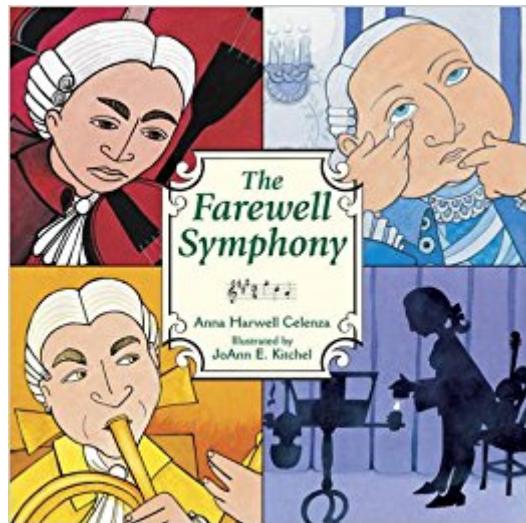


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# The Farewell Symphony



## **Synopsis**

Anna Harwell Celenza's engaging fictionalized telling of the story behind Franz Joseph Haydn's famous symphony is a perfect introduction to classical music and its power. THE FAREWELL SYMPHONY brings to life a long summer spent at EsterhÁfÁjza, the summer palace of Prince Nicholas of EsterhÁfÁjzy. The blustering, bellowing prince entertained hundreds of guests at his rural retreat and demanded music for every occasion. As the months passed, Haydn was kept very busy writing and performing music for parties, balls, dinners, and even walks in the gardens. His orchestra members became homesick and missed their families. The anger, frustration, and longing of the musicians is expressed beautifully in the symphony born of the clever mind of Joseph Haydn who used it to convince Prince Nicholas that it was time to go home. Wonderfully expressive illustrations by JoAnn E. Kitchel capture all the comedy and pathos of this unique symphony. Beautifully interpretive motifs and borders convey the setting and emotion of the story mirroring the structure of the symphony with the repetitive use of sets of four. Making classical music and history come alive with color and character, THE FAREWELL SYMPHONY ensures a place for the arts in the hearts and minds of children.

## **Book Information**

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Age Range: 6 - 9 years

Grade Level: 1 - 4

## **Customer Reviews**

In this intriguing history lesson for music lovers, Prince Nicholas of Austria forbids his musicians

from bringing their families to Estherh<sup>za</sup>, his summer palace in the Hungarian countryside. The court musicians under composer and royal music director Joseph Haydn's care grow increasingly homesick and restless, particularly when the prince extends his stay well into the autumn of 1772. "It will take a great deal of cleverness and tact to influence the prince," says Haydn. His solution: to compose a new symphony as a way of conveying the musicians' emotions to his employer. The real story behind Haydn's famous Symphony No. 45 (in F minor) traces the underlying moods that accompany each movement and ending with the musicians leaving the stage one by one. A will likely make attentive listeners of its readers, as they gain a newfound appreciation for music's simultaneous subtlety and power (a CD recording is included). And if Celenza tweaks history by investing the characters with thoughts and emotions of her own devising (e.g., upon hearing the "explosive chords" and "surging melodies" of the "angry" first movement, the prince senses "the musicians' frustration over having to remain at Esterh<sup>za</sup>"), her interpretation of the events is plausible. Kitchel's (The Heart of a Friendship) brightly bordered watercolors verge on the simplistic, particularly the cartoonish features of the characters, but include plenty of historical detail. Ages 4-9. (July) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Grade 2-4-Celenza's story is a delightful introduction to Joseph Haydn, his "Farewell Symphony," and 18th-century court life. The composer asks Prince Nicholas if the homesick musicians might invite their families to join them at the summer palace in Hungary, and the answer is an emphatic and angry no. When the stay extends into late fall, the musicians again appeal to their royal music director, this time to convince the prince to return to Austria. Since words again fail to persuade him, Haydn decides to try music. His Symphony in F-sharp minor reflects the musicians' anger, sadness, and frustration, and finally moves Nicholas to return home. Based on true events, the story is well told and suitably illustrated with striking watercolor-and-ink cartoons with simple lines and exaggerated characterizations that convincingly convey a sense of the excess and finery of the period. The white-wigged musicians are bathed in fiery crimson as they play the angry first movement and the tearful prince is covered in a wash of blue during the sorrowful second passage. There are notes on both 18th-century symphonic form and instruments as well as on the events and personalities in the story. An entertaining musical history and a well-produced package. Louise L. Sherman, Anna C. Scott School, Leonia, NJ Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This is a great book to have.

This the best book I found for reading aloud to my elementary class on Haydn. The story is engaging and more importantly based on documented facts. My kids always ask if the stories are true and so I try to find ones based more on fact than fiction. The CD was also a nice accompaniment to reading the book.

My 7 year old loved this book. We read it together, then he read it again on his own. The illustrations in the book are wonderful, it's written very well for a 1st grader+ level and the attached CD was a nice touch. I have to say though that if your child had little to no exposure to classical music, it may not be as interesting. With the right preparation, this is a wonderful book.

As a budding musicologist with a focus on Haydn, I bought this book as a way both of introducing what I am doing, and hopefully create a spark of interest in classical music, in the youngest members of my extended family. As a scholar, I am thoroughly impressed by Anna Harwell Celenza's work. The book really manages to capture Haydn's position at EsterhÁfÁjza, and her interpretation of the story and the symphony's musical content is as good as anyone's. At the end of the book there is a small text about the classical symphony, which is very nice, although it's instrument section does not mention flutes and timpani, which, to be sure, is not used in the Farewell symphony, but certainly were used often enough to warrant an inclusion even so. (Flutes are also featured in the second symphony on the following cd, no 31) English is not my main language, but I do consider myself to be sufficiently fluent to have a say on matters of language: It strikes me that this book perhaps uses language that may be a bit too lofty for 's recommended audience of 4-8 years; certainly the lower spectrum probably will not be able to properly grasp it. The following cd has a recording of the Farewell symphony, as well of the "Horn signal" symphony, no. 31. Both of these recordings are of solid quality, and certainly improves the value of the book for anyone who hasn't already got an exhaustive collection of Haydn's symphonies. A very minor point, however, is that the Horn Signal is put first on the cd. While this is stated on the front of the cd it is a counter-intuitive solution, and it is bound to happen that someone not familiar with the works will be puzzled by why the first movement of the Horn signal symphony is described as "angry". These are minor quibbles, though. If I am correct that the language used may be a bit too much for 's suggested age group, that shouldn't be a problem for most; children do, as we all know, have a tendency to grow. I highly recommend this book, then, for anyone wanting to expose their own or other's children to the world of classical music. The music of the Farewell symphony I would think is supremely appropriate for this: It is intense, but not overpowering, of appropriate length and

proportion, and is, finally, an acclaimed masterwork. And Celenza has certainly done a commendable job describing it for anyone not yet ready to take on James Webster's book on the subject. :)

I bought this for my six year old son. He liked the story. The CD he loved! He and my daughter danced to the music all morning. I look forward to reading the story over and over again for both of them

I do collect children's books and take into consideration the illustrations as well as the story. I rate this book excellent, the story is True, based on documented evidence. A CD is also included of the complete "The Farewell Symphony" and I replay it ad infinitum. Excellent investment in quality entertainment. The illustrations are delightful! Dorothy Hope

My mistake was I didn't make sure it was included in the book since it was a used purchase. Bummer.

Another in Celenza's fabulous series of famous composers and their works. We own the whole set. A wonderful classroom or family resource.

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