

Week 6: Classical Composers

Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee

Text: Henry Van Dyke (1852–1933), 1907

- Son of a Presbyterian minister from Brooklyn known post-civil-war for anti-abolitionist writings
- Graduated from Princeton in 1873, then ordained there in 1877, returning to teach as Professor of English Literature on and off from 1899 to 1923
- He was succeeded as pastor of the Brick Presbyterian Church in New York City by Maltbie Babcock, author of “This Is My Father’s World”
- Friends with Woodrow Wilson, a Princeton classmate, who appointed him ambassador to the Netherlands and Luxembourg just before World War I
- Specifically wrote this text (titled “Hymn of Joy”) to accompany Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy” melody
- Van Dyke wrote this description of the hymn text:

These verses are simple expressions of common Christian feelings and desires in this present time — hymns of today that may be sung together by people who know the thought of the age, and are not afraid that any truth of science will destroy religion, or any revolution on earth overthrow the kingdom of heaven. Therefore this is a hymn of trust and joy and hope.

Tune: Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827), 1824

- Born in Bonn, Germany, following two generations of musicians, and demonstrated talent at an early age
- Hoping to replicate Mozart’s success as a child prodigy, his father pushed him in strict musical study and traveling performances
- Following the death of his mother at age 17 and his father’s fall into alcoholism, took responsibility of his two younger brothers
- Arranged to study with Joseph Haydn in Vienna in 1792; the two met when Haydn was en route to London
- Began to suffer from hearing loss in 1798, causing him to stop all public performing after 1811 until directing the premiere of his Ninth Symphony
- Best known for his piano sonatas, string quartets, orchestral concertos, and nine symphonies
- This tune was written to accompany Friedrich Schiller’s poem “Ode to Joy” which he wrote as a “celebration of the brotherhood of man”
- It was later adopted as the official anthem of the European Union

(Play recording from 2:40 to 5:31.)

1. How does the hymn text explore the idea of “joy” without being shallow or naive? What are some of the reasons it gives to be joyful?
 - a. Verse 3 explores some contrasting, paradoxical ideas that give the hymn meaningful depth:
 - i. Relationship between “giving” and “forgiving”
 - ii. Joy in both life and death
 - iii. God as both “father” and “brother”
 - b. Explores different reasons for joy:
 - i. God’s inward transformation, driving out doubt, sin, and sadness
 - ii. God’s wonderful creation reflecting God’s goodness
 - iii. Human love for one another inspired by God’s love for us
2. How well do the text and tune fit together, and why?
 - a. The meter 8.7.8.7D is similar to Common Meter Double, not infrequently used
 - i. Other famous texts in the same meter are “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing”, “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah”, “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”, etc.
 - b. The tied pickup into the third phrase is source of some debate - whether to remain true to Beethoven’s original version or “sanitize” it for easier congregational singing
 - c. Both Van Dyke’s “Joyful, Joyful” and Schiller’s “Ode to Joy” share similar themes which match the upbeat melody

I Vow To Thee, My Country

Text: Cecil Spring-Rice (1859–1918), 1908

- Born into an aristocratic family with a history of politicians and diplomats, educated at Eton and Oxford
- Worked at embassies in Japan, Germany, Persia, Egypt, and Russia, then ambassador to Sweden and US
- Became close friends with Teddy Roosevelt and was best man when Roosevelt remarried in 1886
- An amateur poet, translated numerous Persian poems into English, with a poetry collection published posthumously in 1922
- Originally wrote this text as a poem “Urbs Dei” (“The City of God”, also subtitled “The Two Fatherlands”), and substantially revised in 1918
- Sent the full text in a letter to William Jennings Bryan shortly before his death

Tune: Gustav Holst (1874–1934), 1914

- Born in England, his father was an organist and church choir director
- Interested in composition from an early age, studied at the Royal College of Music on scholarship, where he met fellow student and friend Ralph Vaughan Williams
- Best known for his large-scale orchestral works and music for wind band, as one of the first composers to write “serious” music for the ensemble
- Originally wrote this tune for his orchestral suite “The Planets”, in the central movement “Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity”
- Holst did not consider “The Planets” to be one of his finer works, and was somewhat disappointed to see it overshadow what he considered better pieces, though of the movements he considered “Saturn” his favorite
- He was not a fan of performances that only included some of the movements, and was particularly displeased at those ending with “Jupiter”, saying “in the real world the end is not happy at all”
- Adapted as a hymn tune for this text in 1921, suggested by Spring-Rice’s daughter, a student at St Paul’s Girls School where Holst was music director
- First published for voice with orchestra accompaniment, then later as a four-part hymn in *Songs of Praise* edited by Vaughan Williams in 1926
- Given the name THAXTED after the town where Holst and his wife had a cottage

(Play recording from 20:44 to 23:07.) ... 2:59 to 5:15

1. Rarely used outside of Great Britain, even there the hymn has fallen out of favor in some circles because of its equivalence between loyalty to nation and loyalty to God. Do you think this criticism is appropriate, and why or why not?
 - a. Rev. Dr. Gordon Giles, an Anglican vicar and editor of the *Ancient and Modern* hymnal, has written:

The notion of “vowing” everything to a country, including the sacrifice of one’s life for the glorification of nationhood, challenges sensibilities today. The idea relies on a dated military concept of fighting for “King and Country”... In post-colonial Britain, this comes across as patronising and unjust... Should we, undaunted, make the sacrifice of our sons and daughters, laying their lives on the altar in wars that we might struggle to call as holy or just?
 - b. Final line is a quote from Proverbs 3:17
 - c. The hymn was reportedly a favorite of Princess Diana’s
2. How well do the text and tune fit together, and why?
 - a. The meter for the text, 13.13.13D, is quite unusual, making it quite a coincidence that the “Jupiter” melody fit so easily
 - b. The melody is stately and compelling, not overly jubilant but not morose either: perfect for a serious hymn of devotion

Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken

Text: John Newton (1725–1807), 1779

- Son of a ship's captain, headed to sea with his father four years after the death of his mother at age 7
- Drafted into service in the Royal Navy at 18, unsuccessfully attempted to desert, then held captive in Africa by a slave trader
- Rescued in 1748 by a sea captain sent searching for him by his father, starting the beginnings of his conversion while returning to England
- Later married, became ordained in the Church of England, began to speak out against the slave trade
- Published *Olnay Hymns* in 1779 through collaboration with his friend and poet William Cowper
- This text was included in Book 1 of the collection ("On Select Texts of Scripture") and paired with Isaiah 33:20-21

Tune: Joseph Haydn (1732–1809), 1797

- Born in a small Austrian village near the Hungarian border, son of a wheelwright who was also an amateur musician and served as town mayor
- Sent at age 6 to live with a relative in a larger city in the hopes of receiving a proper musical education
- After early struggles to find employment, eventually obtained patronage from a string of Austrian aristocrats
- Best known for his instrumental music, particularly his symphonies and string quartets
- The tune was written as an unofficial Austrian national anthem with the lyrics "Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser" ("God Save Emperor Franz") inspired by the popularity of the English anthem "God Save the King"
- Its name AUSTRIA reflects these roots (sometimes also appears as AUSTRIAN HYMN)
- Incorporated into the second movement of Haydn's "Emperor" string quartet as a theme and variations
- Later used for the German nation anthem "Deutschland über alles", notably by the Nazi party during World War II

(Play recording from 4:10 to 5:30.)

1. Newton melds together a wide range of scriptural quotes and images to build up a picture of the New Jerusalem (Zion) as a metaphor for Christ's church. What references stick out to you, and what do they teach about the church?
 - a. Verse 1 opens with a quote from Psalm 87:3
 - b. Verse 2 mixes images from Exodus 17:1-7 with Psalm 46:4 and John 7:38
 - c. Verse 3 uses two stories from Exodus Exodus 13:21-22 (pillar of cloud/fire) and Exodus 16:14-16 (manna); see also Isaiah 4:5-6
 - d. Verse 4 "kings and priests to God" is from Revelation 1:6
2. How well do the text and tune fit together, and why?
 - a. Interestingly, the 8.7.8.7D meter is the same as "Joyful, Joyful"
 - i. The meter basically necessitates use of a double rhyme (two syllables) for odd-numbered lines
 - b. Greater harmonic motion gives the tune a naturally slower tempo than the driving beat of "Ode to Joy"
 - i. Helps make the text more calm and ponderous, appropriate for an idyllic picture of peace and sustenance
 - c. This text and tune were first paired in 1889
 - i. Recently, alternative tunes (such as ABBOT'S LEIGH) have been written to avoid the nationalistic associations with AUSTRIA