

Beethoven's Wig

PIANO • VOCAL

Sing Along Piano Classics *Richard Perlmutter*

Inspired and wildly imaginative, *Beethoven's Wig: Sing Along Piano Classics* are zany, stick-in-your-head lyrics set to some of the greatest masterpieces of classical music. Written by Richard Perlmutter, each piece is filled with fact and fancy about the world's most notable composers and their masterpieces, opening a door to serious music in a way that's fun. This collection contains all 13 songs from the fifth CD in the *Beethoven's Wig* series, the only CD exclusively devoted to works specifically composed for piano. The track numbers are provided on the first page of each piece. See page 80 for additional information on the CD. These recordings have won 48 awards, including four Grammy award nominations for Best Music Album for Children.

Title	Page	CD Tracks
Bang Bang Bang (Amiable Conversation)	66	12
I Can't Sleep (Brahms' Lullaby)	58	9
I Like Art (Promenade from <i>Pictures at an Exhibition</i>)	45	5
La De Da Sonata (Sonata in C Major)	19	1
Mary Go Round (Vivo)	60	10
Minuet for My Pet (Minuet in G)	48	6
Mozart Makes Kids Smart (Alla Turca)	50	7
My Little Chicken (Chopsticks)	32	3
A Piano Is Stuck in the Door (The Entertainer)	38	4
The Pony Express (Wild Rider)	56	8
Poor Uncle Joe (Funeral March)	28	2
S.O.S. (Langsam)	64	11
Voyage to the Moon (Claire de Lune)	70	13



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PUTTING ON THE WIG

Adding lyrics to classical music is like putting a wig on a full head of hair: neither the music nor the head needs what is being set on top.

I was well aware of this when, years ago, I wrote the opening words to my piece based on Ludwig van Beethoven's *Symphony No. 5*—"Beethoven's wig is very big!" I knew purists might criticize me for messing with the classics, but I was ready to take my licks.

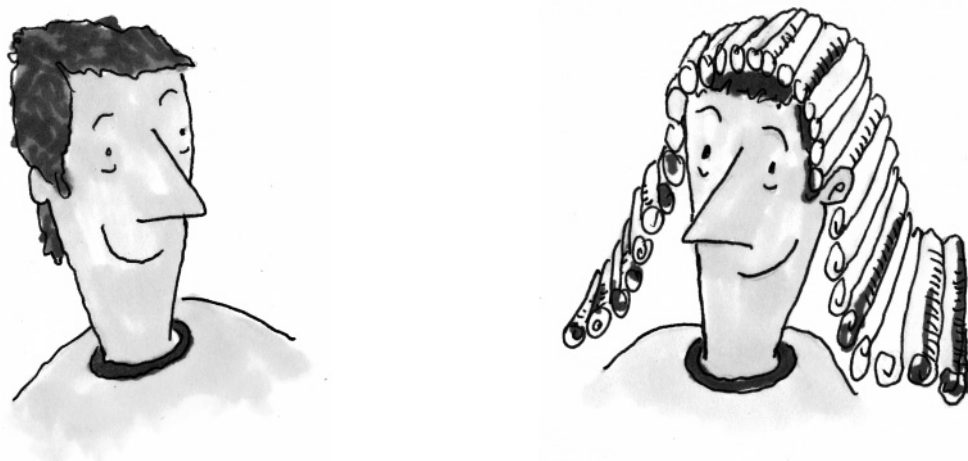
I had made a few CDs for children and thought that one with clever lyrics sung to famous classical pieces might be popular with both kids and adults. It might open a door for people who knew little about classical music. It would be educational and fun!

I also thought it was a pretty novel idea. At the time, I wasn't aware that Walter Damrosch, a conductor of the New York Philharmonic, had hosted a show from 1928–1942 on NBC radio called *The Music Appreciation Hour*. During the show, he sang lyrical snippets to help kids remember classical music themes and composers. One example is set to Franz Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony*: "This is the symphony that Schubert wrote but never finished."

Damrosch's show was very popular. It was broadcast in classrooms across the country, and student and teacher guides were available from the network to enhance instruction. An NBC brochure estimated that *The Music Appreciation Hour* was heard in 70,000 schools, with an audience of 6 million students and 3 to 4 million adults.

However, Damrosch did take some flak from music critics. Theodore Adorno, philosopher and musicologist, accused Damrosch's show of oversimplifying classical music. Harold Schonberg, music critic at the *New York Times*, ridiculed the classical jingles when he wrote, "Goodness knows how many potential music lovers were permanently maimed by this idiotic procedure."

But during the years the show aired, Damrosch's classical music lyrics caught on. There were music recognition contests in many states, and even a national competition in 1934, which was broadcast on NBC radio. Damrosch received thousands of fan letters and inspired others to try their hand at adding lyrics to classical works.



PROGRAM NOTES

La De Da Sonata

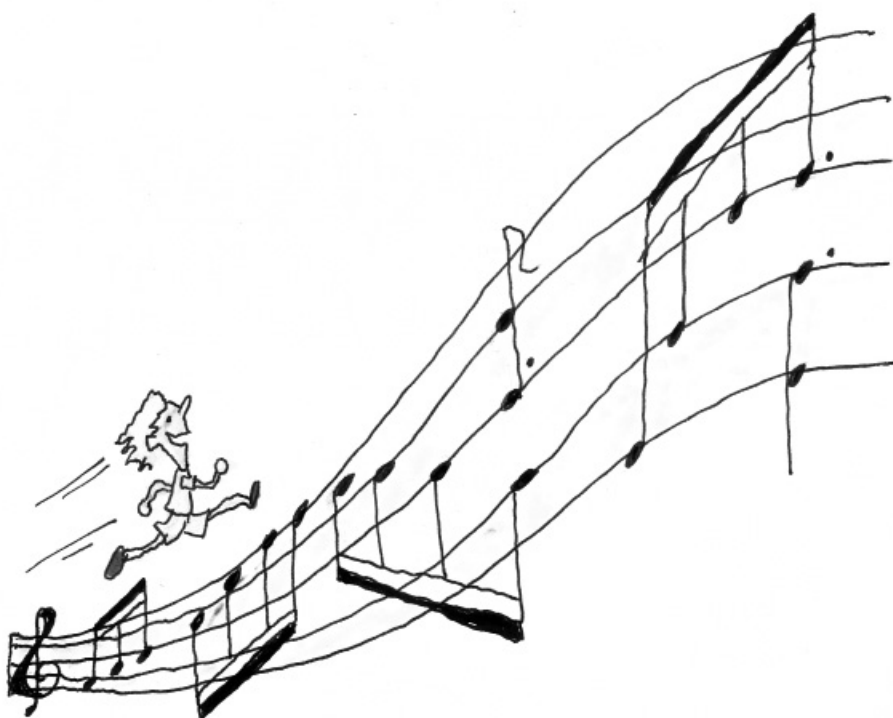
**Based on *Piano Sonata No. 15 in C Major*, K. 545—
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

This popular piano piece is the most well known of Mozart's sonatas. Sometimes called the "Sonata Facile" (easy sonata), Mozart considered it appropriate for beginners.

I began working on the lyrics to this piece with the intention of including it on the first *Beethoven's Wig* CD, and back then I wrote the words that accompany the first seven notes: "Mozart's Sonata in C." But once the piece progressed, there seemed to be no place to go. The whole sonata sounded to me like a series of exercises for piano students—first a trill, then some scales, then arpeggios. It didn't seem like the kind of thing to which I, or anyone else, would be singing along.

However, when I started working on this collection of piano pieces, I couldn't stop thinking about this sonata. One day, I was playing the piece and singing along, and I had started with the same words I'd come up with years earlier, "Mozart's Sonata in C." Then, as I kept playing, I found myself singing "starts with a short doodle, doodle, deedle, de" to complete the phrase. It was an inspiration; I realized that the series of piano exercise-like passages could also be a series of vocal exercises.

Once I got into it, I realized that, while this sonata may not be the most difficult piece to play, it is a doozy to sing! The melody covers a big range and the trills go way too fast. Do the math and you'll find that if you play Mozart's long trill at a pace of 108 beats per minute, you must produce 29 notes in two seconds! On the piano, you do this by alternating between two different notes; but, for the human voice, that's impossible. A trill of the tongue on one note has to suffice. Even that is not easy. Luckily, I was aware of the common notion that the tongue is the strongest muscle in the body, and that provides the fortitude to practice!



LA DE DA SONATA

Based on *Piano Sonata No. 15 in C Major*, K. 545

(First Movement)

Track 1



Music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Lyrics by Richard Perlmutter

Allegro

mp

Mo - zart's So - na - ta in C

mp dolce

p 5

3

starts with a short doo - dle doo - dle dee - dle dee.

p 5

5

Then there's a lot - ta la de da a lot - ta la de da da. Like it or not a lot - ta la de da da la de da da.

p

1 3 1 1 4 3 1 1 4

1 4