**From Handel to Haydn**

*Handel to Haydn* is a program of fine 18th-century music by a selection of the greatest composers of the time, played on period instruments, creating performances that are historically informed and educational.

**Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)**

* J.S. Bach was born in northern Germany in a town called Eisenach. It’s no wonder he became a musician because he was surrounded by a family of musicians as role models.
* From his family Bach learned the basics of music theory, violin, organ and clavichord.
* Bach worked for many noble patrons and for churches as a music director. When working in the church he had to compose a new mass every week!
* The Well-Tempered Clavier is Bach’s biggest collection of music for keyboard and the pieces from this volume (actually 2 big volumes) are some of the most popular baroque pieces for pianists today.
* The compositional style that Bach used fits in with what others like Handel, Telemann and Vivaldi, were also doing at the time. What makes Bach stand apart is his use of counterpoint, which is the use of independent melodies that all fit together somehow, to create complex and powerful pieces of music.

**Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)**

* Vivaldi was born in Venice and remained anchored to the city his entire life.
* He was ordained a priest in 1703, against his own will it would appear, but he was destined for a life in music and shortly after becoming a priest he was appointed as a violin teacher at the Ospedale della Pietà, a school for orphan girls. Vivaldi spent most of his life working here as a violin teacher and composer.
* He also worked as the director of the Teatro Sant’ Angelo in Venice, while also maintaining his position at the Ospedale, so he was working two jobs for most of his life.
* J.S. Bach was a great fan of Vivaldi’s works, and often included works by Vivaldi in his popular music evenings which he organized during the 1730s in Leipzig.
* Vivaldi was generally recognized as one of the greatest Italian Baroque composers, especially for his sacred choral works, operas (more than 40), and many concerti. His compositions are often seen as some of the best examples of the Italian Baroque style.

**George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)**

* As a child, G.F. Handel showed a strong inclination to music. His father, however, wanted him to study law.
* Handel spent most of his career in London, despite being from Germany.
* Bach tried to meet Handel, unsuccessfully. He did, however, say that Handel “understood affect better than any of us.” Ludwig van Beethoven also greatly admired the work of Handel, saying “the master of us all… the greatest composer that ever lived.”
* During his lifetime Handel composed 42 operas, 29 oratorios and over 120 cantatas, and more!
* After his death in 1759 the performance of his works began to die out. His most famous oratorio, *Messiah*, continued to be performed but usually only on special occasions.
* Since the Baroque revival in the 1960s interest in Handel’s operas and other compositions has once again flourished and the performance of Handel’s works is once again common place with opera companies, choirs and orchestras alike.

**Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767)**

* Telemann began his first music lessons at the age of 10. He was quite a skilled composer and performer and he taught himself many instruments, including violin, oboe and flute. He became a musician even though his family didn’t want him to.
* After travelling to France in 1737 he began incorporating the French style into his vocal works. Prior to this time his musical influences had mainly been the German and Italian styles.
* During his lifetime Telemann composed over 3 000 pieces!! Sadly, have been lost, and most are no longer performed.
* Unfortunately, after the baroque revival Telemann’s music was seen as inferior to Bach’s.
* Telemann’s music was very important in helping to shape the late Baroque and early Classical styles.

**François Couperin (1668-1733)**

* A child prodigy, by the age of 10 Couperin was already the deputy organist under his father, at the St. Gervais Cathedral in Paris. At age 18 he inherited his father’s position.
* François Couperin really like the Italian music that was being composed during his time. Because of this he uses some Italian style in his music. The pairing of French and Italian musical styles went well together in Couperin’s music, in the same kind of way that pizza and french fries go well together.
* Couperin, while a great admirer of the Italian style, was also viewed as the epitome of the French classical style and was a foundational player in the advances made in French music.

**Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)**

* Haydn was a Classical composer. He was so important to the development of instrumental ensembles that he is known as “Father of the Symphony” and “Father of the String Quartet.”
* Haydn was born in Austria. He was gifted from a young age and was an especially good singer. He moved to Vienna and was a choir boy in the Cathedral, but he also learned music theory and violin there. This was very important for his musical foundation.
* Two of Haydn’s greatest compositions, the oratorios *The Creation* (1798) and *The Seasons* (1801) were extremely popular when they premiered. Haydn would often lead the performances of these oratorios. They are staples even still today and are still frequently performed.
* Haydn was a friend and mentor to W.A. Mozart and he also taught Beethoven.
* For a lot of his career Haydn was the *most celebrated* composer in Europe!

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)**

* Mozart was a child prodigy born in Salzburg, Austria. He learned violin and keyboard as a toddler and was already composing by the age of five!!
* Mozart’s father, Leopold Mozart, brought his two children Wolfgang and Maria Anna on tours around Europe to show off the two child prodigies.
* Mozart composed his first symphony at age 8 and his first opera at age 14. He wasn’t even 16 when he composed *Exsultate Jubilate,* K.165 which is still widely performed today!
* He composed over 600 works, many of which are considered to be the pinnacle of the symphonic, chamber, choral and operatic repertoire. He is best known for his *Requiem*, and his very popular operas which continue to be performed today by every opera house in the world!
* Beethoven emulated Mozart in his earlier compositions and Haydn said of Mozart “posterity will not see such talent again in 100 years.”