

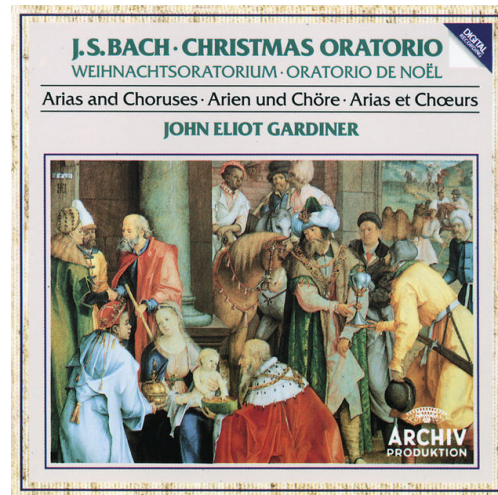
American Minute with Bill Federer Beethoven & Other Famous Composers, and their sacred Christmas music

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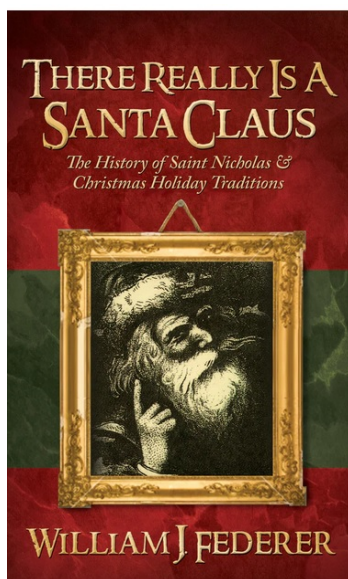
Many famous composers wrote classic **Christmas music**.

In 1741, **George Frideric Handel** wrote his oratorio **Messiah**.

In 1734, **Johann Sebastian Bach** wrote his **Christmas Oratorio** ... [continue reading ...](#)



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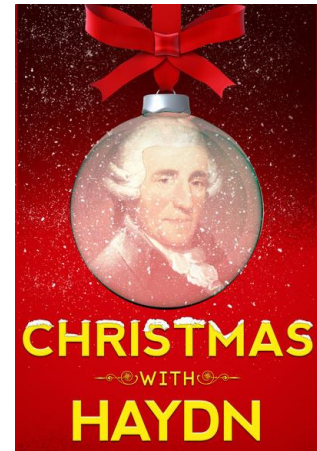
Twenty years after composer **Bach** died, **Ludwig van Beethoven** was born in Bonn, Germany, and baptized on December 17, 1770.

While **Bach** lived during the **Baroque period**,

Beethoven lived in the **Classical and Romantic eras**.

Beethoven was a pupil of the Austrian composer **Joseph Haydn**.

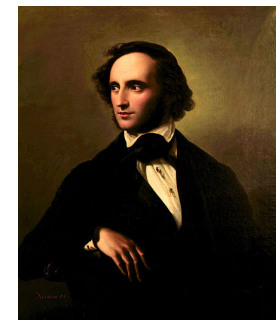
Haydn performed on **Christmas Day**, December 25, 1781, during the reign of **Austrian Emperor Joseph II** -- the "musical king" -- at the occasion of the visit by **Russian Grand Duke Paul I** and **Grand Duchess Maria Feodorovna**.



In attendance at the performance was another Austrian composer, **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**, who had performed on **Christmas Eve** the night before.



Another contemporary was composer **Felix Mendelssohn**, grandson of the Jewish philosopher **Moses Mendelssohn**.



Felix wrote the **tune** which was used for **Charles Wesley's "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing."**

Beethoven encouraged the young Hungarian pianist **Franz Liszt**, who wrote his **Christmas Tree Suite** in 1873-76.



Another contemporary was Austrian composer **Franz Schubert**, who wrote the tune to which **"Ave Maria"** was set.

Ludwig van Beethoven was first taught to play piano by his harsh father, who became an alcoholic.

After his mother died, **Beethoven** took responsibility to

support the family.

Whereas composers **Bach** and **Handel** both went **blind** later in life due to botched eye-cataract surgeries, young **Beethoven** began growing **deaf** at the age 26, initially having difficulty hearing higher frequencies.

In May 1799, he taught piano to the two daughters of Hungarian Countess Anna Brunsvik.

Beethoven fell in love with the younger daughter, **Josephine**.

Unfortunately, for financial reasons, her mother married her to someone in a higher social class.



Beethoven wrote at least 15 love letters to her.

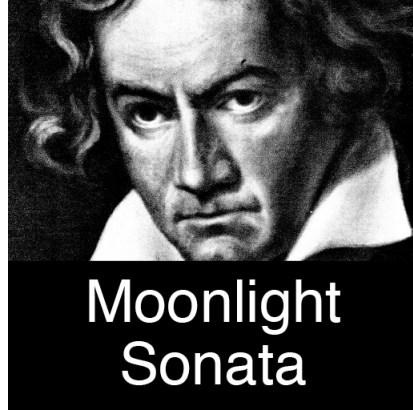
Josephine had a tragic life, being widowed, pressured by her family to remarry for money, then abandoned and had her children taken away.

In late 1801, **Beethoven** gave piano lessons to the young countess **Julie Gucciardi** and they fell in love.



Again, class differences of her being **upper class** and him being in the station of a **commoner** forbade them from pursuing the relationship.

In 1802, **Beethoven** dedicated his "**Moonlight**" **Sonata No. 14** to her.



In 1801, **Beethoven** wrote:

"No friend have I. I must live by myself alone; but I know well that **God** is nearer to me than others in my art, so I will walk fearlessly with **Him**."

In 1804, **Beethoven** planned to dedicate his Third Symphony to **Napoleon, who championed the cause of the people against powerful monarchs.**

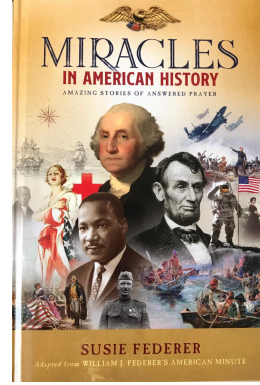


But when it became clear that **Napoleon** had plans to **usurp power** and declare himself **emperor, Beethoven** scratched his name off the title page so violently a hole was made in the paper.

On August 11, 1809, **Napoleon** bombarded Vienna while **Beethoven was living there** with his younger brother Carl and his wife.

The **thunderous cannon explosions** were so loud that **Beethoven** feared it would **destroy what was left of his hearing**, so he hid in his brother's cellar and **covered his ears with pillows.**

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Beethoven's brother, Carl, contracted **tuberculosis**, and **Beethoven** spent a small fortune caring for him.

When Carl died, **Beethoven** became part **guardian of his son, Karl**.

Beethoven appealed to his **other brother Johann** to marry the woman he was co-habiting with.

In 1811, with his hearing fading, **Beethoven** failed at an attempt to perform his Piano Concerto No. 5.

He never performed publicly again.

He continued writing and produced some of the **world's most beautiful symphonies, concertos and sonatas**.

In 1812, **Beethoven** met with German author **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe**.

Beethoven finished his famous **Ninth Symphony** being **completely deaf**.

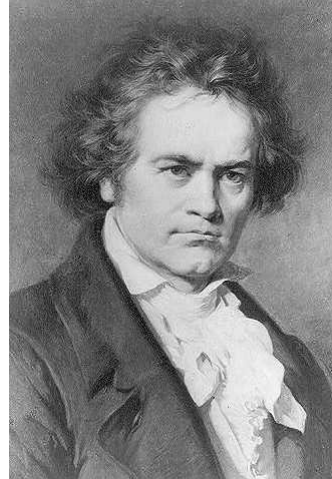
At the conclusion of the Ninth Symphony's first public performance, **Beethoven** turned around to see the audience applauding tumultuously, but he could hear nothing, and wept.

Beethoven's Ninth Symphony included a 4th movement which was a choral setting of **Friedrich Schiller's "Ode to Joy,"** a poem first published

in 1786 and made the **Anthem of Europe** in 1972.

President Jimmy Carter noted while visiting Bonn, July 14, 1978:

"As the world's people speak and work and live together, we all could well remember the poem of **Friedrich Schiller**, immortally put to music by the great **Beethoven**, a son of Bonn, the 'Ode to Joy':



'Alle Menschen werden Bruder Wo dein sanfter Flitg el weit.'" (**All mankind shall be brothers where thy gentle wings abide.**)



Not only was **Friedrich Shillers's "Ode to Joy"** set to **Beethoven's Ninth**, but so was **"Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee,"** a hymn written in 1907 by Princeton professor **Henry Van Dyke**:

Joyful, joyful, we adore
Thee,
**God of glory, Lord of
love;**
Hearts unfold like flowers
before Thee,
opening to the sun above.

Melt the clouds of sin and
sadness;
drive the dark of doubt
away;
Giver of immortal gladness,
**fill us with the light of
day!..**

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee
Henry van Dyke Beethoven

The image shows a musical score for the hymn "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" by Henry van Dyke, set to Beethoven's melody. The score is written in G major and 4/4 time. It consists of five systems of music, each with a line of lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: "Joy - ful, joy - ful, we a - dore Thee God of glo - ry, All Thy works with joy sur - round Thee, Earth and heaven re - Thou art giv - ing and far - giv - ing, Ev - er bless - ing, Mor - tals, join the hap - py cho - rus Which the morn - ing Lord of love; Hearts un - fold like flow'rs be - fore Thee, flect Thy rays, Stars and an - gels sing a - round Thee, ev - er blest, Well - spring of the joy of liv - ing, stars be - gan; Fa - ther love is reign - ing o'er us, O - p'ning to the sun a - bove. Melt the clouds of Can - ter of un - bro - ken praise. Field and for - est, O - cean depth of hap - py rest! Thou our Fa - ther Broth - er love binds man to man. Ev - er sing - ing, sin and sad - ness, Drive the dark of doubt a - way; vale and moun - tain, Flow - ery mead - ow, flash - ing sea, Christ, our Broth - er, All who live in love are Thine; march we on - ward, Vic - tors in the midst of strife, Giv - er of im - mor - tal glad - ness, Fill us with the light of day. Chant - ing bird and flow - ing foun - tain, Call us to re - joice in Thee. Teach us how to love each oth - er, Lift us to the joy di - vine. Joy - ful mu - sic leads us sun - ward In the tri - umph song of life.

Thou art giving and forgiving,
ever blessing, ever blessed,
Wellspring of the joy of living,
ocean depth of happy rest!

Thou our Father, Christ our Brother,
all who live in love are Thine;
Teach us how to love each other,
lift us to the joy divine."

Beethoven fell ill, and died during a storm on March 26,
1827.

**At the moment of his death there was an immense
peal of thunder.**

He was 56 years old.

Johannes Brahms had a **marble bust of Beethoven** in
his home overlooking the spot where he composed.

Brahms wrote the most
recognizable **Lullaby**, 1868,
which included in the original
German words a **Christmas
reference:**

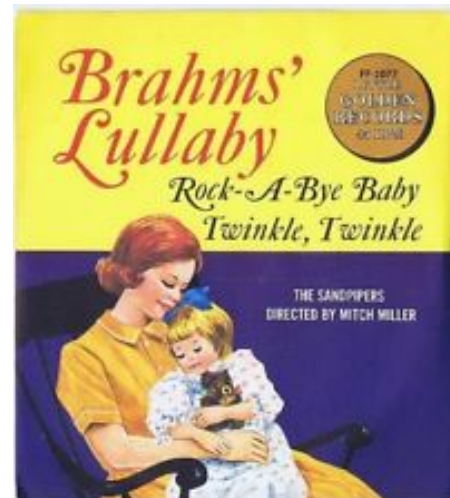
"Guten Abend, gute Nacht
(**Good evening, good night.**)

von Englein bewacht (**By angels
watched,**)

die zeigen im Traum (**Who show you in your dream**)

dir Christkindleins Baum (**the Christ-child's tree.**)

Schlaf nun selig und süß (**Sleep now blissfully and
sweetly,**)



schau im Traum 's Paradies" (see the paradise in your dream.)

Ludwig van Beethoven was an inspiration to composer **Robert Schumann**.

SCHUMANN
ALBUM FOR THE YOUNG OPUS 68
FOR THE PIANO
EDITED BY WILLARD A. PALMER



Robert Schumann composed an "**Album for the Young**" for Advent and Christmas 1848.

The Russian composer **Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky** was inspired by **Mozart** and **Beethoven**, writing in his autobiography:



"I would play through my beloved *Don Giovanni* (by **Mozart**) over and over again ...

From time to time, though, I would set about studying a **Beethoven symphony**.

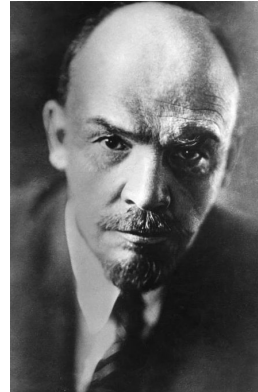
How strange! ... I was filled with a burning desire to write a symphony — a desire which would erupt afresh each time that I came into contact with **Beethoven's music**.

However, I would then feel all too keenly my ignorance, my complete inability to deal with the technique of composition, and this feeling brought me close to despair."

Tchaikovsky wrote the timeless Christmas classic **Nutcracker Suite**, which was performed for the first time in **Saint Petersburg** in December of 1892.



Socialist leader **Vladimir Lenin**, quoted by Maxim Gorky in "**V.I. Lenin**" (1924), stated:



"I know of nothing better than **(Beethoven's) "Appassionata"** and could listen to it every day.

What astonishing, superhuman music! It always makes me proud, perhaps with a childish naiveté, to think that people can work such miracles! ...

But I can't listen to music very often, it affects my nerves. I want to say sweet, silly things, and pat the little heads of people who, living in a filthy hell, can create such beauty.

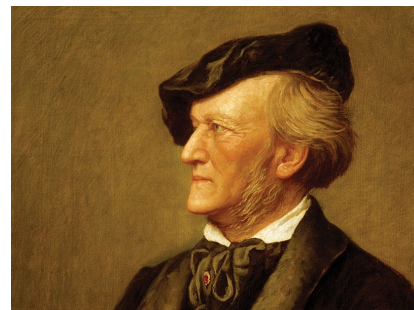
These days, one can't pat anyone on the head nowadays, they might bite your hand off.

Hence, you have to beat people's little heads, beat mercilessly, although ideally we are against doing any violence to people ... Hm - what a devilishly difficult job!"

On **Christmas morning**, 1870, composer **Richard Wagner** arranged for an ensemble to give surprise performance of "Siegfried Idyll" as a birthday present to his wife, Cosima, after the birth of their son Siegfried.



That same year, 1870, **Richard Wagner** wrote an essay commemorating the **one hundredth anniversary of Beethoven's birth**:



"Surveying the historical advance which the art of music made through **Beethoven**, we may define it as ... far beyond the region of the aesthetically beautiful, into the sphere of the sublime."

Sixteen years after **Beethoven's** death, in 1843, another famous **Christmas carol** was composed.

A parish priest in Roquemaure, France, wanting to celebrate the renovation of the church organ, asked poet **Placide Cappeau** to write a Christmas poem, "**O Holy Night.**"

Set to music by **Adolphe Adam**, "**O Holy Night**" became **one of the most beautiful Christmas carols** of all time.

John Sullivan Dwight published an English singing version in 1855.

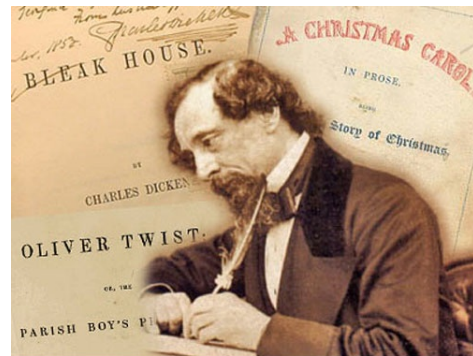
"O holy night! The stars are brightly shining,

It is the night of our dear Saviour's birth.

Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
'Til He appear'd and the soul felt its worth.

A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.
Fall on your knees! O hear the angels' voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born;
O night divine, O night, O night Divine."

During that same era, in 1843,
there was another timeless
addition to the holidays --
**Charles Dickens published "A
Christmas Carol."**



It sold 6,000 copies in London
the first day off the press.

In this story of redemption, the opening chapter has
Scrooge chasing away **Christmas carolers**:

"... at the first sound of -- '**God bless you, merry gentlemen! May nothing you dismay!**' --

Scrooge seized the ruler with such energy of action, that
the **singer** fled in terror, leaving the keyhole to the fog
and even more congenial frost."

In the climactic scene, **Dickens** wrote:

"The Spirit stood among the graves, and pointed down
to one ...

'Before I draw nearer to that stone to which you point,'
said **Scrooge**, 'answer me one question. Are these the
shadows of the things that Will be, or are they shadows
of things that May be' ...

Still **the Ghost** pointed downward to the grave ...

'Men's courses will foreshadow certain ends, to which, if persevered in, they must lead,' said **Scrooge**. 'But if the courses be departed from, the ends will change. Say it is thus with what you show me' ...

'**Spirit.**' he cried, tight clutching at its robe, 'hear me, I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been ... Why show me this, if I am past all hope' ...

The hand appeared to shake. '**Good Spirit,**' he pursued, as down upon the ground he fell ... 'Assure me that I yet may change these shadows you have shown me, by an altered life.'

God not only knows the future, He knows all *possible futures* and tells you what they are, and lets you choose. He even tells you how you should choose: "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; **therefore choose life**" - Deuteronomy 30:19. An in His infinite wisdom, God knows *how* you will choose.

Charles Dickens wrote of **Scrooge** after his transformation:

"... and it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep **Christmas** well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge.

May that be truly said of us, and all of us! And so, as Tiny Tim observed, '**God bless Us, Every One!**'"

U.S. Court of Appeals-8th Circuit, in the case of *Florey versus Sioux Falls School District*, 1980, stated:

"Opportunity for students to perform a full range of **poetry**, and **drama** that is



likely to be of interest to the students and their audience .. advances the student's knowledge and appreciation of the role that **our religious heritage** has played in the **social, cultural and historical development of civilizations.**"



Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson wrote in *McCollum versus Board of Education*, 1948:

"It would not seem practical to teach either **practice or appreciation of the arts** if we are to forbid exposure of youth to any **religious influences. Music without sacred music would be incomplete**, even from a secular point of view."

U.S. District Court Eastern District of Tennessee wrote in the case of *Wiley versus Franklin*, 1979:

"**The Bible** is replete with writings relevant to such secular subjects and interests as **history, both ancient and modern, literature, poetry, music** ... activities encompassed within the generalized phrase '**Western Civilization.**'"

To ignore the role of **the Bible** in the vast area of secular subjects such as herein above referred to is to ignore a **keystone** in the **building of an arch**, at least in so far as **Western history, values and culture** are concerned."

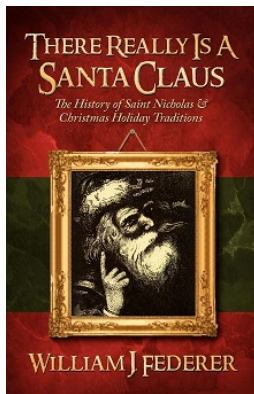
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