

Making Everything Easier!™

2nd Edition

# Classical Music

FOR  
**DUMMIES**<sup>®</sup>  
A Wiley Brand

## Learn to:

- Distinguish the different styles of classical music
- Explore composers, instruments, orchestras, concerts, recordings, and more
- Build a fabulous classical music library



Listen to audio tracks online

**David Pogue**

Conductor and *NY Times* columnist

**Scott Speck**

Composer and National Public Radio commentator





---

***Classical Music***

FOR  
**DUMMIES**<sup>®</sup>  
A Wiley Brand

***Second Edition***

**by David Pogue and Scott Speck**

FOR  
**DUMMIES**<sup>®</sup>  
A Wiley Brand

---

**Classical Music For Dummies®**, Second Edition

Published by: **John Wiley & Sons, Inc.**, 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774, [www.wiley.com](http://www.wiley.com)

Copyright © 2015 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey

Published simultaneously in Canada

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, except as permitted under Sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without the prior written permission of the Publisher. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions>.

Trademarks: Wiley, For Dummies, the Dummies Man logo, Dummies.com, Making Everything Easier, and related trade dress are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc., and may not be used without written permission. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

**LIMIT OF LIABILITY/DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTY: WHILE THE PUBLISHER AND AUTHOR HAVE USED THEIR BEST EFFORTS IN PREPARING THIS BOOK, THEY MAKE NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES WITH RESPECT TO THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS BOOK AND SPECIFICALLY DISCLAIM ANY IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. NO WARRANTY MAY BE CREATED OR EXTENDED BY SALES REPRESENTATIVES OR WRITTEN SALES MATERIALS. THE ADVICE AND STRATEGIES CONTAINED HEREIN MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR YOUR SITUATION. YOU SHOULD CONSULT WITH A PROFESSIONAL WHERE APPROPRIATE. NEITHER THE PUBLISHER NOR THE AUTHOR SHALL BE LIABLE FOR DAMAGES ARISING HEREFROM.**

For general information on our other products and services, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 877-762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3993, or fax 317-572-4002. For technical support, please visit [www.wiley.com/techsupport](http://www.wiley.com/techsupport).

Wiley publishes in a variety of print and electronic formats and by print-on-demand. Some material included with standard print versions of this book may not be included in e-books or in print-on-demand. If this book refers to media such as a CD or DVD that is not included in the version you purchased, you may download this material at <http://booksupport.wiley.com>. For more information about Wiley products, visit [www.wiley.com](http://www.wiley.com).

Library of Congress Control Number: 2015940310

ISBN 978-1-119-04975-3 (pbk); ISBN 978-1-119-04974-6 (ebk); ISBN 978-1-119-04972-2 (ebk)

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

---

# Contents at a Glance

.....

<b><i>Introduction</i></b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b><i>Part I: Getting Started with Classical Music</i></b> .....	<b>5</b>
Chapter 1: Prying Open the Classical Music Oyster.....	7
Chapter 2: The Entire History of Music in 80 Pages .....	13
Chapter 3: Knowing How to Spot a Sonata .....	91
<b><i>Part II: Listen Up!</i></b> .....	<b>111</b>
Chapter 4: Dave 'n' Scott's E-Z Concert Survival Guide™ .....	113
Chapter 5: For Your Listening Pleasure .....	137
Intermission: Taking a Backstage Tour.....	159
<b><i>Part III: A Field Guide to the Orchestra</i></b> .....	<b>177</b>
Chapter 6: Keyboards & Co. ....	179
Chapter 7: Strings Attached .....	191
Chapter 8: Gone with the Woodwinds .....	209
Chapter 9: The Top (and Bottom) Brass .....	223
Chapter 10: Percussion's Greatest Hits .....	235
<b><i>Part IV: Peeking into the Composer's Brain</i></b> .....	<b>247</b>
Chapter 11: The Dreaded Music Theory Chapter.....	249
Chapter 12: Once More, with Feeling: Tempo, Dynamics, and Orchestration.....	289
<b><i>Part V: The Part of Tens</i></b> .....	<b>297</b>
Chapter 13: The Ten Most Common Misconceptions about Classical Music.....	299
Chapter 14: The Ten Best Musical Terms for Cocktail Parties .....	305
Chapter 15: Ten Great Classical Music Jokes.....	311
Chapter 16: Ten Ways to Get More Music in Your Life.....	317
<b><i>Part VI: The Appendixes</i></b> .....	<b>325</b>
Appendix A: Starting a Classical Music Collection .....	327
Appendix B: Classical Music Timeline .....	333
Appendix C: Glossary .....	341
<b><i>Index</i></b> .....	<b>347</b>



---

# Table of Contents

.....

## ***Introduction* ..... 1**

About This Book .....	1
Foolish Assumptions .....	2
Icons Used in This Book .....	2
Beyond the Book .....	3
Where to Go from Here .....	4

## ***Part 1: Getting Started with Classical Music* ..... 5**

### **Chapter 1: Prying Open the Classical Music Oyster . . . . . 7**

Discovering What Classical Music Really Is .....	7
Figuring Out Whether You Like It .....	8
The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Composers .....	9
Their music is from the heart .....	9
They use a structure that you can feel .....	9
They're creative and original .....	10
They express a relevant human emotion .....	10
They keep your attention with variety and pacing .....	11
Their music is easy to remember .....	11
They move you with their creations .....	12

### **Chapter 2: The Entire History of Music in 80 Pages . . . . . 13**

Understanding How Classical Music Got Started .....	13
Chanting All Day: The Middle Ages .....	14
Gregorian chant .....	14
A monk named Guido .....	15
Mass dismissed! .....	15
Born Again: The Renaissance .....	16
The madrigal takes off .....	17
Opera hits prime time .....	17
Getting Emotional: The Baroque Era .....	17
Renegade notes on wheels .....	18
Kings, churches, and other high rollers .....	18
Antonio Vivaldi .....	19
George Frideric Handel .....	21
Johann Sebastian Bach .....	24

Tightening the Corset: The Classical Style.....	26
Joseph Haydn .....	26
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.....	29
Ludwig van Beethoven: The man who changed everything.....	33
Schubert and his Lieder .....	37
Felix Mendelssohn .....	40
Falling in Love: Hopeless Romantics.....	42
Carl Maria von Weber.....	43
Hector Berlioz .....	44
Frédéric Chopin .....	47
Robert Schumann .....	49
Johannes Brahms.....	51
The superstars: Paganini and Liszt .....	53
Liszt follows Paganini's lead.....	55
Richard Wagner.....	55
Strauss and Mahler .....	57
Saluting the Flag(s): Nationalism in Classical Music.....	61
Bedřich Smetana.....	62
Antonín Dvořák .....	63
Edvard Grieg.....	65
Jean Sibelius .....	66
Carl Nielsen.....	67
Glinka and the Mighty Fistful.....	69
Peter Tchaikovsky .....	71
Sergei Rachmaninoff.....	73
Listening to Music of the 20th Century and Beyond.....	75
Debussy and Ravel.....	75
Igor Stravinsky .....	78
Sergei Prokofiev .....	81
Dmitri Shostakovich .....	81
The Second Viennese School .....	83
The Americans .....	85

### **Chapter 3: Knowing How to Spot a Sonata . . . . . 91**

Symphonies .....	91
First movement: brisk and lively .....	92
Second movement: slow and lyrical.....	93
Third movement: dancy.....	93
Finale: rollicking.....	94
Sonatas and Sonatinas .....	95
Concertos .....	95
Concerto structure .....	96
The cadenza.....	97
Dances and Suites.....	98
Serenades and Divertimentos .....	100
Themes and Variations .....	101



Fantasias and Rhapsodies .....	101
Tone Poems (Or Symphonic Poems) .....	102
Lieder (And Follower) .....	103
Leader of the Lieder .....	103
Song forms .....	104
Oratorios and Other Choral Works .....	105
Operas, Operettas, and Arias .....	105
Overtures and Preludes .....	106
Ballets and Ballerinas .....	106
String Quartets and Other Motley Assortments .....	108
Why Do You Need a Form, Anyway? .....	109

## ***Part II: Listen Up!*..... 111**

### **Chapter 4: Dave 'n' Scott's E-Z Concert Survival Guide™ .....113**

Preparing — or Not .....	113
Knowing When to Arrive at the Concert.....	114
Can I Wear a Loincloth to The Rite of Spring? .....	115
The Gourmet Guide to Pre-Concert Dining .....	115
Figuring Out Where to Sit — and How to Get the Best Ticket Deals ....	116
To Clap or Not to Clap: That Is the Question.....	118
Why nobody claps .....	118
More on the insane “no-clap” policy .....	119
Who to Bring and Who to Leave at Home with the Dog.....	120
Recognizing Which Concerts to Attend — or Avoid — on a Date.....	121
Peeking at the Concert Program.....	122
The typical concert format.....	123
The music itself.....	125
A different kind of program .....	126
Introducing the Concertmaster .....	127
Finding the pitch.....	128
Twisting and turning, pulling and pushing.....	128
Enter the Conductor.....	130
Understanding interpretation .....	131
Slicing up time.....	133
Reading the job description .....	134

### **Chapter 5: For Your Listening Pleasure .....137**

1 Handel: Water Music Suite No. 2: Alla Hornpipe .....	138
2 Bach: Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 2:	
Prelude and Fugue in C Major .....	139
3 Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 22 in E-Flat, Third Movement.....	141
4 Beethoven: Symphony No. 5, First Movement .....	145

Exposition .....	145
Development .....	146
Recapitulation .....	147
Coda.....	148
5 Brahms: Symphony No. 4, Third Movement .....	148
6 Dvořák: Serenade for Strings, Fourth Movement .....	151
7 Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 6, Fourth Movement.....	152
8 Debussy: La Mer: Dialogue du Vent et de la Mer .....	154
9 Stravinsky: The Rite of Spring: Opening to the End of Jeu de Rapt.....	156
Introduction.....	157
Dances des adolescentes (Dances of the Adolescent Girls) .....	158
Jeu de rapt (Ritual of Abduction) .....	158
<b>Intermission: Taking a Backstage Tour .....</b>	<b>159</b>
Living in the Orchestral Fishpond.....	159
What I Did for Love.....	160
Going through an Audition.....	161
An almost-true story.....	161
Rigged auditions .....	162
The list.....	163
The prescription .....	163
Playing the odds.....	164
An unexpected meeting .....	164
The return.....	165
Onstage .....	166
Behind the screen.....	166
The wait.....	167
The aftermath.....	168
The Life of an Orchestra Musician, or What's Going on in the Practice Room? .....	169
Selling the Product .....	170
Understanding Contract Riders .....	172
Eyering the Strange and Perilous Relationship between an Orchestra and Its Conductor .....	173
Why an Orchestra Career Is Worth the Grief.....	176
<b>Part III: A Field Guide to the Orchestra.....</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>Chapter 6: Keyboards &amp; Co. ....</b>	<b>179</b>
The Piano.....	179
Looking inside the piano.....	179
Naming the notes .....	180
Finding an octave.....	181

Playing the black keys .....	181
Looking inside the piano.....	182
Pressing down the pedals.....	182
Hearing the piano.....	184
The Harpsichord.....	185
Winning the Baroque gold medal .....	185
Hearing the harpsichord.....	186
The Organ.....	187
Pulling out the stops.....	188
Hearing the organ .....	188
The Synthesizer .....	189
<b>Chapter 7: Strings Attached .....</b>	<b>191</b>
The Violin .....	192
Drawing the bow .....	193
Tuning up.....	193
Playing the violin .....	194
Vibrating the string.....	195
The unbearable lightness of bowing .....	195
Plucking the strings .....	196
Hearing the violin.....	197
The Other String Instruments .....	197
The viola .....	198
The cello.....	199
The double bass.....	201
The harp.....	203
The guitar.....	205
<b>Chapter 8: Gone with the Woodwinds .....</b>	<b>209</b>
The Flute.....	210
Making music out of thin air.....	211
Hearing the flute.....	211
The Piccolo.....	212
The Oboe .....	213
Playing the oboe .....	215
Hearing the oboe.....	215
The English Horn .....	216
The Clarinet.....	216
Transposing instruments.....	217
Hearing the clarinet .....	218
The Saxophone .....	219
The Bassoon.....	220



**Chapter 9: The Top (and Bottom) Brass . . . . .223**

Making a Sound on a Brass Instrument . . . . . 224

The French Horn . . . . . 225

    Hunting for notes: The natural horn . . . . . 225

    Adding valves: The modern, treacherous horn . . . . . 226

    Hearing the French horn . . . . . 227

The Trumpet . . . . . 227

    Tonguing . . . . . 228

    Using mutes . . . . . 229

    Hearing the trumpet . . . . . 229

The Trombone . . . . . 230

    Sliding around . . . . . 231

    Hearing the trombone . . . . . 232

The Tuba . . . . . 232

    A gaggle of tubas . . . . . 232

    Hearing the tuba . . . . . 233

Pet Peeves of the Brassily Inclined . . . . . 234

**Chapter 10: Percussion's Greatest Hits . . . . .235**

The Timpani . . . . . 236

    Drum roll, please! . . . . . 237

    Hearing the timpani . . . . . 238

The Bass Drum . . . . . 238

The Cymbals . . . . . 238

The Snare Drum . . . . . 239

The Xylophone . . . . . 240

Other Xylo-like Instruments . . . . . 241

More Neat Instruments Worth Banging . . . . . 241

    The triangle . . . . . 241

    The tambourine . . . . . 243

    The tam-tam and gong . . . . . 244

    The castanets . . . . . 244

    The whip . . . . . 245

    The cowbell . . . . . 245

    The ratchet . . . . . 246

***Part IV: Peeking into the Composer's Brain . . . . . 247***

**Chapter 11: The Dreaded Music Theory Chapter . . . . .249**

I've Got Rhythm: The Engine of Music . . . . . 250

    Dividing up time . . . . . 250

    Feeling the beat . . . . . 251

    Sight-reading for the first time . . . . . 252

Making notes longer .....	253
Making notes shorter .....	254
Adding a dot .....	255
Taking the final exam .....	256
Understanding Pitch: Beethoven at 5,000 rpm .....	258
Performing an experiment for the betterment of mankind .....	258
Focusing on 12 pitches.....	259
Notating pitches.....	260
Dave 'n' Scott's 99.9999% Key-Determining Method .....	269
Understanding why we have keys .....	270
Making the Leap into Intervals .....	271
The major second .....	271
The major third .....	272
The fourth.....	273
The fifth.....	274
The major sixth .....	274
The major seventh.....	275
The octave .....	275
Telling the difference: major and minor intervals .....	276
The minor second.....	276
The minor third.....	277
The minor fifth (not!) — aka the tritone .....	278
The minor sixth.....	278
The minor seventh.....	279
Getting on the Scale .....	280
Constructing a Melody.....	281
Getting Two-Dimensional: Piece and Harmony .....	282
Major, minor, and insignificant chords.....	283
Friends and relations: harmonic progressions .....	284
Friends, Romans, chord progressions .....	284
Listening to the oldies.....	285
Put in Blender, Mix Well .....	286
Getting Your Music Theory Degree.....	287

## **Chapter 12: Once More, with Feeling: Tempo, Dynamics, and Orchestration. . . . .289**

Meet the Dynamics Duo: Soft and Loud.....	290
Honey, I shrunk the LoudSoft™ .....	291
Wearing Italian hairpins.....	291
Getting into matters of sonic taste .....	292
Throwing Tempo Tantrums .....	293
Telling 'Bones from Heckelphones: Orchestration Made Easy .....	294
Playing with sound colors .....	294
Notating orchestrations.....	294
Who's the orchestrator? .....	294

**Part V: The Part of Tens ..... 297****Chapter 13: The Ten Most Common Misconceptions  
about Classical Music ..... 299**

Classical Music Is Boring .....	299
Classical Music Is for Snobs .....	300
All Modern Concert Music Is Hard to Listen to .....	300
They Don't Write Classical Music Anymore.....	301
You Have to Dress Up to Go to the Symphony.....	301
If You Haven't Heard of the Guest Artist, She Can't Be Any Good .....	301
Professional Musicians Have It Easy.....	302
The Best Seats Are Down Front .....	302
Clapping between Movements Is Illegal, Immoral, and Fattening.....	303
Classical Music Can't Change Your Life .....	303

**Chapter 14: The Ten Best Musical Terms for Cocktail Parties . . . . 305**

Atonal.....	306
Cadenza.....	306
Concerto .....	306
Counterpoint.....	307
Crescendo.....	307
Exposition.....	307
Intonation .....	307
Orchestration.....	307
Repertoire.....	308
Rubato.....	308
Tempo .....	308
Using Your New-Found Mastery .....	308

**Chapter 15: Ten Great Classical Music Jokes . . . . . 311**

Master of Them All .....	311
The Heavenly Philharmonic .....	311
Brass Dates.....	312
The Late Maestro.....	312
Basses Take a Breather.....	313
Houseless Violist .....	313
Ludwig's Grave.....	313
The Weeping Violist .....	314
Musicians' Revenge .....	314
One Last Viola Joke .....	314

---

<b>Chapter 16: Ten Ways to Get More Music in Your Life . . . . .</b>	<b>317</b>
Get Involved with Your Orchestra .....	317
Join a Classical Music Tour .....	318
Meet the Artists — Be a Groupie .....	318
Load Up on Free or Cheapo Recordings.....	319
Make Music Friends on the Internet .....	320
Join an Unlimited Music Service.....	320
Listen to Your Local Classical Station .....	321
Watch Classical Music Movies.....	322
Study Up on the Classics .....	323
Make Your Own Music .....	323
 <b>Part VI: The Appendixes .....</b>	 <b>325</b>
<b>Appendix A: Starting a Classical Music Collection . . . . .</b>	<b>327</b>
List 1: Old Favorites .....	327
List 2: MILD on the Taste Meter.....	328
List 3: MEDIUM on the Taste Meter.....	329
List 4: MEDIUM HOT on the Taste Meter.....	330
List 5: HOT on the Taste Meter.....	331
<b>Appendix B: Classical Music Timeline . . . . .</b>	<b>333</b>
<b>Appendix C: Glossary . . . . .</b>	<b>341</b>
 <b>Index.....</b>	 <b>347</b>





---

# Introduction

.....

**B**y opening this book, you've taken a flying leap into the frightening, mysterious, larger-than-life universe of classical music, where 100 people dressed like 18th-century waiters fill the stage, doing some very strange things to hunks of metal and wood, filling the air with strange and exotic sounds.

We can sense the hair beginning to rise on the back of your neck already. But don't be afraid; whether you know it or not, you've experienced classical music all your life — in movies and video games, on TV, on the radio, and in elevators everywhere. We're willing to wager that you already know more than you need to get started.

## *About This Book*

We know that you're a highly intelligent person. After all, you managed to select this book from among a whole shelf (or website) of highly qualified music books.

But in this vast, complex, information-overload society, you're expected to be fully conversant with 1,006,932,408.7 different subjects. (The .7 is for square dancing, which doesn't quite qualify as a complete subject.) So it's only natural that even the greatest genius doesn't know *everything*. It happens that you, O Reader, are still in the incipient stages of Classical Music Geniusdom.

That's why we use the words "For Dummies" with a twinkle in our eye. Truth be told, this book is for intelligent people who want to discover more about a new subject. And for us, it's a chance to share with you what we love.

If you've never touched an instrument or sung a song, *Classical Music For Dummies, Second Edition* can give you the basic understanding you need. If you want an easy-to-read reference when you hear a recording or attend a concert, this book provides it. If you want to get a thorough grounding in the subject, the book allows for that too. Even if you're already very well versed in classical music (and a surprising number of our readers are), you can discover something in each chapter to enhance your delight even further. This book is meant to meet you wherever you are and bring you to a new level. We've even been thrilled to discover that many *teachers* have used our book as a text in classes about music history, theory, composition, orchestration, or appreciation. Well, sure, that works too!

## Foolish Assumptions

We, your trusty authors, have made some mighty foolish assumptions about you.

- ✔ You have a healthy and active pulse.
- ✔ This pulse sometimes races when you hear a surging phrase of classical music, whether on a recording, in a movie or show, in a video, or in a TV commercial.
- ✔ You have a sneaking suspicion that a little more understanding of the music that makes your pulse race might add immeasurable joy and fulfillment to your life.
- ✔ You'd love to enhance that understanding with one lighthearted, breezy, easy-to-read resource.

If we're right about any of these things (and we're hardly every wrong), then this book is for you. It will deepen your understanding of music, make you comfortable discussing it, and help you understand its form. And although this book isn't a suitable alternative to a graduate degree in music, it's much more fun and costs about \$90,000 less.

Believe it or not, you have a great *advantage* over many of the world's classical music fanatics. You enter this amazing artistic realm unencumbered by preconditioning or music prejudice. You enter the concert hall with an open mind, a clean slate, and an empty canvas upon which the great composers can paint their emotional landscapes.

This situation is what many music aficionados often forget: In classical music, the intellect should take a back seat to emotion. More than many other arts, classical music is meant to appeal directly to the senses. In this book, we show you how to activate those senses — and unlock your capacity to experience one of life's greatest highs.

## Icons Used in This Book



Throughout the book, icons clue you in about certain topics. They indicate material in which you may be especially interested, or material you may be eager to skip. Let them be your guide.

This icon clues you in on a handy shortcut, technique, or suggestion that can help you get more out of your classical music life.



This icon alerts you to what we think are important pieces of information that you should stow away in your mind.



So that we don't fry your brain by surprise attack, we'll place this icon next to advanced topics and special terminology.



This icon marks an opportunity for you to get up, march over to a keyboard or a sound system, and run a little experiment in real life.



If you go online to [www.dummies.com/go/classicalmusic](http://www.dummies.com/go/classicalmusic), you can find nine excerpts from the greatest music in the world. Whenever we discuss one of them, this icon lets you know.



Music has been around longer than most countries. This icon alerts you to the beginnings of trends and rituals that are still around today. This information isn't essential to understanding classical music, but it sure is downright interesting.

## Beyond the Book

In addition to the very book you're holding in your eager little hands, we provide some delicious online goodies for your enjoyment. For example, take a look at the Cheat Sheet at [www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/classicalmusic](http://www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/classicalmusic). There you can find a quick description of the instruments and their locations in a typical symphony orchestra, as well as a timeline of classical music, for easy reference next time you attend a concert.

You also can discover more interesting bits and pieces of information online about how today's concert experience is changing, what it takes to send an orchestra on tour, great music of the 21st century, and more. Head to [www.dummies.com/extras/classicalmusic](http://www.dummies.com/extras/classicalmusic).

Best of all, we provide many, many musical examples, in the form of links to recordings online at [www.dummies.com/go/classicalmusic](http://www.dummies.com/go/classicalmusic). These recordings are your key to entering the world of classical music — a painless introduction to all different styles and time periods. As we describe some of the great masterpieces, you can actually listen to them right away. These recordings set *Classical Music For Dummies* apart from all the other books on the shelf.

## Where to Go from Here

We design this book so that you can start reading anywhere. But to help you figure out what might excite you the most, we give you six different areas to choose from:

- ✔ Part I introduces you to the world of classical music, including a brief history and descriptions of the common packages — such as *symphonies*, *string quartets*, and so on — that classical music comes in.
- ✔ Part II takes you into the concert hall to experience some real music-making, and then takes you on a backstage tour of the professional classical music world.
- ✔ Part III is a field guide to all the instruments that make up an orchestra.
- ✔ Part IV puts classical music under the microscope, explaining the creative little molecules that make it up.
- ✔ Parts V and VI take you even deeper into classical music and help you get more out of it.

You don't need to finish one part, or even one chapter, before starting another. Use the table of contents or the index as a starting point, if you want. Or, if you're in a romantic mood, turn on some sensual classics, cuddle up with a loved one, and start at the very front of the book. (You may want to skip the copyright page, however, because it can deflate that romantic mood rather quickly.)

## Part I

# Getting Started with Classical Music

getting started  
with

**Classical  
Music**



*For Dummies* can help you with lots of subjects. Check out this book's Cheat Sheet at [www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/classicalmusic](http://www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/classicalmusic) to discover more interesting information to make your classical music experience more worthwhile.

## *In this part . . .*

- ✓ Discover that you've been listening to classical music all your life — on elevators, in movies, in TV commercials, in video games, and just about everywhere else you want to be.
- ✓ Find out what separates mediocre music from mankind's greatest musical masterpieces.
- ✓ Explore the different packages that classical music comes in, from symphonies to sonatas.
- ✓ Meet all the lovable (and not-so-lovable) characters who collectively created the history of classical music.

---

## Chapter 1

# Prying Open the Classical Music Oyster

.....

### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Understanding what's so great about classical music
  - ▶ Identifying the seven habits of highly effective composers
  - ▶ Access the audio tracks at [www.dummies.com/go/classicalmusic](http://www.dummies.com/go/classicalmusic)
- .....

**T**he world of classical music is a place where idealism reigns, where good conquers evil and love conquers all, where you always get a second chance, where everything comes out right in the end, and where you can have your cake and eat it, too.

Classical music is one of the few living arts. It continues to exist by being constantly re-created, live, before an audience. Unlike the visual arts, classical music envelops you in real time and comes to life before you; unlike literature or theater, it can be understood equally by speakers of any language — or no language; and unlike dance, you don't need to look good in a leotard to perform it.

Classical music is a place to come to for pure enjoyment, for solace, for upliftment, for spiritual transcendence, and — if you follow our suggestions — for less than 25 bucks.

## *Discovering What Classical Music Really Is*

For the purposes of this book, *classical music* is the music composed in the Western Hemisphere during the past few hundred years (not including recent pop and folk music). It's the music generally composed for an orchestra or combination of orchestral instruments, keyboards, guitar, or voice.



Until very recently (at least in geological terms), people didn't make such big distinctions between "popular" and "classical" music. In the 1700s and 1800s, it was all just *music*, and people loved it. People would go to the latest performance of a symphony, concerto, song cycle, or opera just as you might go to a concert in an arena, stadium, club, coffeehouse, or bar today — to have fun! They were enticed by the prospect of seeing their favorite stars, schmoozing with their friends, and hearing their favorite tunes. They came in casual clothes; they brought along food and drink; they even cheered during the show if the spirit moved them. Classical music *was* pop music.

The fact is that classical music is just as entertaining as it ever was. But these days, it's become much less *familiar*. That's all. After you become familiar with this art form, it becomes amazingly entertaining.

## Figuring Out Whether You Like It

Not every piece of classical music will turn you on right away. And that's perfectly okay.

First of all, some pieces are, as we euphemistically say in the classical music biz, more "accessible" than others. That is, some have beautiful melodies that you can hum instantly, whereas others, on first listening, sound more like geese getting sucked through an airplane engine.

See what you like best at this very moment. There are no right or wrong answers; classical music is supposed to be fun to listen to. The trick is to find out what's most fun for you.



Play the first minute or so of each audio track at [www.dummies.com/go/classicalmusic](http://www.dummies.com/go/classicalmusic). Each is a musical masterpiece, each in a different musical style. The track list includes pieces from the Baroque style (roughly mid-1600s to mid-1700s), the Classical style (mid-1700s to early 1800s), early Romantic style (first half of the 1800s), late Romantic style (second half of the 1800s), and more modern, often deceptively chaotic-sounding style (20th century to the present).

Does one piece appeal to you more than all the others? If so, begin your exploration of classical music by delving into other works in that style or by that composer.

Or, if you love them all, fantastic! Our job just got a lot easier.



- [read The End of the Road pdf](#)
- [Alone Against Tomorrow: Stories of Alienation in Speculative Fiction pdf](#)
- [Katie, Batter Up! \(Cupcake Diaries, Book 5\) pdf, azw \(kindle\), epub, doc, mobi](#)
- [Trying Not to Try: The Art and Science of Spontaneity pdf, azw \(kindle\)](#)
- [read online A Geopolitics Of Academic Writing \(Pitt Comp Literacy Culture\) online](#)
  
- <http://thewun.org/?library/Alphabetical--How-Every-Letter-Tells-a-Story.pdf>
- <http://thewun.org/?library/Alone-Against-Tomorrow--Stories-of-Alienation-in-Speculative-Fiction.pdf>
- <http://honareavalmusic.com/?books/Ten-Nights--Dreams-and-Our-Cat-s-Grave.pdf>
- <http://twilightblogs.com/library/Trying-Not-to-Try--The-Art-and-Science-of-Spontaneity.pdf>
- <http://diy-chirol.com/lib/A-Geopolitics-Of-Academic-Writing--Pitt-Comp-Literacy-Culture-.pdf>