



COMPOSER BIOGRAPHY

**FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN**

BORN: March 31, 1732

ERA/STYLE: Classical

DIED: May 31, 1809

HOMETOWN: Rohrau, Austria

Franz Joseph Haydn was born in Austria in 1732. He grew up in a musical home. His parents recognized that he was talented, and when he was 6 years old, Haydn was sent to study music with a relative who lived near Vienna, Austria. He never again lived with his parents. When Haydn was 8, he became a member of the famous boys' choir at Vienna's St. Stephen's Cathedral. He was a chorister for nine years.

In 1759, Haydn was appointed music director of the small musical establishment of Count Morzin. His reputation grew, and he became conductor of the private orchestra of Prince Esterházy in 1761, who came from a wealthy, noble Hungarian family. The orchestra he conducted became known as one of the finest of that time. This post, which he filled for almost 30 years, was ideal for Haydn because it gave him the opportunity to work with a group of fine musicians. He wrote music, directed the court orchestra, hired musicians, and generally provided entertainment for the palace. Unfortunately, his contract with the family said that every composition he wrote belonged to them, which was common in the Classical period.

Later in his life Haydn traveled to London, where he wrote 12 very popular symphonies and gave concerts for English aristocrats. Haydn wrote many compositions, including 104 symphonies, 32 piano trios, and 60 piano sonatas.

Haydn was often called "Papa Haydn" by his friends because of his good sense of humor and likable disposition. He was one of the greatest composers of the Classical period.