



STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Student Activities – Activity #1, Haydn's "Surprise" Symphony

- Read the background to Haydn's "Surprise" Symphony

Symphony No. 94 in G Major "Surprise" – II. Andante by Franz Joseph Haydn

Symphony No. 94 in G Major by Franz Joseph Haydn is known as his "Surprise" Symphony. It is known as the "Surprise" Symphony because of the startling loud chord that occurs in the 2nd movement! This loud chord occurs amongst very soft dynamics and seems out of place within the melody. Haydn was known to include musical jokes into his music, and this is a great example of that.

- Listen to the following excerpt and see if you can hear the surprise!
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VOLy6JxEDLw>



Activity #1, Haydn's "Surprise" Symphony

Most historians thought Haydn was upset at people falling asleep at his concerts. They initially thought he included the loud chord in this symphony to wake everyone up! However, this is not necessarily true. Haydn wanted to add this exciting element because he was competing for attention with his former student, Ignaz Pleyel. Haydn's biographer, George August Griesinger asked Haydn if the surprise was meant to wake the audience and Haydn responded: *"No, but I was interested in surprising the public with something new, and in making a brilliant debut, so that my student Pleyel, who was at that time engaged by an orchestra in London (in 1792) and whose concerts had opened a week before mine, should not outdo me. The first Allegro of my symphony had already met with countless Bravos, but the enthusiasm reached its highest peak at the Andante with the Drum Stroke. Encore! Encore! sounded in every throat, and Pleyel himself complimented me on my idea."*

- It is also rumored that Haydn wrote the opening melody as a variation on a song we all know...Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star!

Twinkle Twinkle Little Star

Twinkle, twin-kle, lit - tle star, how I won-der what you are!

5 Up a - bove the sky so high, like a dia-mond in the sky.

9 Twin-kle, twin-kle, lit - tle star, how I won - der what you are!



Now listen to the beginning of the Surprise Symphony excerpt again. Compare/Contrast the Surprise Symphony melody with the Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star melody. Can you hear the similarities? Explain.

Activity #2, Dynamics



Student Activities – Activity #2, Dynamics

Haydn makes great use of dynamics in his “Surprise” Symphony.

1. What are dynamics?

Listed below are the common dynamic markings used in music. Fill out the chart defining what these terms mean in English and what abbreviation is used in the music score.

Italian	English	Abbreviation
Fortissimo	a.	g.
Forte	b.	h.
Mezzo Forte	c.	i.
Mezzo Piano	d.	j.
Piano	e.	k.
Pianissimo	f.	l.

Activity #3, "Surprise" Symphony Score



Student Activities – Activity #3, "Surprise" Symphony Score

Look at the score for Haydn's "Surprise" Symphony
No. 94 in G Major (2nd mvmt.)

1. Which dynamic marking is found at the beginning of the piece?

2. Which dynamic marking does it change to in bar 9?

3. In which bar does the "surprise" occur?



Andante

Flauti

Oboi

Fagotti

Corni in [C Do]

Trombe in [C Do]

Timpani in [C G Do Sol]

Violino I

Violino II

Viola

Violoncello e Contrabasso

F1.

Oh.

Fg.

Cor.

Tr.

Timp.

VL. I

VL. II

Vla.

Vlc.

e. Cb.

Activity #3, "Surprise" Symphony Score



Student Activities – Activity #3, "Surprise" Symphony Score

Listen to the musical excerpt again and follow along in the score.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VOLy6JxEDLw>

4. Why do you think Haydn did this?

5. What effect did it have on you while you were listening? Did it startle you?

6. Does the "surprise" make the piece more exciting or less exciting? Why?

If possible, practice performing the famous violin melody on piano, bell set, or recorder! Practice performing with dynamic contrast.

Activity #4, Composition



Student Activities – Activity #4, Composition

BE THE AUTHOR!

Think about something that inspires you! On a separate sheet of paper, write your own story and think about/reference your source of inspiration. Be as creative as you want!

BE THE COMPOSER!

Create an 8 bar rhythm for your story. Add dynamics just as Haydn did with his Surprise Symphony! Complete the checklist below as you compose your rhythm.



Activity #4, Composition



CHECKLIST

- Complete eight 4/4 bars on the staff provided
- Use quarter notes and quarter rests (you may use eighth notes and rests if desired)
- Decide which percussion instruments and/or body percussion sounds (clap, snap, etc.) you would like to use for the performance
- Add dynamic contrast to your rhythmic composition
- Perform with dynamic contrast!
- Perform without dynamic contrast. Compare/contrast. Which performance did you like better?

