



Notes Of Chapter 2 – The Sound of Music

I. Answer these questions in a few words or a couple of sentences each.

Question 1. How old was Evelyn when she went to the Royal Academy of Music?

Answer: Evelyn was not even seventeen when she went to the Royal Academy of Music.

Question 2. When was her deafness first noticed? When was it confirmed?

Answer: Her deafness was noticed when she was eight-year-old. It was confirmed by the time she was eleven.

II. Answer each of these questions in a short paragraph (30-40 words).

Question 1. Who helped her to continue with music? What did he do and say?

Answer: Ron Forbes helped her to continue with music. He spotted her potential and said, “Don’t listen through your ears, try to sense it some other way.” He began by tuning two large drums to different notes.

Question 2. Name the various places and causes for which Evelyn performs.

Answer: Evelyn performed free concerts in prisons and hospitals. She made music her life and performed many regular concerts.

III. Answer the question in two or three paragraphs (100-150 words).

Question 1. How does Evelyn hear music?

Answer: Evelyn became deaf by the time she was eleven. But she did not give up. She was determined to lead a normal life and pursue her interest in music. Ron Forbes, a percussionist spotted her potential. He asked her not to listen through ears but try to sense it some other way. She realized she 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. She learnt to open her body and mind to sounds and vibrations. She herself explained, “It pours in through every part of my body. It tingles in the skin, my cheekbones and even in my hair.” When she played on the xylophone, she could sense the sound passing up the stick into her fingertips. By leaning against the drums, she could feel the resonances flowing into her body. On the wooden floor she used to remove her shoes so that the vibrations may pass through her bare feet and up her legs.

IV. Thinking about the Text

Question 1. Tick the right answer.

1. The (shehnai, pungi) was a ‘reeded noisemaker.’

Ans Pungi

2. (Bismillah Khan, A barber, Ali Bux) transformed the pungi into a shehnai.

Ans 2 A barber



3. Bismillah Khan's paternal ancestors were (barbers, professional musicians).

Ans 3 Professional musicians

4. Bismillah Khan learnt to play the shehnai from (Ali Bux, Paigambar Bux, Ustad Faiyaz Khan).

Ans 4 Ali Bux

5. Bismillah Khan's first trip abroad was to (Afghanistan, U.S.A., Canada).

Ans 5 Afghanistan

V. Answer these questions in 30-40 words.

Question 1. Why did Aurangzeb ban the playing of the pungi?

Answer: Aurangzeb banned the playing of the pungi because it had a shrill and unpleasant sound.

Question 2. How is a shehnai different from a pungi?

Answer: A shehnai is a pipe with a natural hollow that is longer and broader than a pungi. It has seven holes on the body of the pipe.

Question 3. Where was the shehnai played traditionally? How did Bismillah Khan change this?

Answer: The shehnai was played traditionally in the temple at the royal courts and on weddings. The credit must go to Bismillah Khan to take this instrument onto the classical stage.

Question 4. When and how did Bismillah Khan get his big break?

Answer: Bismillah Khan got his big break with the opening of the All-India Radio in Lucknow in 1938.

Question 5. Where did Bismillah Khan play the shehnai on 15 August 1947? Why was the event historic?

Answer: Bismillah Khan played the shehnai on 15 August 1947 at the Red Fort. He was the first Indian to greet the nation with his musical instrument. This event was historic because we got independence on that day. He poured his heart out in the presence of many people including Pt. Jawahar Lai Nehru.

Question 6. Why did Bismillah Khan refuse to start a shehnai school in the U.S.A.?

Answer: He refused to start a shehnai school in the USA because he never wanted to leave India. He loved India so much and he did not want to settle anywhere except India. That is why whenever he was in a foreign country, he kept yearning to see Hindustan.

Question 7. Find at least two instances in the text which tell you that Bismillah Khan loves India and Benaras.

Answer: Bismillah Khan loves India and Benaras the sound of Music 197 from the bottom of his heart. He says that he misses the holy Ganga and India when he goes abroad. While in Mumbai he thinks of only Benares and the



holy river and when he is in Benaras he remembers the unique mattha of Dumraon.

Summary

Evelyn Glennie is a multi – percussionist, who can play thousands of instruments to perfection, a most sought-after musician internationally. Surprisingly, she achieved this status despite her disability, she was profoundly deaf. But she learnt to listen with her body instead of the ears. She feels the sound through her body.

Evelyn was eleven years old when it was discovered that she had a hearing problem. She wanted to pursue her career in music, but her teachers discouraged her. It was Ron Forbes who recognized her potential and supported her. He advised her not to listen through her ears but try to sense it in some other way. This proved to be the turning point. She learnt to open her body and mind to the sounds and vibrations. After that she never looked back. She had mastered the art of interpreting different vibrations of sound on her body.

She joined the prestigious Royal Academy of Music and scored the highest marks in the history of the Academy. She worked hard and with determination against all odds and got right to the top. In 1991, she was presented with the Royal Philharmonic Society’s prestigious “Soloist of the year award”. Apart from the regular concerts, Evelyn gave free concerts in hospitals, prisons and also to aspiring young musicians. She became a source of inspiration for deaf and other handicapped children. She inspired them and made them believe that if Evelyn could do, so could they.

Part-2: Bismillah Khan

This chapter throws light on the origin of Shehnai and the life of all-time great Shehnai Vadaak – Bismillah Khan. The winner of Bharat Ratna, the highest civilian award of India, his dedication to music and his love for India.

“Pungi” a musical instrument, was banned by Emperor Aurangzeb, because of its shrill and unpleasant sound. In fact, it was regarded more as a noise maker rather than a musical instrument. It was modified and perfected by a barber who belonged to a family of professional musicians. He played it in the chamber of the king. Its sound was so appreciated by the emperor that it was made a part of Naubat. Since it was played for the first time in Shah’s chamber by a Nai, it came to be known as Shehnai.

Traditionally, it was played in the temples and on every auspicious domestic occasions also. Its sound was regarded as auspicious. But it was treated as an incomplete musical instrument, not capable of creating independent pages. But Bismillah Khan broke this myth.



Bismillah belongs to the Benares Gharana. He was born in 1916 at Dumraon, in Bihar. As a 5-year-old, he used to visit the Bihariji Temple and sing Bhojpuri “Chaitya” there. For his melodious singing he used to earn a big Laddu from the local Bhojpuri King. At the age of 6, he moved to Benares. There under the guidance and training of his maternal uncle, Ali Bux, he started picking up the finer nuances of shehnai. He used to spend most of his time practicing on the banks of the River Ganges. The themes of his music were deeply affected by the sounds of flowing water of the Ganga.

He got the best performer award at All India Music Conference in Allahabad in 1930. In 2001, he

won 3 awards ‘the Padma Bhushan, Padma Shree and Padma Vibhushan. He was invited to play the shehnai from the ramparts of the Red Fort becoming the first to greet the independent India. He won many international awards also. He became the first Indian to perform at title Lincoln Central Hall, in USA. An auditorium in Tehran was named after him-Tahar Mosque Ustad Bismillah Khan.

Bismillah was very fond of Benares and Dumraon. He declined an offer from one of his students to settle in the USA, as he was not willing to stay away for long from Benaras and its holy river Ganga. He ventured into film world also. He gave his music in 2 movies. His composition “Dill ka khillona

Hai” for movie “Goonj Uthi Shehnai”, was a chartbuster. But he could not associate himself

with the artificial glamour of die film world. For him, music was his soul, his life.