

**Chapter 18 Primary Source Activity**

The first outstanding composer of classical music in the Age of Reason (textbook page 464) was Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809) of Vienna. Like most artists and musicians, Haydn depended on wealthy patrons and for years was court composer for the Hungarian Prince Esterhazy. Even famous musicians were often treated like servants, as is clear in this letter from Haydn to the prince about two musicians who had been let go.

◆ *As you read, think about the class differences that existed in this period. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, answer the questions that follow.*

**A Court Musician's Problems***Your Serene Highness*

[Prince Esterhazy]

Your Illustrious and Serene Highness graciously gave me to understand, not long hence, that not only was the Rent Collector Frantz Nigst found superfluous [unnecessary] as a violinist, but also Joseph Dietzl as a member of the band; and moreover I was ordered to demand the two uniforms from the former. Concerning the former [Nigst], . . . I must respectfully persuade Your Highness, and admit myself candidly, that the second violin section in all the operas hitherto produced was, with him, in the best possible hands, because he is the only one capable of leading the seconds: therefore if he were dismissed, one would fear for the future on account of the mistakes which would creep in—that is, unless Your Highness were minded graciously to engage another permanent second violinist, or to have one come from Vienna when we produce operas. . . .

It is true that if the whole band goes to Esterhaz next year, he could not be in Esterhaz permanently on account of the rent office, but nevertheless it is my humble opinion that he should be brought to Esterhaz when the Imperial and Royal Court, or other high dignitaries, are present there. I humbly ask Your Highness, moreover, graciously to allow him the yearly 50 Gulden [as salary], and also the Winter and Summer clothes (in which he has already seen service in Esterhaz).

Joseph Dietzl is in my opinion especially necessary in the choir loft if the whole band goes off to Esterhaz. . . . I hear from many people that he cannot possibly support himself with his position as schoolmaster. I ask you humbly to grant him in your graciousness enough so that he can live.

In the next few days I will respectfully send Your Illustrious and Serene Highness some new trios, and I most humbly commend myself to your high favour and grace.

Your Illustrious and Serene Highness' most humble,

*Joseph Haydn*



ILLUSTRATION/PHOTO  
CREDIT: BETTMANN.

SOURCE:  
*The Collected Correspondence and London Notebooks of Joseph Haydn*, by H. C. Robbins Landon (Barrie and Rockliff, 1959).

**Questions to Think About**

1. What is Haydn's main reason for writing to the prince about these two musicians? How does Haydn try to change his mind?
2. What does Haydn ask the prince to give the violinist for his services?
3. **Drawing Conclusions** What does this letter show about the relationship between Haydn and Prince Esterhazy? Point out some phrases or examples.
4. **Activity** Listen to some music by Haydn, Mozart, or another composer of this period. Then make a poster advertising a concert of their works.