed

6. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

In spite of having travelled all over the world—*Khansaab* as he is fondly called—is exceedingly fond of Benaras and Dumraon and they remain for him the most wonderful towns of the world. A student of his once wanted him to head a *shehnai* school in the USA, and the student promised to recreate the atmosphere of Benaras by replicating the temples there. But *Khansaab* asked him if he would be able to transport River Ganga as well.

(a) A student of Ustad Bismillah Khan wanted him to:

- (i) not to leave India
- (ii) set-up a shehnai school in the USA
- (iii) settle in America
- (iv) transport River Ganga to America

(b) Bismillah Khan didn't want to leave India because he was attached to the temples of Benaras and to the

(c) The antonym of 'exceedingly' is:

- (i) extremely (ii) awfully
- (iii) highly (iv) slightly

(d) Complete the analogy with a word from the extract.
promise : pledge :: rejuvenate :

Answers

- (a) (ii) set-up a shehnai school in the USA
- (b) holy river Ganga
- (c) (iv) slightly
- (d) recreate

Short Answer Type Questions

Q 1. Why was *pungi* banned by Aurangzeb?

Ans. Emperor Aurangzeb did not like the sound of *pungi*. He found it shrill and unpleasant. Therefore, he decided to ban its use.

Q 2. What name was given to the improved version of *pungi* and why?

Ans. The improved version of *pungi* was called *shehnai*. It was named so because the instrument was made by a *nai* (barber) and was first played in the *Shah's*

(Emperor's) chambers. So, *shehnai* is a word coined by joining the two words *shah* and *nai*.

Q 3. What is thought about the sound of shehnai?

Ans. The sound of shehnai is thought to be auspicious. This is why it is played in temples and weddings.

Q 4. How is a shehnai different from a *pungi*?

Ans. *Pungi* is a reeded wind instrument. Its sound is shrill and unpleasant. Shehnai differs from *pungi* in shape and size and structure. It is made from a pipe with a natural hollow stem that is longer and broader than the *pungi*. It has seven holes on its body. These holes are closed and opened while playing. It has a soft and melodious sound.

Q 5. Describe Bismillah Khan as a boy in Dumraon.

Ans. As a five-year old, Bismillah Khan played *gilli-danda* near a pond in the ancient estate of Dumraon in Bihar. He sang the Bhojpuri 'Chalal' in the nearby Biharji temple. At the end of the day he would earn a big laddu. It weighed 1.25 kg. It was a prize from the local Maharaja.

Q 6. Where did Bismillah's uncle take him when he was fourteen years old? What happened there?

Ans. When Bismillah was fourteen years old, his uncle took him to the Allahabad Music Conference. Bismillah gave his recital there. After his performance Ustad Faiyaz Khan patted his back and said, "work hard and you shall make it."

Q 7. When and how did Bismillah Khan get his big break?

Ans. Bismillah Khan got his big break when in 1938 the All India Radio Station opened in Lucknow. He soon began playing shehnai on radio on a regular basis.

Q 8. Why did Bismillah Khan not delve deep into the world of cinema?

Ans. Bismillah Khan's ventures in film music didn't go beyond Vijay Bhatt's *Gunj Uthi Shehnai* and Vikram Srinivas's Kannada film *Sanadhi Apanna*. He found the film world artificial and glamorous. Also, he did not compromise with the musical compulsions of the world of cinema.

Q 9. Why did Bismillah Khan refuse to head a shehnai school in the USA?

Ans. One of the students of Bismillah Khan wanted him to head a school in the United States. He refused to do so because he was extremely fond of Benaras and could not think of leaving it.

Q 10. Bismillah Khan loved India and Benaras the most. Justify it by giving two instances from the text.

Ans. He was fond of Benaras and Dumraon. They remained for him the most wonderful towns of the world. This can be justified with the help of the following examples:

- (i) A student of Bismillah Khan wanted him to head a shehnai school in the USA but he refused.
- (ii) He had gone to Pakistan but stayed there only for an hour.



Long Answer Type Questions ↘

Q 1. Why was Benaras so important to Bismillah Khan?

Ans. Bismillah Khan came to Benaras at the age of six. Benaras remained a part of Bismillah Khan's life. Benaras offered him more than he wished. He was exceedingly fond of Benaras and it remained for him the most wonderful town in the world. He was so fond of the Ganga at Benaras that he could not live without it.

He had practised shehnai in loneliness for hours at the temples of Balaji and Mangla Maiya situated on the banks of river Ganga. The flowing waters of the Ganga inspired him how to create and perform music spontaneously and invent raagas.

Thus, Benaras was an inseparable part of his life.

Q 2. 'Awards and recognition came thick and fast'. Justify.

Ans. Ustad Bismillah Khan was recognised and awarded for his work. National awards like the Padmashri, the Padma Bhushan and the Padma Vibhushan were conferred on him. In 2001, he was awarded the highest civilian award, the Bharat Ratna. He was the first Indian to be invited to perform at the prestigious Lincoln Centre Hall in the USA. He also performed at the World Exposition in Montreal, in

the Cannes Art Festival and in the Osaka Trade Fair. An auditorium in Teheran is also named after him. When he played shehnai in Afghanistan, the King Zahir Shah was so impressed by him that he gifted him priceless Persian carpets and other souvenirs.

Q 3. 'If you work hard and know where you are going, you'll get there,' says Evelyn Glennie. How far is this statement true in the case of both the musicians— Evelyn Glennie and Ustad Bismillah Khan?

Ans. If you work hard and know where you are going, you will get there. This is true in the case of both the musicians, viz., Evelyn Glennie and Bismillah Khan.

Evelyn was profoundly deaf at the age of eleven. But she was determined to lead a normal life and pursue her interest in music. Percussionist Ron Forbes helped her in her pursuit. She got on top by sheer determination and hard work. She brought percussion to the fore front of the orchestra.

As a five-year old, Bismillah Khan played *gilli-danda* in Dumraon. Then he came to Benaras. His maternal uncle Ali Bux taught him to play the shehnai. Bismillah would sit practising throughout the day. He would practise hard in solitude. He brought shehnai onto the classical stage.

Thus, we see the statement to be true in the case of both the musicians.

