

# HEY KIDS, MEET GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

GERMAN BAROQUE ERA COMPOSER (1685-1759)



George Frideric Handel was born on February 23, 1685 in the North German province of Saxony, in the same year as Baroque composer Johann Sebastian Bach. George's father wanted him to be a lawyer, though music had captivated his attention. His mother, in contrast, supported his interest in music, and he was allowed to take keyboard and music composition lessons. His aunt gave him a harpsichord for his seventh birthday which Handel played whenever he had the chance.

In 1702 Handel followed his father's wishes and began his study of law at the University of Halle. After his father's death in the following year, he returned to music and accepted a position as the organist at the Protestant Cathedral. In the next year he moved to Hamburg and

accepted a position as a violinist and harpsichordist at the opera house. It was there that Handel's first operas were written and produced.

In 1710, Handel accepted the position of Kapellmeister to George, Elector of Hanover, who was soon to be King George I of Great Britain. In 1712 he settled in England where Queen Anne gave him a yearly income.

In the summer of 1717, Handel premiered one of his greatest works, *Water Music*, in a concert on the River Thames. The concert was performed by 50 musicians playing from a barge positioned closely to the royal barge from which the King listened. It was said that King George I enjoyed it so much that he requested the musicians to play the suite three times during the trip!

By 1740, Handel completed his most memorable work - the *Messiah*. It is said that when the king first heard the "Hallelujah Chorus" he rose to his feet. This tradition continues to this day.

On April 6, 1759 Handel conducted his last performance of the *Messiah* and returned home in poor health. He died on April 14, 1759 and was buried in Poet's Corner of Westminster Abbey in London, England. More than 3000 people attended his funeral.

# There's No Place Like Home

Classical composers come from all over the Western world. Salzburg, Austria hosts a week-long festival in honor of their most famous resident, Mozart. Verdi is a national hero in Italy, and Handel was given the great honor of a burial in England's Westminster Abbey. Complete the crisscross grid as you learn where some famous composers call home. (Use just the composer's last name in the grid.) And don't worry, you get to start from H-O-M-E.

## 4 letters

Bach (Germany)  
Ives (America)

## 5 letters

Beach (America)  
Bizet (France)  
Haydn (Austria)  
Still (America)  
Verdi (Italy)

## 6 letters

Bartók (Hungary)  
Dvořák (Czech Republic)  
Handel (Germany and England)  
Joplin (America)  
Larsen (America)  
Mahler (Czech Republic and Austria)  
Mozart (Austria)  
Wagner (Germany)



Vivaldi



Bach



Copland

## 7 letters

Berlioz (France)  
Britten (England)  
Copland (America)  
Debussy (France)  
Purcell (England)  
Strauss (Germany)  
Vivaldi (Italy)



Stravinsky

## 8 letters

Schubert (Austria)  
Schumann (Germany)



Beethoven

## 9 letters

Beethoven (Germany)  
Bernstein (America)

## 10 letters

Schoenberg (Germany)  
Stravinsky (Russia)



Bernstein



Schumann

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**Bonus Activity:** When you finish the grid, see if you can write down a composer from each of the following countries without looking at the list.

America \_\_\_\_\_

England \_\_\_\_\_

France \_\_\_\_\_

Germany or Austria \_\_\_\_\_

Italy \_\_\_\_\_