



## BEETHOVEN: THE FOUR NOTES THAT CHANGED THE WORLD BY JUDY CHINITZ

Here's an awesome bit of TRIVIA for you: what is the most RECOGNIZED phrase in all of music? The first bars of the United States' national anthem? The Rolling Stones getting no SATISFACTION? The BEATLES asking for HELP! Alicia Keys wailing "New York!"??? Wrong, wrong, wrong, and wrong. The answer may astound you...but maybe not. It is the first 4 notes of LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN's 5<sup>TH</sup> Symphony. Across the globe that da-da-da-duuum is regarded as the single most famous notes in music.

SPELL: TRIVIA SPELL: RECOGNIZED SPELL:  
SATISFACTION

What rock group sang the song Help!? BEATLES

Who sang the song New York? ALICIA KEYS

What composer are we talking about today? LUDWIG VAN  
BEETHOVEN, BEETHOVEN

What is the most recognized phrase in all music? BEETHOVEN'S  
FIFTH SYMPHONY, THE FIFTH SYMPHONY

From what country to the Beatles hail? ENGLAND, BRITAIN

What was your first guess as the answer to the question what is the  
most recognized phrase in all music?

Beethoven was born in 1770 in the German town of BONN. He moved to Vienna as a young man to study music with the famous FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN, the CREATIVE genius behind the creation of the SYMPHONY. Beethoven rapidly achieved fame for his music, his VIRTUOSO piano playing and his hot temper. As one author puts it, "you can think of the young Beethoven as a TEMPERMENTAL, emo rock star."

SPELL: BONN SPELL: VIRTUOUSO SPELL: CREATIVE

What was Beethoven's nationality? GERMAN

To what city did he move as a young man? VIENNA

In what country is Vienna found? AUSTRIA

What instrument did Beethoven play? PIANO

With whom did he study in Vienna? FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN,  
HAYDN

How was Beethoven described in this paragraph? HOT TEMPERED,  
TEMPERMENTAL, A ROCK STAR, A VIRTUOSO PIANO PLAYER

In what year was Beethoven born? 1770

If you could have a statue of someone erected in your bedroom, who  
would it be?



VAKT: MUSICAL ICON OF 1800 AND NOW, LUDWIG VAN  
BEETHOVEN

In what has to be one of the most tragic, IRONIC and DEVASTATING cosmic jokes, Beethoven – who, it could be reasonably argued, was the greatest musical genius of all time – began to lose his hearing in his early 20s. As you can easily imagine, this caused him to lapse into a terrible depression, a true emotional CRISIS...but it also inspired him to PERSEVERE and to never, ever give up. He began to produce increasingly powerful music that completely changed how

music was regarded: from a structured non-emotional piece of art (he was born into what is now known as the CLASSICAL era in music) to an emotional, sometimes TURBULENT, creation that spoke of the inner world of the artist. His music USHERED in a new age in music: ROMANTICISM, which, as its name implies, was the reflection of a new age of originality and emotional freedom.

SPELL: IRONIC SPELL: DEVASTATING SPELL: PERSEVERE

Into what period of music was Beethoven born? CLASSICAL

What new age of music did he usher in? ROMANTICISM

What sense did Beethoven begin to lose in his 20s? HEARING

The recognition that he was losing his hearing caused him at first to lapse into what? DEPRESSION, EMOTIONAL CRISIS

What words are used in this paragraph to describe Romanticism?

EMOTIONAL, TURBULENT, SPEAKS OF THE INNER WORLD OF THE ARTIST, ORIGINALITY, EMOTIONAL FREEDOM

Name another artist, composer, author or poet of the Romantic era.

A little more on the differences between Classical era and Romantic era music: as opposed to symphonies of the former era, those of the Romantic period used looser form, sometimes slower paces, and more SELF-CONSCIOUS emotional EXPRESSION. While Beethoven used the TRADITIONAL classical formats in his symphonies, he was the PIVOTAL composer, the fountainhead, in terms of moving music into this new age of FREEDOM. His sixth symphony, the PASTORALE, he himself defined as, "...more an expression of emotion than painting." Beethoven loved nature, and found his only peace being in natural beauty. His 6<sup>th</sup> symphony is an ode to nature.

SPELL: SELF-CONSCIOUS SPELL: EXPRESSION SPELL: TRADITIONAL

What is the name of Beethoven's sixth symphony? PASTORALE

Beethoven himself stated that the 6<sup>th</sup> symphony is more an expression of emotion than what? PAINTING

What formats did Beethoven adhere to in his symphonies?

CLASSICAL

What word in this paragraph means the wellspring or origin?

FOUNTAINHEAD

What is it an ode to? NATURE, NATURAL BEAUTY

What do you think Beethoven meant by describing his sixth symphony as more an expression of emotion than painting?

VAKT: Listen to some of Beethoven's 6<sup>th</sup> symphony: Beethoven Symphony No. 6 "Pastorale," London Philharmonic Orchestra. Can you hear the sounds of nature?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fRg0K5rgXog>

But it is his 3<sup>rd</sup> symphony that most of his BIOGRAPHERS view as the LANDMARK moment in music: it was written on an UNPRECEDENTED scale, for its time, massive in scope and most view it as a TESTAMENT to the power of human free will. The first 2 notes – two massive CHORDS – are often regarded as *the* moment, of the master opening a new age of music. In fact, the symphony was so long for the time – literally twice as long as any symphony by Beethoven's predecessors, including those of classical music supermen like Mozart and Haydn – that, it was reported by one of Beethoven's friends that an audience member called out during its premier in 1805, "I'd give another KREUTZER if it would only stop!"

SPELL: BIOGRAPHERS SPELL: LANDMARK SPELL: TESTAMENT

What word in this paragraph means those who came before? PREDECESSORS

What unit of currency is mentioned in this paragraph? KREUTZER

What is thought by many, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> symphony, to open a new age in music? FIRST TWO NOTES, FIRST TWO CHORDS

What two musical supermen are mentioned in this paragraph outside of Beethoven? MOZART, HAYDN

What is Mozart's first names? WOLFGANG AMADEUS

In what year did the third symphony premier? 1805

Why do you think the audience member was willing to pay for the piece to stop?

VAKT: Beethoven – Symphony No. 3 in E flat major (Op. 55) Eroica  
Berliner Philharmoniker: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nbGV-MVfgec>

But it his fifth symphony that reigns supreme as the single most recognized piece of music in the world. The piece was first PREMIERED in 1808 and is often called The Symphony of Fate. Why? Because when asked about those remarkable first notes by his SECRETARY, Beethoven responded, "This is the sound of fate knocking at the door." While no one knows with absolute certainty that this story is true, it is certainly believable in that, by that point, Beethoven was already very hard of hearing and suffered too from a HORRENDOUS condition called TINNITUS, a PERSISTANT ringing in his ears. By 1802, in fact, Beethoven saw his fate – eventual deafness – knocking at his door. In the will he wrote that year, he acknowledged the fate that was coming for him: "There is little holding me back from ending my own life. It is only art that is keeping me going."

SPELL: PREMIERED SPELL: SECRETARY SPELL:  
HORRENDOUS

Besides deafness, from what other condition did Beethoven suffer?  
TINNITUS

What is the nickname for the fifth symphony? SYMPHONY OF FATE  
Who reported the story about Beethoven's description of those first 4 notes? SECRETARY

What is tinnitus? RINGING IN THE EARS

What is it believed Beethoven called the first 4 notes of the fifth?  
FATE KNOCKING AT THE DOOR, THE SOUND OF FATE  
KNOCKING

How old was Beethoven when the fifth symphony premiered? 38  
(1808-1770 = 38)

VAKT: Beethoven – Symphony No. 5 (Proms 2012):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jv2WJMVPQi8> What do you think of when you hear those 4 notes that were *fated* to be the most famous ever written? Also start to listen at minute 28:45. How would you describe the emotion portrayed in the music?

By the time he died in 1827, Beethoven had become an ICON to young musicians. Just as you might have a poster of your favorite rock star or band, they had statues of the MAESTRO to which they'd pay HOMAGE. Beethoven is so regarded as the emperor of music



that a legend developed which was dubbed THE CURSE OF THE NINTH. It is a superstition amongst the classical composers who followed that they would die during or right after their writing their ninth symphony: they could not do more than their musical god. EERILY, the belief had some basis in fact: Franz Shubert, Antonin DVORAK (pronounced D-Vor-jock), the great English composer, Ralph (pronounced Rafe) Vaughan Williams, died right after completing their 9ths. His fellow countrymen composers, Anton Bruckner, died with his 9<sup>th</sup> unfinished and Gustav Mahler tried to get a 10<sup>th</sup> in but died while writing it. Fortunately, the curse does seem to be somewhat selective: the great Russian composer, Dmitri Shostakovich, managed to write 15 of 'em. Still...would you take the risk?!

SPELL: MAESTRO SPELL: HOMAGE SPELL: EERILY

What did fans of Beethoven in the 1800s have to pay homage to the great composer? STATUES

What superstition is described in this paragraph? THE CURSE OF THE NINTH

What was Mahler's first name? GUSTAV

What was Ralph Vaughan William's nationality? ENGLISH

What Russian composer got away with writing 15 symphonies?

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH, SHOSTAKOVICH

What is the curse of the 9<sup>th</sup>? DIE IF YOU WRITE MORE THAN 9 SYMPHONIES

Name some of the composers who suffered the curse of the 9<sup>th</sup>?

SCHUBERT, DVORAK, VAUGHAN WILLIAMS, BRUCKNER, MAHLER

What was Dvorak's nationality? CZECH

What instruments of the orchestra can you name?

How old was Beethoven when he died? 57 (1827-1770= 57)

Like all truly great heroes, Beethoven did not give in when faced with a fate that some might PERCEIVE as worse than death for a musician. In fact, he wrote a letter to a friend and stated, "I want to grasp fate at the throat – it shouldn't bring me down completely." By the time he wrote his final symphony, his 9<sup>th</sup>, he was completely deaf. And yet, some music SCHOLARS believe it to be his greatest work. Whether or not this is the case, all agree that it is a TITANIC

MASTERPIECE, and one of the most popular ever written. It ends with the great choral movement: Beethoven put the German poet, SCHILLER'S, work "Ode to Joy" to music. For arguably the greatest composer who ever lived to find such pure joy in the world, in spite of his heart-rending disability, should serve as a model for all who face TRAGEDY, the sometimes PERVERSE dictums fate, hardships in life. Perhaps therein lies a lesson for all of us.

SPELL: PERCEIVE SPELL: SCHOLARS SPELL: TITANIC

By what did Beethoven want to grasp fate? THROAT

How many symphonies did Beethoven write? 9 (NINE)

Who wrote the poem sung in the last movement? SCHILLER

What is the name of the poem? ODE TO JOY

By time he wrote this symphony, Beethoven was entirely what?  
DEAF

What words are used in this paragraph to describe the ninth symphony? TITANIC, GREATEST WORK, CHORAL, POPULAR, MASTERPIECE

VAKT: Beethoven-Symphony No. 9 (Proms 2012):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJQ32q2k8Uo> – start listening around minute 51 to hear the Ode to Joy

VAKT: CLASSICAL MUSIC GAME! CAN YOU TELL WHICH ERA OF MUSIC, CLASSICAL OR ROMANTIC, EACH OF THE FOLLOWING IS FROM? (Answers at the end of the lesson)

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQFjDBFXN58> - start at minute 13:30
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JTc1mDieQI8> – start at the beginning
3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OitPLlowJ70> – start at the beginning
4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihx5LCF1yJY> – start at the beginning

5. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qut5e3OfCvg> – start at either the beginning or minute 25:21

CREATIVE WRITING: BELOW IS SCHILLER'S ODE TO JOY.  
NOW...WRITE YOUR OWN.

Joy, beautiful spark of Divinity [or: of gods],  
Daughter of Elysium,  
We enter, drunk with fire,  
Heavenly one, thy sanctuary!  
Thy magic binds again  
What custom strictly divided;  
All people become brothers,  
Where thy gentle wing abides.

Whoever has succeeded in the great attempt,  
To be a friend's friend,  
Whoever has won a lovely woman,  
Add his to the jubilation!  
Yes, and also whoever has just one soul  
To call his own in this world!  
And he who never managed it should slink  
Weeping from this union!

All creatures drink of joy  
At nature's breasts.  
All the Just, all the Evil  
Follow her trail of roses.  
Kisses she gave us and grapevines,  
A friend, proven in death.  
Salaciousness was given to the worm  
And the cherub stands before God.

Gladly, as His suns fly  
through the heavens' grand plan  
Go on, brothers, your way,  
Joyful, like a hero to victory.

Be embraced, Millions!  
This kiss to all the world!  
Brothers, above the starry canopy  
There must dwell a loving Father.  
Are you collapsing, millions?  
Do you sense the creator, world?



Seek him above the starry canopy!  
Above stars must He dwell.

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<https://study.com/academy/lesson/beethoven-symphonies-shift-from-classical-to-romantic.html>

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ludwig-van-Beethoven>

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Eroica-Symphony>

<https://www.dw.com/en/beethovens-fifth-symphony-the-truth-about-the-symphony-of-fate/a-45472113>

<https://www.classicfm.com/discover-music/curse-of-the-ninth/>

answers:

1. Mahler's 1<sup>st</sup> symphony – Romantic
2. Mozart symphony number 40 – Classical
3. Haydn symphony 94 (the Surprise) – Classical
4. Vaughan Williams Fantasia on a theme of Thomas Tallis – Romantic
5. Dvorak – New World Symphony (9th) - Romantic