

Summary

Evelyn Glennie is a multi – percussionist. She has attained mastery over almost a thousand musical instruments despite being hearing – impaired. She learnt to feel music through the body instead of hearing it through the ears.

When Evelyn was eleven years old, it was discovered that she had lost her hearing power due to nerve damage. The specialist advised that she wear hearing aids and be sent to a school for the deaf. On the contrary, Evelyn was determined to lead a normal life and follow her interest in music. Although she was discouraged by her teachers, her potential was noticed by master percussionist, Ron Forbes. He guided Evelyn to feel music some other way than to hear it through her ears. This worked well for Evelyn and she realized that she could sense different sounds through different parts of her body.

Once she had overcome this hurdle, Evelyn began her career in music. She got admission in the Royal Academy of Music, London and scored the highest marks in the history of the academy. Evelyn says that hard work and dedication towards her goal helped her achieve success. Evelyn gives solo performances and even gives free concerts for hospitals and schools. In the year 1991, she won the Royal Philharmonic Society's prestigious 'Soloist of the Year' Award. Evelyn's story is an inspiration for the differently abled who are motivated to fulfil their dreams like she did.

Question and Answers

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

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

A. Evelyn was seventeen years old when she got admission in the Royal Academy of Music, London. She was nervous as she boarded the train from Scotland as she lived on farms in the countryside and was not exposed to the life in cities. Evelyn was excited as she was about to begin her career in music which was her aim in life.

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

A. When Evelyn was eight years old, her mother, Isabelle Glennie noticed that Evelyn did not respond to her name being called out at the piano class. Evelyn's loss of hearing was gradual and for some time she was able to hide her disability from her teachers and friends. By the time she turned eleven,

her marks deteriorated, and her parents took her to a doctor. Then, it was discovered that Evelyn was profoundly deaf.

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

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

A. Evelyn was discouraged by her teachers but master – percussionist Ron Forbes spotted her talent and potential. He guided Evelyn to feel music some other way rather than hearing it. He got two large drums and tuned them to different notes. When he played the drums, Evelyn reacted to the distinct notes differently. She realized that she could feel the higher notes produced by one of the drums through the upper part of her body, above the waist and the lower notes of the other drum through the lower part of her body, below the waist. This worked well for Evelyn and gradually, she found that she could sense different sounds and vibrations through different parts of her body.

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

A. Evelyn made her first tour at the age of sixteen, when she performed with a youth orchestra. She toured the United Kingdom and after that tour she decided that she would make a career in music. She has made her name in the field of music. Evelyn is a popular musician with a busy international schedule. Apart from the regular concerts, she also does charity and performs for hospitals and prisons. Evelyn also holds classes for young musicians.

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

1. How does Evelyn hear music?

A. Evelyn Glennie was passionate about music but unfortunately, she lost her sense of hearing by the age of eleven. She wanted to learn playing the xylophone but was discouraged by her teachers. They opined that as she could not hear, she could not learn music. Master percussionist Ron Forbes spotted Evelyn's potential. He guided her to feel music some other way than to hear it through her ears. He trained her by tuning two large drums to different notes. Evelyn realized that she could sense different sounds and vibrations through different parts of her body. She could feel the higher notes produced by one of the drums through the upper part of her body, above the

waist and the lower notes of the other drum through the lower part of her body, below the waist. This experiment worked well for Evelyn and she responded to the finer sounds of music too.

Evelyn can feel music penetrate her body through various parts – cheeks, hair, skin, etc. When she plays the xylophone, she feels the sound move from the sticks into her finger tips. When the drums are played, she can feel the echo of the drum beats through her body. Evelyn removes her footwear as she performs on a wooden floor so that she can feel the vibrations produced by different instruments pass through her feet up her legs. Thus, Evelyn has sensitized her body to music.