INSTRUCTIONS: Skim the article. **What is special about these musicians? How have they influenced other people?**

BREAKING DOWN THE SOUND OF SILENCE

Ten years before he died, the composer Beethoven went deaf. He called this disability his "nightmare." Fortunately for thousands of classical music fans, he didn't stop writing brilliant music. One hundred and eighty years later, being deaf hasn't stopped three Americans – Steve Longo, Ed Chevy, and Bob Hiltermann – from playing music, either. In their case, the music is rock, and their band is called Beethoven's Nightmare.

The three boys grew up in different cities, but they all showed a surprising interest in music. Although they couldn't hear it, they were amazed by the energy of 1960s bands like the Beatles. They could see the effect the music had on the audiences – the happy faces of friends and family as they watched. Something exciting was obviously happening. "I'm going to do that, too," they all said. "Why? You can't hear," asked parents, teachers, and friends alike. Each boy used sign language to answer, "Because I can feel it."

Longo and Chevy started playing the guitar. They put on headphones and turned up the volume. With the help of powerful hearing aids, they could get some of the notes – the rest they felt through vibrations. Drummer Hiltermann came from a musical family. His parents thought that teaching their son to play an instrument was a waste of time. But they changed their minds after he nearly drove them crazy by using knives and forks to drum on the furniture of the house.

The three men first met in college in Washington, D.C. They started a band and played many concerts until they graduated in 1975. In 2001, Hiltermann had the idea to bring his old friends together again. They have been performing ever since. In 2013, a new member, Paul Raci, joined the band as a singer. At concerts, dancers put on a spectacular show and use sign language to explain the words of the songs to the audience. And, of course, the band plays very loudly!

The group has encouraged many deaf people, and people with other disabilities, to follow their dreams. Chevy says, "The only thing deaf people *can't* do is hear."

Dennis McCarthy, "Deaf band 'Beethoven's Nightmare' feels the music," *Los Angeles Daily News* (Oct. 31, 2013). Used with permission.

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article. Choose the correct word (words).

1. After going deaf, Beethoven **continued / refused** to compose music.
2. The boys knew music was powerful because of something they **read / saw.**
3. Many people didn't **understand / like** the boys' ambition to play music.
4. Hiltermann's parents **wanted / didn't want** him to learn to play at first.
5. The three young men started playing together **before / after** finishing college.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

INSTRUCTIONS: Answer the questions in your notebook.

1. Which band inspired the three boys to play music?
2. What did Longo and Chevy use to hear some parts of the music?
3. What did Hiltermann use to make noise in his house?
4. Where did the three men get to know each other?
5. When did Beethoven's Nightmare start playing?

Do you think it's very difficult for people in your country to achieve their dreams?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Lila Downs

Lila Downs is a Grammy-award winning singer and songwriter who is famous not only in Mexico and the United States, but throughout the world.

Lila was born in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico in 1968. Her mother belongs to the indigenous Mixtec people who speak both Mixtec and Spanish. Her father, who died when Lila was sixteen, was a professor of art and film from the United States. As a girl living in and traveling between Mexico and the U.S., Lila picked up the musical influences that give her music a very international flavor. She still travels a lot between Mexico and the U.S. because her husband is from Minnesota.

Lila is trilingual. She sings in Mixtec, Spanish, and English. She can sing in other languages, too. She learned to sing as a child by listening to her mother, who was a professional singer of Mexican popular music. Lila's first big success came in 1999 with her album *La Sandunga*, which is the name of a traditional dance in Oaxaca. In 2005 she went on to win the Latin Grammy award for *Una Sangre (One Blood)*.

Lila became known to many people through her singing performance in *Frida*, the 2002 film about the famous Mexican artist Frida Kahlo. She has acted in and contributed music to a number of films, while also writing the music and lyrics with her husband to the musical version of *Como agua para chocolate (Like Water for Chocolate)*, based on the very popular book by Mexican novelist Laura Esquivel.

Although she studied classical voice at college in the United States, Lila has devoted a great part of her career to singing the music of Mexico in Spanish, Mixtec, and Zapotec, which is another indigenous language in the state of Mexico. Many of her songs are concerned with social justice.

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article and check true or false. For statements that are false, write the correct information.

	True	False
1. Lila Downs' father was a professor of literature in the United States.	☐	☐
2. Her husband is from the United States.	☐	☐
3. She wrote the book *Como agua para chocolate*.	☐	☐
4. She studied classical voice in college in Mexico.	☐	☐
5. She speaks Spanish, Mixtec, and English.	☐	☐

LIVEWORKSHEETS

LIVEWORKSHEETS