

# Classics for Kids



## Tritsch Tratsch Polka

**Johann Strauss Jr.**  
**Born: October 25, 1825**  
**Died: June 3, 1899**

Johann Strauss, Jr. was born in Vienna, Austria. He was the oldest of six children in a very musical family. His father, composer and conductor Johann Strauss Sr., was known throughout Europe for his dance music, particularly his waltzes. In fact, he was the person responsible for establishing the waltz tradition in Vienna.

Johann Sr. was passionate about his music, but he was even more passionate in his opinions as to what his children should do with their lives. He wanted Johann Jr. to become a banker, not a musician.

However, Johann Jr. had other ideas about his career, and, like his father, he loved music. His mother encouraged this interest and secretly arranged for her young son to study the violin while his father was away at concerts. Johann Jr. made his first attempt at writing a waltz when he was six years old.

In 1844, at age 19, Johann Jr. began conducting. For a time, he and his father had competing

orchestras. After Johann Sr. died in 1849, the two groups were combined under the son's leadership.

Johann Jr. wrote in all of the popular styles of his day, but he was most famous for his dance music—waltzes, polkas and quadrilles. Just like his father, he traveled everywhere with his orchestra. People all over the world loved to dance and listen to his tunes. The demand for appearances by the Strauss Orchestra was so great that Johann Jr. convinced his brothers Josef and Eduard to join the family business. The Strauss brothers eventually came to control all the music performed for balls, concerts and parties in Vienna.

Johann Strauss Jr. wrote his famous *Tritsch Tratsch Polka* during a trip to Russia in 1858. However, its title came from Strauss' hometown. That same year, a new magazine called *Tritsch Tratsch* was published in Vienna. It contained the work of several of the composer's friends and was described as a "humorous, satirical weekly publication." By using the same name for his polka, Strauss was telling his audience that it was a fun and amusing dance.

As you listen to this polka, imagine yourself dancing. Are you going fast or slow? Can you see yourself twirling around? Can you hear the laughter of the other dancers in the music?

### "Trisch-Tratsch"

Johann Strauss Jr. had a great sense of humor. He used the title "Tritsch Tratsch" to let the audience know that this music was to be fun and enjoyable. "Trisch Tratsch" often translates to "Chit Chat." Listen to the music, then write your own "Trisch Tratsch" about the music using the following two characters.

Kayla: \_\_\_\_\_

Jon: \_\_\_\_\_

Kayla: \_\_\_\_\_

Together they decided the music sounded like \_\_\_\_\_

ABA

ABA

ABA

## Name the Family

All instruments belong in a “family.” The four families of the orchestra are the string, brass, woodwind, and percussion. Please name the instruments below and connect them to the correct family name.



String



Brass



Woodwind



Percussion



### Did you know?

A polka is a lively dance in 2/4 time that originated in Bohemia in the 19th century.



### All in the Family

Do you play the same instrument that your mom or dad plays? Musical talent often runs in families. That’s how it was for Johann Strauss and his three sons - Johann Jr., Josef, and Eduard. Here are some other famous musicians from musical families. Look them up at [www.classicsforkids.com](http://www.classicsforkids.com).

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

George Gershwin (1898-1937)

Franz Josef Haydn (1736-1809)

Charles Ives (1874-1954)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)