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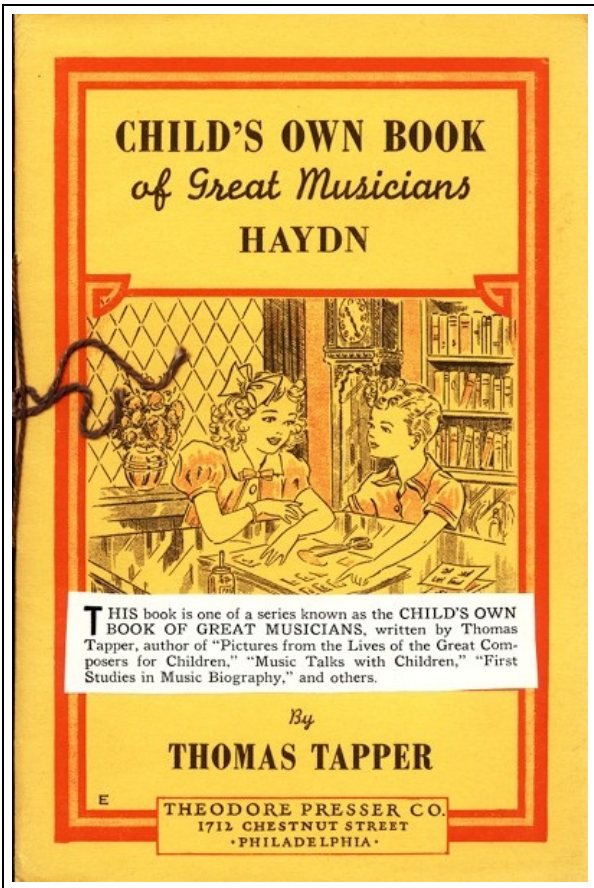
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FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN : THE STORY OF THE  
CHOIR BOY WHO BECAME A GREAT COMPOSER  
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# **Franz Joseph Haydn**

## **The Story of the Choir Boy who Became a Great Composer**

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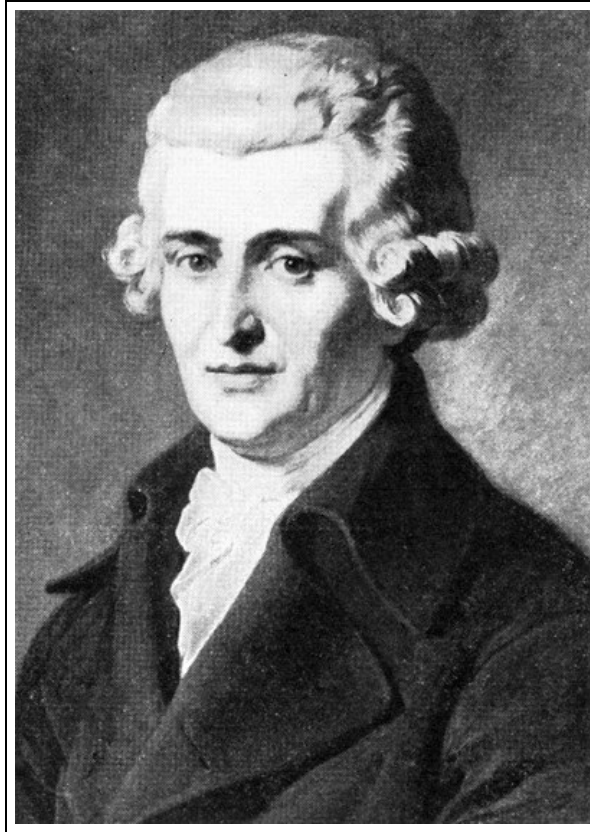
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BORN

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## **The Story of the Choir Boy who Became a Great Composer**

Joseph Haydn was born in Rohrau, a little Austrian village not far from Hainburg.

It is quite worth while for you to look for this town and for the River Leytha in any large geography. You may not find Rohrau itself, for it is a very small town, but you will surely find the River Leytha which flows by it.

The parents lived in a very modest little house. The picture of this house is worth studying, and remembering. As you see, it is of one story with a thatched roof. The farm buildings are joined to the house itself. The windows look inviting and pretty. They seem to tell us very plainly that it is warm and cosy within.

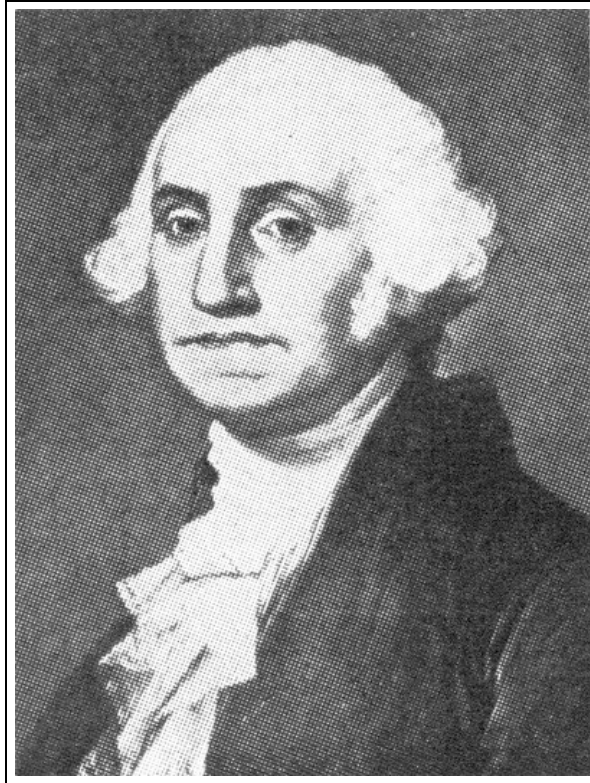


**HAYDN'S BIRTHPLACE**

It will be easy for you to remember the year in which Joseph Haydn was born, because you have already learned in school that our President, George Washington, whose picture should be inserted here, was born in the same year—1732.

This President's birthday was in what month?

What day of the month?



WASHINGTON

Joseph Haydn was born on March 31st of the same year (he used to say that he was born "in the night" between March 31st and April 1st).

Washington's father died in the year when he and Joseph Haydn were ten years old. This is a picture of Washington, as a man, bidding his mother good-bye before leaving for a war.



WASHINGTON LEAVING HOME

Little Joseph Haydn's father and mother were poor, but they loved cleanliness and system.

They feared God, worked hard, and loved music. Joseph's father used to sing in a clear tenor voice, accompanying himself on the harp. At home little Joseph was called Sepperl.

When the child was old enough, he, too, began to sing. He quite surprised everyone by his sweet voice.

In the neighboring town of Hainburg there lived a schoolmaster named Frankh, who used to visit the Haydns and play the violin. Sepperl used to watch him very closely, and one day he, too, began to play the violin while his father and mother were singing. But he had no real violin, of course, so he had to play on a make-believe one of two sticks. But he sang in tune and kept time with his wooden bow.



SEPPERL PLAYING ON TWO STICKS

One day the schoolmaster chanced to come up the street while the little boy was playing his make-believe music. Watching him closely, he saw that he was really fond of music.

Then Cousin Frankh, as they called him, had a long talk with Sepperl's father and mother. After a while it was agreed that the little boy should go to

Hainburg (the place you found on the map), and there become a pupil of the schoolmaster.

They worked hard at the school in those days. Once, when Haydn was an old man, he said: "I shall be grateful to that man (the schoolmaster) as long as I live, for keeping me so hard at work. But I used to get more floggings than food."

When he was six years old, Sepperl could "stand up like a man" and sing masses in the church choir, besides playing a little on the piano and the violin.

It once happened that a drummer was needed in a procession in Hainburg. Frankh called Sepperl, and showed him how to make the stroke. But the boy was so small that someone had to carry the drum for him, Sepperl following up and beating it as he had been taught. Haydn was very fond of playing the drums, and even as a boy tried to learn how to play right.



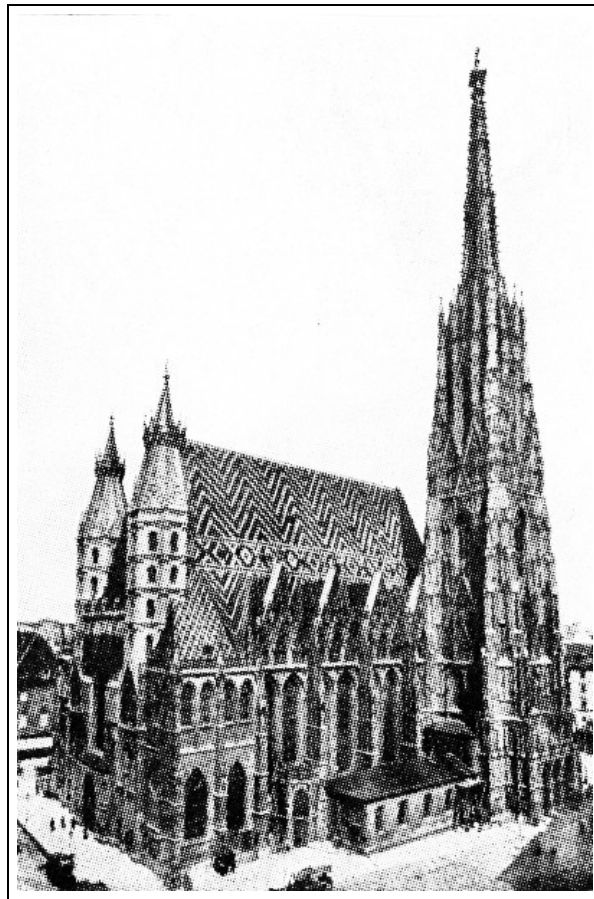
HAYDN DRUMMING

But Joseph Haydn was to do other things.

One day a man from Vienna visited the pastor of

the Hainburg Church. He heard the little boy sing and liked his voice so much that he invited him to become a chorister in the huge Church of St. Stephen. He was eight years old when he arrived in the great city of Vienna, still a little farther away from home than he was at Hainburg.

There was much else to do in the great church beside singing in the choir. There were music studies, of course, in singing, violin and piano playing. But there were also school studies to be learned every day. These were Religion, Latin, Writing and Arithmetic.



ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH

But one must not think that because Sepperl was a busy musician he did not love fun like other boys of eight. One day the choristers sang at the Royal Palace at Schoenbrunn, just outside of Vienna. The scaffolding was still standing about the building, and Joseph climbed to the top. The Empress Maria Theresa caught him at this mischief and gave an order that "that blockhead should have a good



spanking."

Five years after Joseph Haydn entered St. Stephen's, his brother Michael joined the choir. It was just at that time that Joseph's voice began to change. One day when the Empress heard him she said his voice sounded more like a rooster's crowing than anything else. The choirmaster, taking the hint, prepared to dismiss him.

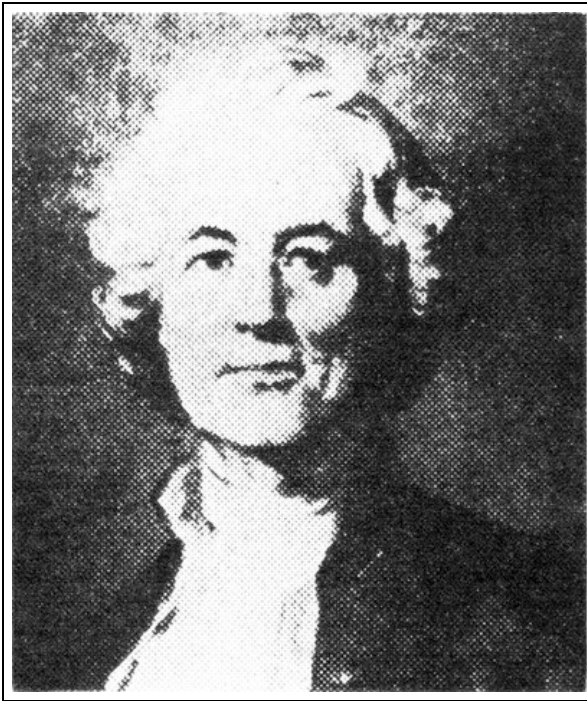
But before Joseph said good-bye to his schoolmates his spirit of fun bubbled over again. Someone had left a pair of new scissors where he found them.

What should he cut with them?

Ah, he knew. He would cut off the pigtail of one of the choir boys. And he did.

Joseph Haydn was never lazy. His father and mother had taught him to love work. He was industrious, happy-hearted, and made friends easily. People loved him and he began to meet those who could help him. One of these was the great poet, Metastasio. Another was the singing master, Nicholas Porpora, who taught him music composition in return for which the boy brushed the master's clothes, polished his boots, did anything and everything, even to running errands. And all because he was so anxious to be taught how to compose music.

Then soon afterward Haydn met Gluck, the opera composer; and another time Wolfgang Mozart and his father, Leopold Mozart. So you see he was getting on famously.



GLUCK



L. MOZART

One day he was invited to become Music Director (or Vice-Capellmeister, as it was called) in the family of a great man who was known as Prince Paul Anton Esterhazy.

Haydn's position in the Esterhazy home gave him just the opportunity he wanted. There was an orchestra, and for it he composed all sorts of music.

When the band was to play for the Prince's family and its guests, Haydn and the players were

required to wear white stockings and white collars, and a pigtail or tie-wig.

If you could have watched him conduct the players, you would have seen a very short man with short legs; his face pitted with the marks of small-pox. His nose was large, his eyes gray, but of the kindest expression.

And here is a picture which shows exactly how the "good-natured sort of fellow" looked.



SILHOUETTE OF HAYDN

A butcher in the town where Joseph was living wanted to celebrate his daughter's marriage with fitting music, and was bold enough to ask Joseph to compose a Minuet for the occasion. Joseph good-naturedly consented, and wrote the Oxen Minuet, and made the butcher and his daughter very happy. People say that soon after the wedding the butcher appeared at Joseph's door leading an ox all

decorated with ribbons and with gilded horns.



OXEN MINUET

For many years Haydn remained in the peace and quiet of the Esterhazy family life. But, nevertheless his good work was heard of in distant places. He received many invitations to travel to foreign countries. One of these he accepted. He went to England; twice in fact. The night before he left Vienna he and Mozart dined together.

"Do not go on such a long journey," Mozart begged of him. "You are too old and you do not know languages enough to travel through so many countries."

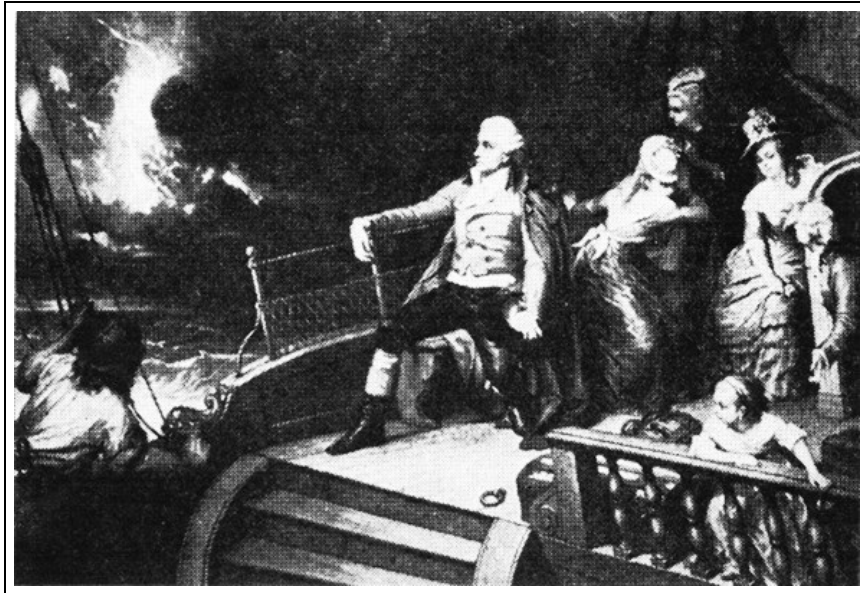
"But," said Haydn, "I know one language that is understood everywhere—the language of music."

Mozart said farewell to his old friend. They never met again.

On the way north, along the Rhine, Haydn met Beethoven at Bonn; and it was arranged that

Beethoven should study with Haydn on his return to Vienna.

When the traveler reached Calais he took the boat to Dover in England. He was so enchanted by the sight of the sea that he sat on deck all the way, to watch it. Never before had he seen such a sight, for, we must remember, he was born far inland.



HAYDN ON CALAIS BOAT

Most men do their best work in their younger years, but in Haydn's later years he wrote two of his greatest works: *The Creation* and *The Seasons*. *The Creation* is loved by all people. It is one of a group of favorite oratorios which have found a warm place in the hearts of the people. With it stand *The Messiah*, *Judas Maccabaeus*, *St. Paul* and *Elijah*. Do you know who composed each of these?

After the English journeys, Haydn lived quietly in Vienna in what is now known as the Haydn house. Should you ever go to Vienna you will be welcomed there by the caretaker, who will show you the rooms in which Haydn lived.

One day toward the end of his life he asked his servant to carry him to the piano. While the members of his household stood near him he played three times, very solemnly, the *Emperor's Song*.



THE EMPEROR'S SONG [Listen](#)

This is the way Haydn wrote his name—



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## FACTS ABOUT FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN

When you have read this page and the next make a story about Haydn's life. Write it in your own words. When you are quite sure you cannot improve it, copy it on pages 15 and 16.

### SOME FACTS ABOUT JOSEPH HAYDN.

1. He was born at Rohrau, in Hungary, March 31, 1732.
2. He was a few weeks younger than George Washington.
3. As a little boy he loved to hear his father and mother sing.
4. While they sang he played on a "make-believe"

violin, of two sticks.

5. He left home at the age of six and never lived there again.

6. First he became a choir-boy at Hainburg.

7. When he was eight years old he entered St. Stephen's in Vienna as a chorister.

8. After he left St. Stephen's he worked hard for many years. Many people whom he met in this time helped him.

9. Among his friends of this period were: Metastasio, Porpora, Gluck, Mozart and his father, and Beethoven.

10. For a time he was Beethoven's teacher.

11. He spent a great part of his life in the Esterhazy family.

12. Here he was Vice-Capellmeister and composer to the Prince.

13. He was a short, stout man, with kindly gray eyes, and very dark hair.

14. He went twice to England to conduct his symphonies.

15. Haydn was called the father of the Symphony and of the String Quartette.

16. He composed a song which will always be famous. It is called *The Emperor's Song*.

17. He died in 1809, seventy-seven years of age.

### **SOME QUESTIONS.**

1. Where and in what year was Joseph Haydn born?

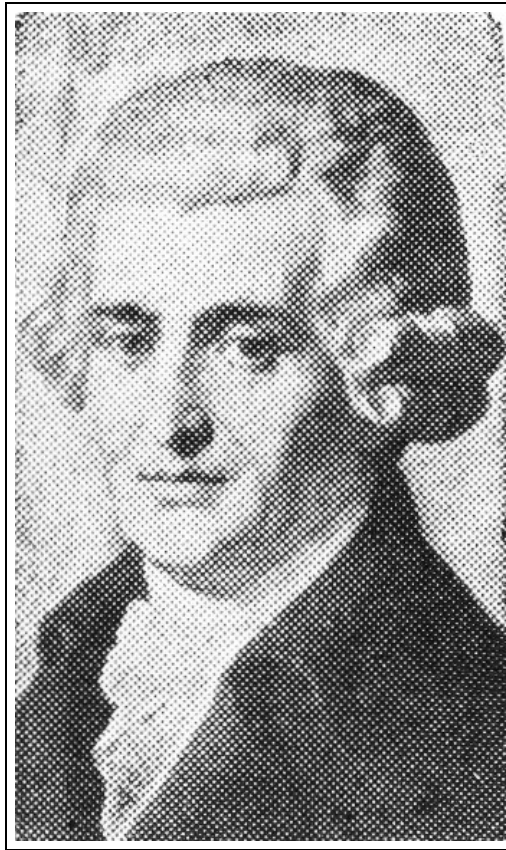
2. By what name was he known at home?
3. Who was his first teacher?
4. What studies had he at St. Stephen's?
5. With what distinguished family did he live for many years?
6. Give the names of some of the distinguished composers whom he knew.
7. What great composer was his pupil for a time in Vienna?
8. Why did Mozart think that Haydn should not travel through so many strange countries?
9. What two great works did he write after he returned from England?
10. In what year did Haydn die?
11. Can you find in what year George Washington died?

## **THE STORY OF FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN**

Written by.....

On (date).....





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**Transcriber's Notes:**

On page 8, "singingmaster" was replaced with "singing master"

On page 14, a period after "St. Stephen's" was replaced with a question mark.

**\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK  
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