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Hello there! Welcome to episode 12 of Busy Kids Love Music, an educational podcast for music-loving families. I'm Carly Seifert, the creator of Busy Kids Do Piano, and I'm so happy to have you here with me today. Our last episode -- episode 11 of Busy Kids Love Music -- was all about the symphony. We learned what a symphony is, the instruments that are in a symphony orchestra, and also about the symphonic form, which was developed by Franz Joseph Haydn, the Father of the Symphony. If you haven't had a chance to listen to episode 11 yet, I'll be sure to link to it in my show notes. While Haydn wrote over a hundred symphonies, there was one composer -- who wrote 9 groundbreaking symphonies that changed the world of classical music.

That composer was Ludwig Van Beethoven. In today's episode, we're going to take a deeper look at Beethoven's nine symphonies.

You're listening to Beethoven's very first symphony, which he finished writing when he was around 25-years-old. You might say that Beethoven was still finding his voice when he composed this symphony, which is influenced heavily by composers Mozart and Haydn -- who was actually one of Beethoven's music teachers. But you will begin to hear hints of the revolutionary Beethoven is to become in his later symphonies. Some trademark Beethoven moves, if you will, are quick volume changes, explosive energy and heavier use of wind instruments than was typical of the time. The performance of this symphony in Vienna sort of served as an announcement -- Beethoven is here and he is a composer to watch!

Beethoven's second symphony in D Major contains a bold, dramatic opening and fast and furious strings. During the composing of this symphony, he confessed to a friend that he was losing his hearing. In an unsent letter to his brothers he wrote that he was in despair over his hearing loss, saying, "I would have ended my life. Only my art held me back. It seemed to me impossible to leave the world

until I had produced all that I felt was within me." Despite his despair, this symphony seems to have a fun and humorous feel to it, leading us to wonder if composing musical comedy provided him with comfort during difficult times.

Beethoven's 3rd symphony, also known as the Eroica -- which is Italian for heroic -- is where Beethoven throws out the rulebook from the classical era of music and kicks off the Romantic period of music. Did you hear the CRASH at the opening? Beethoven isn't messing around. There is some rage in him, and he isn't afraid to let you know it. Beethoven originally dedicated this symphony to Napoleon, but when Napoleon declared himself emperor of the French, Beethoven angrily tore up the dedication page.

After the energy and grandiose of the "Eroica", you'll find that Beethoven's fourth symphony has more of a quiet, subdued mood to it. A wealthy count, who heard Beethoven's 2nd symphony, liked it so much that he told Beethoven he would pay a large amount of money for him to compose a symphony for him. This symphony tends to be the least-performed and least known of Beethoven's nine symphonies.

While you may not have recognized Beethoven's 4th Symphony, chances are you've heard his 5th symphony -- it is perhaps the best known classical piece of all time -- especially those first 8 notes! The opening notes of the symphony are used in the works of other composers and in pop culture. Beethoven supposedly told his assistant that the opening of the symphony is Fate knocking at the door. The remainder of the symphony sounds like a struggle that comes from those first 8 notes. The symphony starts in a minor key but ends in a major key, which gives it an ending that many describe as victorious or heroic. Many use the word heroic to describe this middle stage of Beethoven's career -- during which he composed the 5th symphony.

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As you listen to Beethoven's 6th symphony, do any images or feelings come into your mind? Beethoven titled this symphony not just "6th Symphony" but with the full title, "Pastoral Symphony, or Recollections of Country Life." This "Pastoral" symphony was declared by Beethoven to be an expression of nature. Here are some of the notes Beethoven wrote on the music of his symphony: "The hearers should be allowed to discover the situations." "Anyone who has an idea of country life can make out for himself the intentions of the composer without many titles." He named the movements of this symphony with very descriptive titles. The first movement was called, "Awakening of cheerful feelings upon arriving in the country." His second movement, called "Scene by the brook", includes famous bird calls -- the flute is a nightingale, an oboe is the quail, and two clarinets are the cuckoo.

You're listening now to the second movement from Beethoven's 7th Symphony. The debut concert of this symphony was a charity concert to benefit wounded soldiers, and it was one of Beethoven's most successful concerts. The second movement of the symphony -- the Allegretto -- was the most popular part of the symphony and is often performed separate from the rest of the symphony. Beethoven himself spoke fondly of this symphony as, "one of his best works." The piece is celebrated especially for its interesting and repetitive rhythms.

Beethoven had a trend of composing symphonies with even numbers in a more classical style, and his 8th symphony was no exception. The style of the work is very similar to Haydn's, and after the popularity of his 7th symphony, people were reportedly a bit disappointed by the 8th symphony. It's shorter, lighter and has a more humorous sound to it than the 7th. Though the symphony had a playful sound to it, his health was poor during this time of his life.

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At last we reach Beethoven's Ninth and final symphony. This symphony is considered by many to be Beethoven's greatest work and one of the greatest works in all of western music. Beethoven had long desired to set a poem called "Ode to Joy" to music, and found the opportunity to do so in this symphony. The words are sung during the fourth and final movement, which you are listening to now. This was the first time a famous composer used voices in a symphony. This symphony has been performed on many important occasions -- including opening ceremonies of many Olympic Games and the fall of the Berlin Wall in Germany. The words of the "Ode to Joy" poem celebrate freedom and say that "all men shall become brothers." The famous story is that as Beethoven conducted the symphony during its premiere performance, one of the vocalists of the symphony walked over and turned him around to accept the audience's thundering cheers and applause. Beethoven, who couldn't hear the applause, was at least able to see the standing ovations and the handkerchiefs and hats thrown in the air.

Be sure to download this episode's listening calendar at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/12 to hear different performances of Beethoven's 9 symphonies until our next episode of Busy Kids Love Music in 2 weeks. If you enjoyed this episode, be sure to rate and review our podcast, and thanks so much for joining me today to learn more about Beethoven's nine symphonies. I'll see you again in 2 weeks!