



Antonio Vivaldi

4th March, 1678 - 28th July, 1741

Born in Venice, Italy.

He was a 'virtuoso violinist'.

He was an ordained catholic priest.

An earthquake struck on the day he was born.

Ludwig van Beethoven

December 1770 - 26th March, 1827

Born in Bonn, Germany.



His first public performance on the piano was march 1778 aged just eight.

He was often quite grumpy and scruffy!

In his late twenties he began to go deaf. Many of his most admired works came from the last decade of his life when he was almost completely deaf.



Richard Wagner

22nd May, 1813 - 13th February, 1883

Born in Leipzig, Germany.

Wagner loved dogs.

He had his own opera house built.

Much of his life was spent on the move due to politics, love affairs and to escape from debt.



Benjamin Britten

22nd November, 1913 - 4th December, 1976

Born in Lowestoft, England.

Britten brought British opera back to life after nearly 250 years without any notable opera being written.

When he was three-months-old he had pneumonia which left him with a weak heart.

He was made a Baron in 1976.

Johann Sebastian Bach

21st March, 1685 - 28th July, 1750

Born in Leipzig, Germany.



Bach wrote 'Air on a G String' which was made famous by the 'Hamlet' cigar adverts.

He wrote over 1000 pieces of music.

He was put in prison by his boss (the Duke in Wiemer) for accepting another job with better pay!

Felix Mendelssohn

3rd February, 1809 - 4 November, 1847

Born in Hamburg, Germany.



A young Felix excelled as a painter, poet, athlete, linguist and musician.

He travelled a lot, including ten visits to Britain. Scotland inspired two of his best loved works.

He was one of the first people to use a baton when conducting and brought the idea to Great Britain.



Frédéric Chopin

1st March, 1810 - 17th October, 1849

Born in Warsaw, Poland.

Chopin began composing and writing poetry at age six and his first performance was when he was eight.

He wrote the 'Minute Waltz' which actually lasts between a minute and a half and two minutes.

He made his home in Paris.

Leonard Bernstein

25th August, 1918 - 14th October, 1990

Born in Massachusetts, USA.



Bernstein helped bring music from the concert hall to Broadway.

He wrote the music for the musical, 'West Side Story'.



Joseph Haydn

13th March, 1732 - 31st May, 1809

Born in Rohrau, Austria.

Haydn was a chorister at age five.

He spent several years in London and, after hearing the British National Anthem, he wrote a patriotic piece for his homeland which became Austria's National Anthem.

His 'String Quartet in E-Flat' was subtitled, 'The Joke'. There are false endings that try to catch the audience out!



Edward Elgar

2nd June, 1857 - 23rd February, 1934

Born in Broadheath, England.

Elgar was a great letter-writer.

He was knighted by King Edward VII.

He was one of the first composers record his music.

He often worked with HMV to make recordings.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

7th January, 1756 - 5th December, 1791

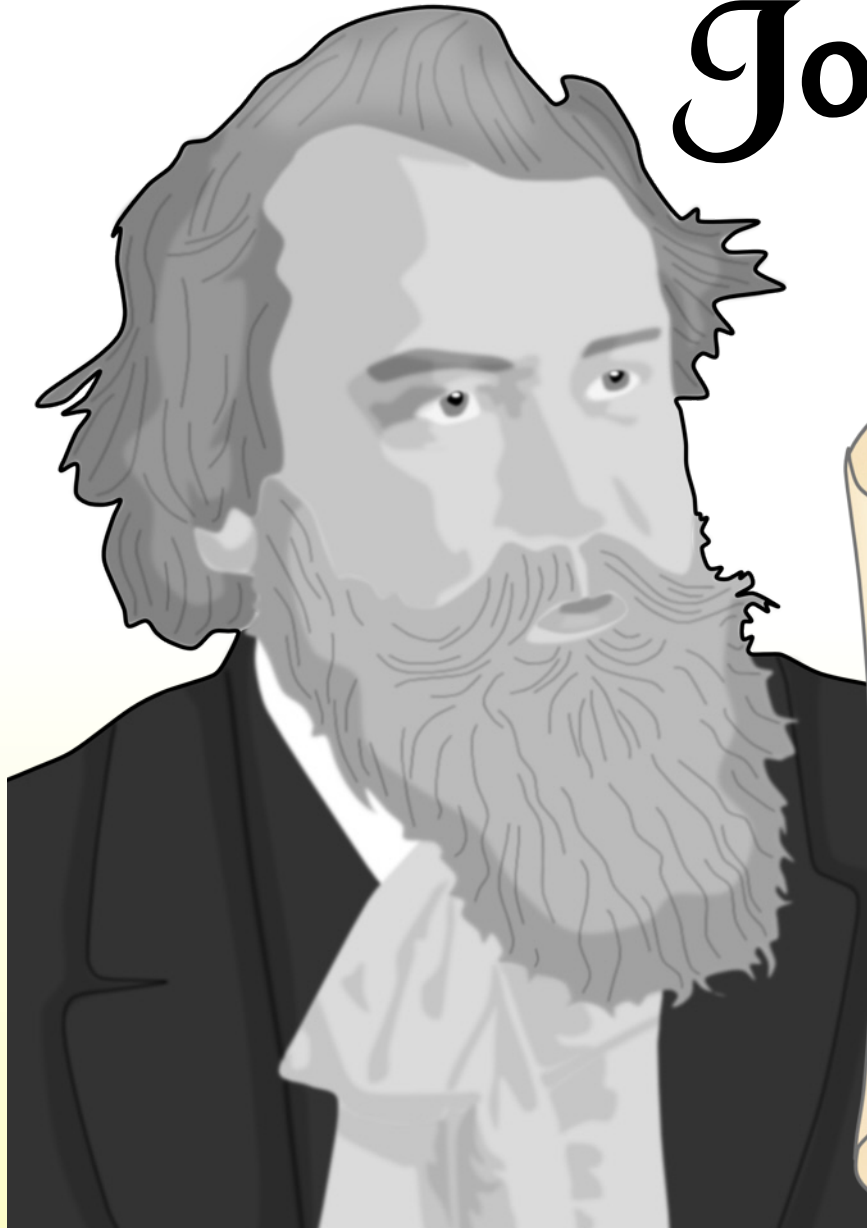
Born in Salzburg, Germany.



At age 17 he was employed as a musician at the Salzburg Court.

His 'Clarinet Concerto in A Major' features in films including 'The King's Speech', '27 Dresses' and 'Out of Africa'.

'The Magic Flute' was Mozart's last opera.



Johannes Brahms

7th May, 1833 - 3rd April, 1897

Born in Hamburg, Germany.

He started composing aged eleven.

He met a Hungarian refugee violinist, Eduard Remenyi, who introduced him to folk and gypsy music that influenced his composing style a lot.

Brahms enjoyed being outdoors and often travelled to the hills of Italy for walking holidays.



Franz Schubert

31st January, 1797 - 19th November, 1828

Born in Vienna, Austria.

When Schubert was seven he was talent spotted by the composer Salieri. He was taken to the Imperial Seminary where he sang and played violin.

He wrote his first masterpiece, 'Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel', at age seventeen.

Shubert's greatest contribution was a collection of 600 songs that express every shade of human emotion.



Robert Schumann

8th June, 1810 - 29th July, 1856

Born in Zwickau, Germany.

Schumann's wife Clara was also a composer.

His brother and his wife died in 1933 during the worldwide cholera pandemic.

He tried to kill himself in 1854 and spent the rest of his life in a hospital for the mentally ill.

Georg Friedrich Handel

23rd February, 1685 - 14th April, 1759

Born in Halle, Germany.



Handel wrote the 'Hallelujah Chorus'.

He was in charge of music for 'George', the elector of Hanover. This 'George' became George first king of England. Handel went on to be the official composer for the king.

'Zadok the Priest' was written for the coronation of George III and has been used at every British coronation ever since.

Piotr Illitch Tchaikovsky

7th May, 1840 - 6th November, 1893

Born in Votinsk, Russia.



Tchaikovsky's music is still some of the most popular classical music today.

His piece, 'The Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy', is famous for using an instrument new at the time, called the celesta. It looks like a small piano and makes a tinkly sound.

There is some mystery about how Tchaikovsky died. Some say he died of cholera, while others say he killed himself.