



INTERCULTURAL OUTREACH
CULTUREGUIDE

Austria

Series 1
Secondary [7-12]



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CROSS-CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS

AUSTRIA AND CLASSICAL MUSIC

Throughout history, Austria has been highly influential in the development of music. Many classical composers lived in Austria for most, if not all, of their lives. The music these composers wrote while in Austria was innovative, influential, and often revolutionary. Their compositions contributed to the development of music in cultures and countries worldwide. Although many of the most famous Austrian composers lived over a hundred years ago, their music is still an important part of Austrian culture today. Austrians' enjoyment and value of music reflects on their rich musical heritage.



Starting Points

1. What is your favorite kind of music? Who are your favorite musicians or composers? Why do you like their music? How has their music influenced you? Classical music has been very influential in Austria, largely because so many classical composers came from the country.
2. Think of a famous celebrity or historical figure. What did he or she do? In Austria, some of the most famous and respected people are music composers. These composers wrote music that both entertained and influenced the people of their day. Even today, their music is still important to Austrian people.
3. On the board, make a list of classical composers. Which ones do you recognize? Can you name any of the musical pieces written by these composers? Which ones lived in Austria? Many classical composers in history were born in Austria.



Information

Prominent Composers in Austria

Since the eighteenth century, Austria has been an important musical center in Europe. Renowned composers such as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Franz Josef Haydn, Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Schubert, Anton Bruckner, Gustav Mahler, Johann Strauss Jr., and Arnold Schönberg each spent part, or all, of their lives in Vienna. Many of them are buried in Vienna and their graves can be seen in Austria today (see **Cross-cultural Contributions Visual 1**). All of these composers have monuments dedicated to them in cities across Austria. These monuments are dedicated to them because the music they wrote was innovative, inventive, and influential for other composers and other cultures.

Mozart's Major Works and Influence

One example of a composer whose work influenced Austria and composers worldwide is Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791 C.E.). One of Mozart's most famous operas is *Die Zauberflöte* [dee tzow-ber-floetah], or the Magic Flute. This opera is

one of the most popular and renowned operas in the world. This opera was unique at the time of its premiere because there had been very few operas composed in the German language before the Magic Flute. Even the operas that Mozart had written previous to the Magic Flute had been sung in Italian. Mozart's popular composition of the Magic Flute helped German-language operas become accepted and even standard. Because of Mozart's opera, German operas became popular. This popularity paved the way for later composers such as Richard Wagner [vog-ner], who also wrote German-language operas.

Mozart's operas are still played frequently throughout Austria, Germany, and the rest of Europe. Almost every major city has an opera house of its own. Even countries smaller than Austria, such as Slovakia and the Czech Republic, have large opera houses of their own (see **Cross-cultural Contributions Visuals 2–5**).

Beethoven's Major Works and Influence

The works of Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) are some of the most influential compositions in the history of music. Although he was born in Germany, Beethoven spent much of his life in Vienna, where he composed music for many instruments, though most of his music was for the piano and the orchestra. In total, Beethoven wrote nine symphonies. Today, they are some of the most famous and well loved symphonies in the world. The most remarkable of those nine were his Third, Fifth, and Ninth symphonies, which were highly innovative and enormously influential.

Beethoven's Third Symphony, known as *Eroica*, or *Heroic*, has four movements. Prior to Beethoven, most composers had adhered to a certain form when writing symphonies—similar to using a pattern when writing a poem—but Beethoven made the first movement of this symphony much longer and more complex than the first movement of any previous symphony, pushing the limits of what was considered conventional.

In Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, there is one idea, or motif, that is repeated over and over. This motif ties the entire symphony together and gives it unity. Previous to Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, there had been no orchestral works with this type of unity. The use of one repeated motif influenced composers all over Europe and later spread throughout the entire world. One person who was influenced by this idea was the French composer Hector Berlioz. Berlioz lived around Beethoven's time, and, like Beethoven, he repeated one musical phrase throughout his entire composition *Symphonie Fantastique*. Many composers other than Berlioz also used this idea in their works. Even today, the motif from Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is commonly used in commercials and movies.

Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was one of the last pieces Beethoven wrote before he died. Many of the composers throughout Europe believed a better piece of music couldn't be written. Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was unprecedented in several ways. First, it had five movements, whereas the conventional symphony had four. Second, in the fifth movement, Beethoven added singers to the composition. Prior to this piece, singers had never been part of a nonreligious symphonic work. Third, the fifth movement used the text from a German poem, "*An die Freude*" [on dee froyda], or "Ode to Joy," by Friedrich Schiller as the text for the choral music.

Beethoven's Ninth Symphony inspired many future symphonic works that were written for both orchestra and chorus. Today, the Ninth Symphony is often played on special occasions or at the end of the year, because it is considered to be one of the best summations of music and words. One of the most memorable times the symphony was played was at a ceremony celebrating the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

Not only Beethoven's symphonies, but also much of his other music has been influential. His piano sonatas are still learned and played by pianists everywhere. Some of the most famous of these sonatas are the Tempest, Pastorale, Pathétique, Appassionata, Waldstein, and Moonlight Sonata. He also wrote literally dozens of pieces of music for various instruments and voice. Musicians everywhere still love and play his music today.

Schubert's Major Works and Influence

Franz Schubert (1797–1828) also lived in Vienna for a large portion of his life. Schubert wrote over 130 songs for voice and piano, commonly referred to as *lied* [leed] (song), or *lieder* [leed-er] (songs). His lieder were unique because Schubert was one of the first composers to closely link together the music played on the piano, the notes sung by the voice, and the actual text being sung. One example of this is a song entitled “Erkönig” [ehrl-koe-nig], meaning “Elf King.” The text for this song comes from a poem. The poem is about a boy who has become sick in the middle of the night; his worried father is carrying him in his arms and racing to get help. In the song, the boy says that the Elf King (a character similar to the Grim Reaper) is calling for him. The parts of different characters are all sung by one singer, but each time a different character “speaks,” the music changes to indicate which character it is. For example, when the boy speaks, the notes are higher, and when the father speaks, the notes are lower. The piano part of the song uses repeated notes to create a kind of panicked feeling in listeners, representing the danger in the story. Schubert was a master at creating this kind of music.

The works of Schubert became extremely popular in countries throughout Europe. One of his most popular pieces for voice and piano is still very well known today: “Ave Maria.” Because Schubert wrote his songs for just voice and piano, they could be performed in small gatherings in peoples' homes. Schubert's popularity also gave way to “Schubertiades,” which were small gatherings where friends sang the lieder written by Schubert. These parties occurred all over Europe during the nineteenth century, particularly in France and Austria. These types of gatherings affected the musical culture throughout Europe—they brought music into the homes of middle-class citizens.

Strauss's Major Works and Influence

Johann Strauss Jr. (1825–1899) is another famous Viennese composer. He wrote many kinds of music, from marches to polkas to operettas. Some of his most famous pieces include the Thunder and Lightning and Tritsch-Tratsch polkas, and the Gypsy Baron and *Die Fledermaus* [dee flay-der-mouse] operettas. Although he wrote many different kinds of music, Johann Strauss was especially well known for his waltzes. Throughout Europe, he soon became known as the “Waltz King,” and, to this day, no one has been able to take the title from him. Some of his most popular and

FACTS ABOUT AUSTRIA

Official Name: Republic of Austria
(Republik Österreich)

Capital: Vienna (Wien)

Government Type: federal republic

Area: 83,870 sq km

Land Boundaries: Czech Republic,
Germany, Hungary, Italy, Liechtenstein,
Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland

Climate: temperate; cold winters,
moderate summers

Lowest Point: Neusiedler See 115 m

Highest Point: Grossglockner 3,798 m

Natural Resources: oil, coal, lignite,
timber, iron ore, copper, zinc, anti-
mony, magnesite, tungsten, graphite,
salt, hydropower

Natural Hazards: landslides, ava-
lanches, earthquakes

Population: 8,192,880 (July 2006 est.)

Ethnic Groups: Austrians 91.1%, for-
mer Yugoslavs 4% (includes
Croatsians, Slovenes, Serbs, and
Bosniaks), Turks 1.6%, German 0.9%,
other 2.4% (2001 census)

Religions: Roman Catholic 73.6%,
Protestant 4.7%, Muslim 4.2%, other
3.5%, unspecified 2%, none 12%
(2001 census)

Languages: German (official nation-
wide), Slovene (official in Carinthia),
Croatian (official in Burgenland),
Hungarian (official in Burgenland)

GDP: \$279.5 billion (2006 est.)

GDP Per Capita: \$34,100 (2006 est.)

GDP Composition By Sector: agricul-
ture:1.8%; industry: 30.4%; services:
67.8% (2005 est.)

Labor Force: 3.52 million (2006 est.)

Unemployment Rate: 5.2% (2005 est.)

Industries: construction, machinery,
vehicles and parts, food, metals,
chemicals, lumber and wood processing,
paper and paperboard, communications
equipment, tourism

Agricultural Products: grains, potatoes,
sugar beets, wine, fruit, dairy products,
cattle, pigs, poultry, lumber

Exports: \$144.4 billion f.o.b. (2006
est.) machinery and equipment, motor
vehicles and parts, paper and paper-
board, metal goods, chemicals, iron
and steel, textiles, foodstuffs

Imports: \$138.6 billion f.o.b. (2006
est.) machinery and equipment, motor
vehicles, chemicals, metal goods, oil
and oil products, foodstuffs

Trade Partners: Germany, Italy, U.S.,
Switzerland, U.K., France (2005)

Currency: euro (EUR)

Exchange Rate: 0.79669 EUR = \$1U.S.
(2006)

HISTORY AND HOLIDAYS

TIME LINE

- 15 B.C.E.** Romans invade the area inhabited by Illyrian and Celtic people; Austria becomes provinces of the Roman Empire; formerly a Celtic settlement, known as Vindobona, Vienna, becomes one of first Roman military posts
- C.E. 788** Charlemagne establishes outposts or military districts, including *Ostmark* (Eastern March), which later becomes *Ost Reich* (Eastern Country), or *Österreich* (Austria)
- 812** Charlemagne renounces his claim on several territories, including the area that is now Austria, in exchange for political recognition from the Byzantine empire
- 955** The defeat of an invading Hungarian army marks the emergence of Austria as a political entity, under the rule of Otto I of Germany, the first Holy Roman Emperor
- 1135** Construction on St. Stephen's Cathedral begins
- 1273** Rudolf I of Habsburg elected Holy Roman Emperor, beginning the Habsburg family's great political influence which continues for the next 550 years
- 1365** University of Vienna established
- 1521–22** Division of the Habsburg dynasty into Spanish and Austrian branches; the reformation also begins to gain force in the Holy Roman Empire
- 1555** Peace of Augsburg brings limited religious tolerance for Lutherans and Catholics (based on the idea that each individual ruler within the Holy Roman Empire can determine the religion of his subjects)
- 1618** Rebellion of Protestant nobels in Bohemia marks the beginning of the Thirty Years War
- 1713** Holy Roman Emperor Charles VI decrees the Pragmatic Sanction, allowing females to inherit the throne
- 1740** Charles VI dies without any sons; Maria Theresa, who rules for forty years and has sixteen children (among them Marie Antoinette), ascends the throne—ultimately leading to the War of Austrian Succession and the Seven Years' War
- 1756** Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is born in Salzburg
- 1797** Treaty of Campo Formio: Austria relinquishes present-day Belgium to Napoleon Bonaparte in order to preserve control of the remainder of the country
- 1800** Open hostilities resume with France
- 1806** The Holy Roman Empire is dissolved; Francis II declares himself Emperor of Austria

- 1848** Francis Joseph I ascends to the throne at age eighteen (he later marries Elizabeth (Sissi) of Bavaria, an adored heroine of the Austrian people)
- 1867** The Dual Monarchy, known as the Austria-Hungary Empire is created; each, however, has its own constitution, government, parliament, and language
- 28 Jun 1914** Heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, Francis Ferdinand and his wife are assassinated, triggering the start of World War I
- Summer 1918** Austro-Hungarian forces are defeated—strikes, protests, and demonstrations occur at home
- 12 Nov 1918** The monarchy relinquishes its power and Austria and Hungary declare themselves republics
- 15 Mar 1938** Anschluss (unification) with Germany occurs—Hitler’s German troops enter Austria, and the country is annexed to Germany
- Apr 1945** Eastern part of Austria is liberated by Soviet troops; the Allied forces separate Vienna and Austria into four sectors, just as they did to Berlin and Germany
- 1951** After starvation, industrial failure, disrupted production, and economic devastation, the United States and United Nations help industrial production break its prewar peaks
- 15 May 1955** Occupying powers and the Austrian government sign the Austrian State Treaty, restoring Austrian sovereignty and prohibiting another Anschuluss; Austria announces permanent neutrality
- 1955** Austria becomes a member of the United Nations
- 1 Jan 1995** Austria becomes a member of the European Union
- Jan 2002** Euro coins and bills replace the old Austrian schilling
- Apr 2004** Heinz Fischer elected president

HOLIDAYS

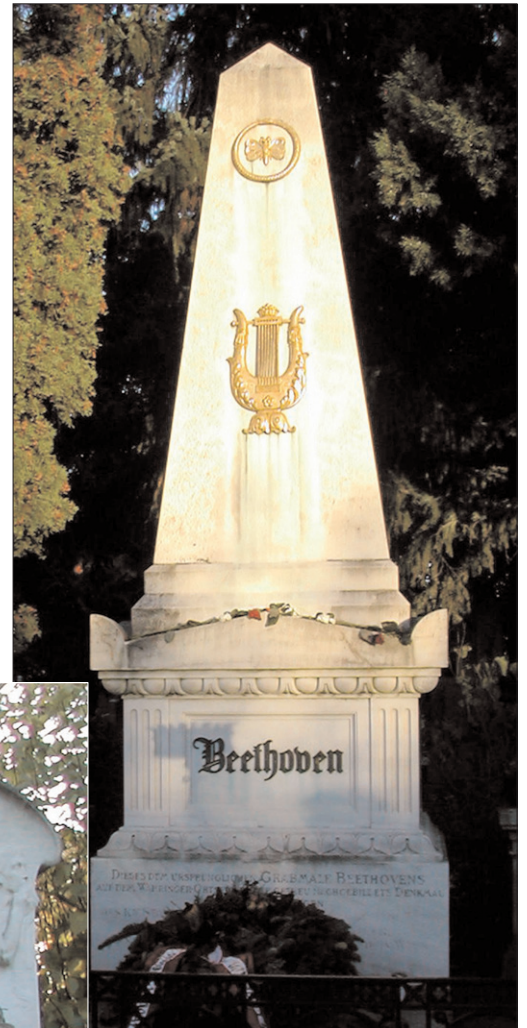
- 1 Jan** Neujahrstag (New Year’s Day), Traditional Vienna Philharmonic concert celebration: Neujahrskonzert
- Feb/Mar** Fasching (Carnival)—the moment the new wine becomes old; many balls and parties; tasting of the new wine (this holiday occurs forty days before Easter)
- Mar/Apr** Good Friday—a serious day of fasting; Palm Sunday—priests bless adorned pussy willow branches (symbolizing rebirth) that are subsequently situated in special corners in the home
- Mar/Apr** Ostern (Easter), observed on Sunday and Monday; traditional music is played in churches and many attend Mass
- 1 May** Tag der Arbeit (Labor Day), traditionally known as May Day, there are parades, dances, and festivals; today there are more protests and demonstrations
- May** Christi Himmelfahrt (Ascension), always occurring on a Thursday in May, it is a celebration of Christ’s ascension; many gather with friends and relatives for the day
- Mid-May/June** Second Thursday after Whitsunday (Pentecost); marked by a large procession along the main street in Vienna (*Ringstrasse*)

- 15 Aug** Maria Himmelfahrt (Assumption Day)—commemorates the Virgin Mary’s ascension into Heaven; like on Christi Himmelfahrt, friends and family usually meet for the day and dinner
- 26 Oct** Nationalfeiertag (Austrian National Day)—commemorates the day in 1955 when the last foreign troops, a continuous presence since World War II, left Austria; many take long walks or hikes on this day
- 6 Dec** Nikolaustag (St. Nikolas Day)—the white-robed St. Nikolas and his devious, evil-spirited companion, Krampus, roam the streets, rewarding or punishing children for behavior during the previous year
- 24 Dec** Heiliger Abend (Christmas Eve)—marked with a festive meal, a candle-lit tree, and the distribution of presents; many attend Midnight Mass, at the end of which they sing *Stille Nacht* (“Silent Night”)
- 25 Dec** Christtag (Christmas Day)—the holy day of resting, going to church, and visiting family; many gather with relatives and friends to eat a roast goose
- 31 Dec** Silvester (New Year’s Eve)—on this evening people celebrate by drinking special drinks, throwing confetti, and giving each other kisses; there are firework shows and a special Midnight Mass

Cross-cultural Contributions Visual 1: Tombs of Haydn, Strauss, Brahms, and Beethoven



HAYDN



BEETHOVEN



STRAUSS



BRAHMS

Cross-cultural Contributions Visual 5: Opera House in Bratislava

