

Classical Composers

Teaching with Franz Joseph Haydn

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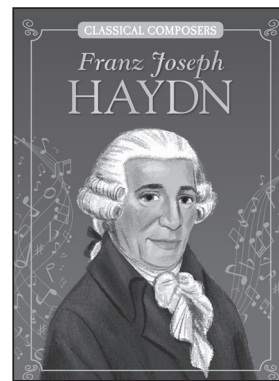
Introduction

Franz Joseph Haydn (or just “Joseph” when he was little) was born on March 31, 1732, in a small Austrian village called Rohrau. His dad made wagon wheels and his mom cooked for the local lord. They didn’t have much money, but they had plenty of kids. Joseph was the second of twelve, though sadly, in those days, many children didn’t live to grow up.

Music seemed to be in Joseph’s bones. He could sing so beautifully that his uncle, who ran a choir, asked if Joseph could come live with him to train as a musician.

At just eight years old, Joseph joined the choir at St. Stephen’s Cathedral in Vienna, a huge and important church. For eight years, he sang, learned and practiced almost every single day.

Things changed when Joseph turned sixteen. His voice got deeper and he couldn’t hit those high notes anymore. Just like that, his time in the choir and at the school was over. He didn’t have a job, a home, or much more than the clothes on his back. But Joseph didn’t quit. He stayed with friends, did small jobs to get by and kept teaching himself music whenever he could.



Lexile: 600L Words: 1,029

DISCOVER Haydn’s music here online to play for students:

<https://www.classicfm.com/composers/haydn>



Vocabulary Review to supplement the Glossary

1. CHOIR

Definition: A group of singers performing together.

Example: Joseph sang in the choir at St. Stephen’s Cathedral as a boy.

2. SYMPHONY

Definition: A long piece for an orchestra, split into parts called movements.

Example: Haydn’s symphonies were lively and fun to listen to.

3. STRING QUARTET

Definition: Music for 2 violins, 1 viola and 1 cello

Example: Haydn wrote so many that people call him “The Father of the String Quartet.”

4. KAPPELLMEISTER:

Definition: A German word for “music director.”

Example: Haydn was Kapellmeister for the Esterházy family, leading their orchestra and writing music for them.

6. ORATORIO

Definition: A big work for choir and orchestra, usually telling a Bible story.

Example: Haydn's *The Creation* is a famous oratorio.

7. NOBLE

Definition: A person from the highest social class, like a prince or count.

Example: Haydn worked for the noble Esterházy family for more than 30 years.

8. CONDUCTOR

Definition: The person who leads the orchestra.

Example: Haydn conducted concerts in Austria and London.

Reading Comprehension Questions

1. Where was Haydn born and what was his family like?

Answer: Haydn was born on March 31, 1732, in a little village called Rohrau in Austria. His dad worked making wagon wheels and his mom cooked for the local lord. There were twelve kids in the family (Joseph was the second oldest) but sadly, in those days, not all children survived and only five of them grew up.

2. How did Haydn's musical training begin?

Answer: When Joseph was about six, his uncle, who was a choir director, heard him sing and thought, "This boy has talent!" He invited Joseph to come live in Hainburg to study music. A couple of years later, at just eight, Joseph was singing in the choir at St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna.

3. What happened when Haydn left the choir?

Answer: When his voice changed at sixteen, he could no longer sing the high parts. That meant he had to leave both the choir and the school. He didn't have much. No home, no money, so he stayed with friends, took any small jobs he could find and kept learning music on his own whenever possible.

4. What was Haydn's first big job in music?

Answer: In 1759, Haydn got his first important position: Kapellmeister for the Count of Bohemia. He was in charge of leading the orchestra and even wrote his very first symphony for them to play.

5. Why was working for the Esterházy family important to Haydn?

Answer: The job with the Esterházy's gave him more than just a paycheck. It gave him a place to live, musicians to work with and the time to create many different kinds of music, from operas to string quartets.

6. What did Haydn do in London?

Answer: When he went to London, Haydn wrote and performed new pieces for huge audiences. His concerts were so popular that even the royal family came to listen, which made him even more famous across Europe.

Writing Activity "A Day in Haydn's Life"

- Pretend you're Haydn. Pick a big day — your first concert for the Esterházy's, your first London show, or the premiere of *The Creation*.
- Use at least three vocabulary words (like "symphony," "choir," or "Kapellmeister").
- Describe what happened, how you felt, and what you hoped would come next.

Music & Art Activities

1. Feelings in the Music

- o *Listen:* Play a cheerful or dramatic movement from one of Haydn's symphonies.
- o *Activity:* Students pick the mood (happy, calm, excited, surprised) and draw a scene or character that matches it.

2. Musical Memory Match

- o *Listen:* Play a short, catchy part of a Haydn piece.
- o *Activity:* Students try to clap, hum, or tap it back in the right rhythm.

Evaluation Questions and Answers

Comprehension

1. What challenges did Haydn face after leaving the choir?

No home, no job, no money. He stayed with friends, worked small jobs and kept learning music on his own.

2. How did working for the Esterházy family shape his career?

It gave him the time, musicians and support to create many kinds of music and become well-known.

3. Why was his time in London so important?

He met new audiences, performed for royalty and made his music famous across Europe.

Vocabulary

1. What is a symphony, and how is it different from other music?

A long, multi-part work for orchestra. Usually bigger and more detailed than short songs.

2. What does "Kapellmeister" mean?

It means "music director" in German, the leader who guides the orchestra and decides what they play.

3. What is an oratorio, and which one did Haydn write?

An oratorio is a big piece for choir and orchestra that tells a story, often from the Bible. Haydn wrote The Creation.

Extension Ideas

1. Haydn or Mozart? Play one short piece by each composer and let students guess which is which and explain their choice.

2. Make a Concert Poster: Draw a poster for a Haydn concert, with a picture, the date and the music that will be played.