

Haydn & Beethoven

The young Beethoven - just over a week past his 20th birthday - first met the renowned Joseph Haydn on 26 December 1790 in Bonn, when Haydn and the impresario Johann Peter Salomon stopped off on their way to London where Haydn was to perform. Beethoven met Haydn again on Haydn's return journey in July 1792. Beethoven showed him his scores for the Cantatas on the Death of Emperor Joseph II (WoO 87) and the Elevation of Emperor Leopold II (WoO O88).

Haydn was sufficiently impressed to tell Beethoven that if he could arrange to come to Vienna, he would gladly take him on as a pupil. Beethoven began lessons with Haydn soon after his arrival in Vienna in November 1792 - but quickly became dissatisfied. Haydn was enormously busy with his own compositions and commissions; in January 1794 he left for a second trip to London, returning more than a year and a half later with a commission for a set of symphonies (to become the London symphonies).

Beethoven took lessons with other teachers - often in secret so as not to offend Haydn!

In August 1795, Beethoven performed his newly composed three Piano Trios opus 1 in the salon of [Prince Lichnowsky](#), with Haydn - who had just returned from London - as guest of honour. Haydn - 63 years of age - was tired. The trip to London had been exhausting, and he had a grueling commission to fulfill. The three Trios, in performance, comprise more than an hour and a half of music. By the end of the third and final Trio, Haydn was seriously tired.

Beethoven hurried over to his teacher and asked him what he thought. Haydn had the temerity to suggest that the third Trio needed more work on it before it was published.

Beethoven was horrified - and he never forgot Haydn's criticism. (Ironically musicologists today rate the Third as the best of the three!) There was no falling-out between the two, but Beethoven was always quick to criticize his old teacher. He once said, "I never

learned anything from Haydn."

Proof that relations were not too strained by the Piano Trio incident came when Beethoven dedicated his next opus - the set of three Piano Sonatas, opus 2 - to Haydn.

But Beethoven never acceded to the one request Haydn made of him, which - Haydn knew - would forever tie him to his brilliant and precocious pupil: to put at the top of a single composition by Ludwig van Beethoven, pupil of Haydn.

Ralph Vaughan-Williams and Maurice Ravel

By age 36, Vaughan-Williams had already played an important role in the British music renaissance, but he still felt that his technique needed further refinement. In 1908, he journeyed to Paris for three months to study with Maurice Ravel, three years his junior. He took a room in a local hotel without any piano. Ravel's first assignment was for Vaughan-Williams to compose a small minuet in the style of Mozart; not the advice he had hoped he'd receive and he made his feelings known. But during the coming weeks, they met four or five times each week, and RVW worked assiduously at the tasks set by Ravel, who introduced him to piano works by Russian composers, using them as orchestration exercises (Pictures?) Ravel's influences appeared in the "comparative economy and new harmonic daring" presented in future works, particularly the G minor String Quartet.

Vaughan-Williams recalled that Ravel's motto was "complex music, but not complicated". He showed me how to orchestrate in points of color rather than in lines. He was against development for its own sake—one should only develop for the sake of arriving at something better. He was horrified that I had no piano in that little hotel where I worked. "Without the piano one cannot invent new harmonies."