

Franz joseph haydn



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Franz Joseph Haydn

Franz Joseph Haydn was born a peasant in the village of Rohrau, Austria on March 31, 1732. His father, a wagon maker by trade, was musically inclined. He often played the harp while his wife, Haydn's mother, sang along. The second child of twelve in a peasant home left Haydn little chance of attending school, however young Franz's early showings of musical ability caused his cousin to take notice and fund his education to be given at St. Stephen's (Franz Joseph Haydn Biography, NAXOS). At age eight he was given a choirboy position in a Viennese cathedral. From a very early age Haydn was moving up in the world based on his own merit. Social mobility in his day and age was relatively unheard of, but from the very beginning Franz Joseph Haydn was proving to be exceptional.

For several years Haydn remained a choirboy with the cathedral, until one day he found himself out on the streets with little more than the clothes on his back. Puberty had altered the boyish timbre in his voice and he was unfit to remain in the boys' choir. Soon, however, Haydn found work as an accompanist to Niccolò Porpora, an Italian composer. Niccolò taught Haydn Italian, voice, and schooled him in musical composition (Franz Joseph Haydn Biography). Haydn and Porpora really began to find success as aristocrats and royalty began to hire them for entertainment at all types of events. Haydn began to find more than just status, he began to generate significant revenue (Halley Tsai).

Soon Haydn moved on apart from Porpora and was briefly hired by Baron Karl Josef von Furstberg. It was under this patronage that he composed his earliest string quartets. At 28 Haydn found a more substantial position when <https://assignbuster.com/franz-joseph-haydn/>

he was hired as music director by Count Ferdinand Maximilian von Morzin (Basic Repertoire List – F. J. Haydn).

One of the biggest turning points in Haydn's life came in 1761 when Prince Pal Antál Esterházy hired him as assistant music director. The following year he was promoted to head director, or Kapellmeister. Haydn served as Kapellmeister under three princes in this household, finding himself with overwhelmingly demanding duties and responsibilities. The second prince, Prince Miklós József Esterházy, was the biggest musical advocate of the three. He spent a fortune building up a musical establishment second to none in his day. Haydn found himself in a very publically demanding position. Haydn worked to not only compose music, but also to teach his music as well as other's pieces. He was in turn responsible for performing music, maintaining the library of music, keeping up the instrument collection, coaching singers, and perform the duties of an administrative figure when it came to issues and disputes among musicians and entertainers (Basic Repertoire List – F. J. Haydn).

During the time of Haydn's patronage by the princes he composed roughly 83 works. Many of these works were string quartets. Haydn wrote many of these quartets in sets that shared common themes and elements. Some of these sets are as follows: The Sun Quartets (1772), The Russian Quartets (1781), The Prussian Quartets (1787), and many, many more. Many of these later quartets were written to feature his third prince and patron Prince Nikolaus Esterházy. Nikolaus played a bowed instrument called the baryton. This instrument was also able to be plucked, and was looked at rather critically by later scholars and critics. In addition to the quartets, Haydn also

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composed a significant amount of pieces for two violins and a cello as well as some 126 baryton trios (Franz Joseph Haydn Biography, NAXOS).

Haydn did not always enjoy the seclusion that came with working for the princes of Esterháza, but he did enjoy the unique privilege of being allowed to market his compositions to publishers and receive commission. Many composers being patronized during the 18th century did not have this luxury (Basic Repertoire List – F. J. Haydn). During the early to mid 1790's Haydn joined forces with an enterprising, young English violinist, Johann Peter Salomon. It was alongside Salomon, in London, that Haydn composed some of his works considered masterpieces. Several of which are commonly known as The London Symphonies. (Basic Repertoire List – F. J. Haydn). His use of crescendo, accents, abrupt dynamic changes, modulation, and other such innovative technique set the precedent for many following composers (Forney, Kristine). While working for the princes Haydn published a total of 125 trios and 19 operas (Basic Repertoire List – F. J. Haydn).

The most famous of Haydn's symphonies, Symphony No. 94, is often referred to as the " Surprise Symphony." It became apparent to Haydn that members in the audience were falling asleep mid-performance. As a remedy for this problem, he composed this symphony utilizing a forceful brass section composed of French horns and trumpets along with tympani percussion. Haydn wrote the beginning to be mild and peaceful. Dynamically the introduction was relatively piano. And then, seemingly without warning, Haydn wrote in an orchestral hit that brought the dynamic level abruptly to forte in an attempt to jar sleeping listeners to wake. Such dynamic change was later reflected in Beethoven's works (Forney, Kristine).

Although Haydn had passed the age of sixty his output of music showed no signs of slowing. After his work in London, Haydn returned to Austria and began to write oratorio. The Creation and The Seasons were two famous works that portrayed scenes of nature. An avid hunter and nature lover, Haydn often incorporated themes of nature into his music (Franz Joseph Haydn biography, Essortment Articles). Haydn was notably one of the most productive writers of all time, putting out an immense number of musical works throughout his life. Haydn wrote career number 107 symphonies, 68 string quartets, 62 piano sonatas, 43 piano trios as well as the 125 trios written during his work with the princes, and 19 operas (Basic Repertoire List – F. J. Haydn).

This level of proficiency in that day was rivaled only by the young composer Mozart, who was actually a good friend of Haydn. Haydn stumbled across Mozart while observing a lesson of Mozart's with another student. Haydn was stunned by the musical genius and quickly befriended him. The two began to become involved in each other's music writing and even suggested ideas on occasion that would better each other's writing. Haydn even admitted his younger companion's superiority in writing opera (Franz Joseph Haydn Biography, NAXOS).

Haydn and Mozart remained friends until parted by the death of Mozart. At age 77, Haydn followed his friend in death on May 31, 1809. It was Mozart's last composition A Requiem that was performed at Haydn's own funeral (Halley Tsai). Haydn's works are not as often performed today as some of his later contemporaries, because they are not complex in nature; however, the originality of his works are without question. Haydn paved the way in style

and technique for his future composers. Haydn not only influenced the minds of the composers but also was an instructor to the musicians and performers, both instrumental and vocal, that would play the music. Haydn is often remembered as a self-made man, a true example of “ rags to riches.” He is remembered as an innovator and an instructor totally unique and original in all areas of his life and work.

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