

Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is 200 years old

9th May 2024



Image: Public Domain

Beethoven's Ninth Symphony has been played in Vienna to mark the 200th anniversary of its first performance. The premiere of Beethoven's masterpiece took place at a theatre in Austria's capital city on the 7th of May, 1824. Vienna is the

city where the German composer lived and worked for much of his life. He composed many of his most famous works there. The anniversary performance earlier this week was conducted by the world-famous Italian conductor Riccardo Muti. A member of the choir told the BBC how happy she was to sing in the 200-year celebration. She said: "It's the whole world to us to be able to sing this wonderful message of love. You're lifted up...when you're singing."

The Ninth Symphony is believed to be one of the greatest pieces of music ever written. It is also one of the most played and most widely-recognized classical works. The symphony's final part – the fourth movement – is called Ode to Joy. This was revolutionary 200 years ago because it used solo voices and a choir. An adapted version of Ode to Joy is the anthem of the European Union. It is loved and played by orchestras worldwide. In Japan, it is sung each December by a choir of 10,000 singers. The Ode represents peace and international understanding. Heidrun Irene Mittermair, a singer in a Viennese choir, called Beethoven's Ninth, "a wonderful message of love". She added that it "moves from the darkness to the light".

Sources: [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com) / [dw.com](https://www.dw.com) / [theconversation.com](https://www.theconversation.com)

Writing

Classical music is the best thing to listen to. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

Beethoven / Vienna / premiere / masterpiece / composer / anniversary / conductor / music / classical / joy / choir / orchestra / singers / peace / love / darkness / light

True / False

- 1) A performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was played in Germany. T / F
- 2) The premiere of the Ninth Symphony was in 1824. T / F
- 3) Beethoven spent a long time living in Austria. T / F
- 4) A chorister was happy to be in the choir and sing a message of love. T / F
- 5) The article says the Ninth Symphony is the best piece of music ever. T / F
- 6) It was common to have choirs in classical music 200 years ago. T / F
- 7) An annual chorus of 10,000 singers sings Beethoven's Ninth in Japan. T / F
- 8) A singer in a choir said the Ninth Symphony was dark. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. mark | a. modified |
| 2. premiere | b. entire |
| 3. works | c. known |
| 4. whole | d. first night |
| 5. wonderful | e. last |
| 6. recognized | f. advances |
| 7. final | g. commemorate |
| 8. adapted | h. globally |
| 9. worldwide | i. compositions |
| 10. moves | j. marvellous |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What's the greatest piece of music ever written?
- c) What do you think of your country's national anthem?
- d) Would you like to see a choir of 10,000 singers?
- e) What song or music is a message of love for you?
- f) Is classical music the best thing to listen to?
- g) Are classical composers better than today's singer-songwriters?
- h) What questions would you like to ask an expert on Beethoven?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. mark the 200th anniversary of | a. music ever written |
| 2. The premiere of Beethoven's | b. of the European Union |
| 3. He composed many of his most | c. when you're singing |
| 4. sing this wonderful message | d. of 10,000 singers |
| 5. You're lifted up | e. of love |
| 6. one of the greatest pieces of | f. its first performance |
| 7. The symphony's final part – | g. international understanding |
| 8. Ode to Joy is the anthem | h. famous works there |
| 9. a choir | i. the fourth movement |
| 10. The Ode represents peace and | j. masterpiece |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you know about Beethoven?
- What do you know about Beethoven's Ninth Symphony?
- What do you think of classical music?
- Why is Beethoven's Ninth Symphony such a classic?
- Who is the greatest composer ever?
- What do you think of singing?
- What music lifts you up?
- How do you feel when you sing?

Spelling

- mark the 200th aivnsarnrey
- its first rrfeecmpoan
- The rmperiee of Beethoven's masterpiece
- Austria's pcaalit city
- the world-famous Italian tondrcruo
- sing in the 200-year cnaebrliet
- lasilcsca works
- This was yuatvlrrenoio 200 years ago
- played by rctehsaros worldwide
- The Ode perneesrst peace
- a singer in a Viennese rciho
- it moves from the arssnkde to the light

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. d	3. i	4. b	5. j
6. c	7. e	8. a	9. h	10. f

Role Play

Role A – Classical

You think classical is the best music genre. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their genre. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): opera, rap or electro.

Role B – Opera

You think opera is the best music genre. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their genre. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): classical, rap or electro.

Role C – Rap

You think rap is the best music genre. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their genre. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): opera, classical or electro.

Role D – Electro

You think electro is the best music genre. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their genre. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): opera, rap or classical.

Speaking – Music Genres

Rank these with your partner. Put the best genres at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-------------|-----------|
| • Classical | • Rap |
| • Opera | • Electro |
| • Ambient | • Pop |
| • Jazz | • Country |

Answers – True False

1	F	2	T	3	T	4	T	5	F	6	F	7	T	8	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.