



GREAT MUSIC THROUGH THE AGES

The Lives & Times of History's Greatest Composers



ROBERT RIENZO

MINDFUL@LIVING-A-MINDFUL-LIFE.COM

<https://www.living-a-mindful-life.com/>

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Classical Music Defined

Oddly enough, there is no standard definition as to what counts as classical music – you know it when you hear it. In this essay I have chosen to define classical music as comprising medieval sacred chant, renaissance sacred choral music, fully-composed baroque music excluding madrigals, and fully-composed music from the classical period through to today that utilizes instruments typically associated with classical music (strings (including guitar), wind, brass, and percussion including piano).

Classical Music – What Makes it Different?

It has been estimated that only about three percent of the population regularly listen to classical music, and even then, many of these do so on a 'greatest hits' basis only. In large part, this is surely due to the unique characteristics of classical music:

- Classical music functions as art and expects listeners to go beyond its surface of sound to explore its inner workings – the interplay of themes, the ambiguity of meaning, the changing musical patterns.
- It expects to have a listener's undivided attention and is meant to be actively listened to – its details and progression of musical material matter and rely upon and build upon each other. Like a good book, classical music tells a tale that reaches a logical conclusion based on all that has gone before it.
- While pop music usually has a catchy beat that makes you want to move and easy melody that just begs to be hummed and sung, it needs to be said that some of the greatest masterpieces of the classical music canon will never be mistaken for catchy tunes. Those composers recognized as among history's greatest are generally not those who possessed the greatest gift of melody or sensuous appeal, Beethoven being but one prominent example. In short, such music is unlikely to be appreciated in the absence of familiarity bred of repeated dedicated listening and cumulative experience with similar pieces. With much classical music, familiarity does not breed contempt – *it breeds appreciation through experience.*
- While pop music is usually of short duration with little variation between beginning, middle, and end, classical music is often of extended length with each section being important parts of the whole thus making for more demanding listening over an extended period of time.

"Where words leave off, music begins"

Heinrich Heine, German poet and writer (1797 – 1856)

Pop Music vs. Classical Music

Relative to classical music, pop music is generally characterized by:

- **Simpler harmonies than classical music.**
- **Typically of strophic form (i.e. the same verse is repeated + chorus)**
- **Repetitious harmony.**
- **Chords (multiple notes of different pitch sounded simultaneously) are mainly triads (i.e. three different notes sounded at the same time)**
- **Predictable chord progressions.**
- **Predominantly vocal.**
- **Of short duration.**
- **Same mood throughout.**
- **Typically not scored.**
- **Electronically amplified.**
- **Electronically enhanced or altered.**
- **Clear meaning. In contrast, the meaning of a classical music piece is more open to personal interpretation.**
- **Usually in the major scale (which tends to sound happier than the minor scale).**
- **Clear beat, usually via drums. Classical music rarely has any instrument play the beat, but the brain still senses one through the aural complexity.**

In the introduction to composer Aaron Copland's now-classic, "[What to Listen for in Music](#)", fellow composer William Schuman writes, "This book should help listeners who have a curiosity about more complicated forms of music. And make no mistake about it: great music is born of great effort by great and dedicated minds – *and by greatly devoted listeners.*"

And therein lies the popularity problem for classical music: unlike pop music, it *does* place demands on the listener, it *does* ask for their undivided attention to be fully appreciated, and it *does* necessitate active listening to make sense of it.

Just as literary classics reward careful reading and masterpieces of the visual arts reward careful study, music classics reward careful listening.

As in any field, full appreciation takes time, effort, and a modicum of education. Sadly, in our ultra-busy world, few individuals are inclined to devote the time necessary to sit still for an hour let alone educate themselves about the wonders that await in the classical music repertory – sadly, in my opinion – to their ultimate loss.

It is my hope that this essay will, in some small way, aid your studies of the vast classical music repertoire and thereby enhance your appreciation and lead to a lifetime of enjoyment of the wonderful, life-enhancing experiences that await you.

Music Basics

What is Music?

A standard dictionary definition would be something like “The art of combining sounds in an orderly manner so as to please the ear.” However, the phrase “please the ear” is simply too subjective to be useful – one person’s pleasing sound is another’s grating irritation.

Better, from the Oxford Dictionary, is “One of the fine arts concerned with the combination of sounds with a view to beauty of form and the expression of feeling.”

“My father (composer, [Malcolm Forsythe](#)) once said that if he could change or influence someone’s outlook or feelings, even for a minute, then he had succeeded in writing something worthwhile. The same is true for me with performing.”

[Amanda Forsyth](#), Canadian cellist

Beauty of form exists when we enjoy the relationship between what we are hearing now and what we heard seconds or minutes before – there is a logical flow to the sounds.

What elevates a Mozart or a Beethoven above any number of now long-forgotten composers is their mastery of musical form – their notes progress in a manner that seem inevitable, yet still manages to surprise and delight.

It has been said of both that altering a single note of their music serves only to weaken the composition – now that is testament to mastery of form!

In an amusing story I heard on CBC radio a few years ago a young pianist was performing a Beethoven piano sonata in competition and noticeably strayed from the printed notes. When asked why, he stated that he wanted to improve some of the passages. After a brief pause, one of the judges, a world-renowned musician, replied, “Young man, one does not improve Beethoven.”

One example I encountered is the 1997 composition, “Standing Stone”, a 75-minute tone poem by Sir Paul McCartney (a tone poem being a composition for orchestra that attempts to tell a story, in this case, in his own words, “to depict how Celtic man might have wondered about the origins of life and the mystery of human existence”).

Here are excerpts from two reviews at the time:

- *"Sir Paul has now taken the ultimate cultural leap with "Standing Stone", a 75-minute tone poem for orchestra and chorus. ... nowhere is it written that great pop stars make great classical composers. (And vice versa: Beethoven wrote lots of songs, all now forgotten.) This isn't classical music but pop in classical garb."*

Classical Notes (Peter Gutmann, 1997)

- *"How to sum up? It may be difficult to regard Standing Stone as anything other than a footnote to McCartney's 'popular' work, and one would have to stretch the definition of 'classical' music to include it."*

Gramophone magazine, November 1997

Having listened to a recording of this piece I found it to be full of lovely melodic ideas – Sir Paul's unquestioned gift – but, nonetheless, having an overall feel of being strung together in a manner that makes it all sound rather disjointed. It was as if Sir Paul was saying, "here is a good tune, and here is another", but without the benefit of equally good transitions from one to the other.

In addition, the ideas are permitted to play on well beyond their best-before date.

All in all, an interesting one-time listen but definitely not a piece I would want to hear again any time soon due, in large part, to a lack of logical, expert form.

The Science of Sound

Music is made up of tones of different frequencies. What do we mean by frequency? Sound travels in waves whose peaks and valleys can be physically viewed on an oscilloscope. What it shows is that low-pitched tones (i.e. low frequency tones) have a very long wave while high-pitched tones (i.e. high frequency tones) have a very short wave:

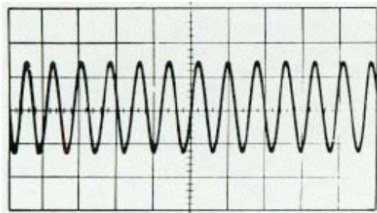


Fig 2 Oscilloscope displaying a pure high frequency tone.

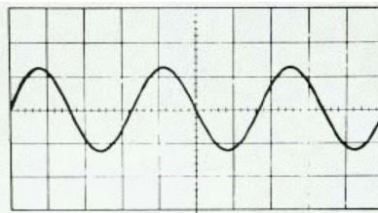


Fig 3 Oscilloscope displaying a pure low frequency tone (fewer waves – or cycles – per second).

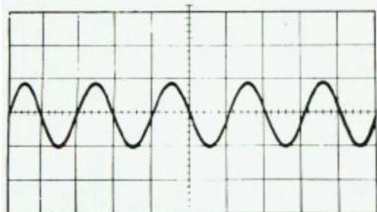


Fig 4 Oscilloscope displaying a pure tone at a given intensity.

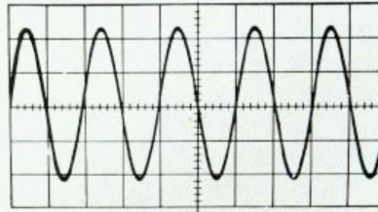
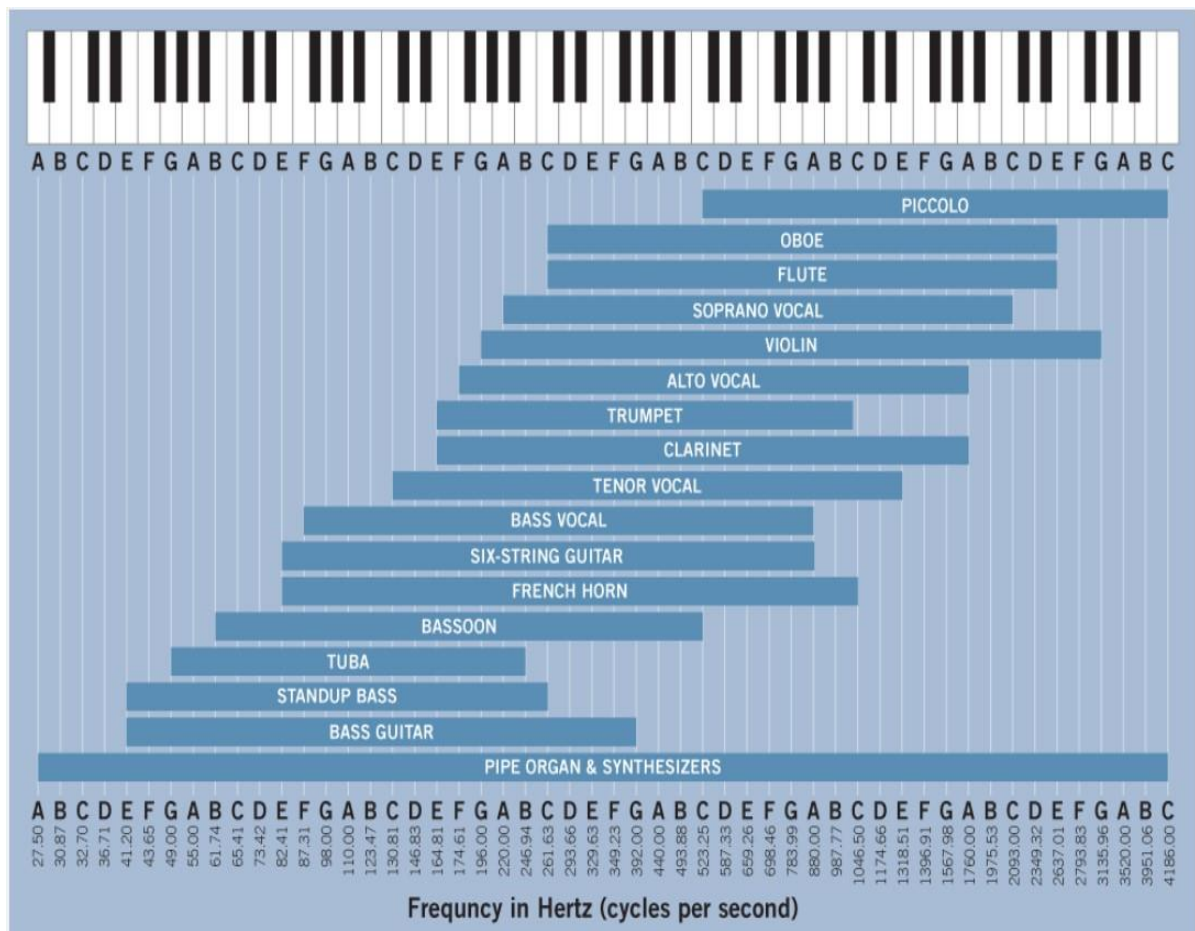


Fig 5 Oscilloscope displaying the same tone at increased intensity.

A common measure of pitch then is to count how many complete waves pass by a given point in a second. Here are some examples:

- Lowest note on an 88-key grand piano: 28 Hz or cycles/second
- Highest note on an 88-key grand piano: 4200 Hz
- Bass singer low note: 88 Hz
- Tenor "high C": 520 Hz
- Soprano high note: 1100 Hz
- Tuba low note: 40 Hz
- Flute high note: 2000 Hz
- Typical human hearing range: 16 Hz to 20,000 Hz
- "Musical" sound range: 28 Hz to 4200 Hz

And here is a graph showing the range of frequencies capable of being produced on a modern grand piano as well as on selected musical instruments and by the human voice:



Okay, you may be thinking, then why doesn't a piano playing a note at 500 Hz sound identical to an oboe playing the exact same frequency? And the reason is that instruments don't just play one frequency at a time. Instead, they simultaneously emit a slew of higher frequencies, each of decreasing intensity.

These are referred to as "overtones", or "harmonics", or "partials", as opposed to the main frequency known as the "fundamental". A piano and an oboe playing the same fundamental frequency sound different because they emit a different slew of overtones, and every instrument is unique in the overtones they emphasize.

Why can't a flute go down to 40 Hz like a tuba? Its cavity is too narrow and its length too short to accommodate the long waves of a low note. Why can't a tuba go up to 2000 Hz like a flute? Its tubing is too broad and its length, at roughly 25' when straightened out, is too long to accommodate the very short waves of a high note.

Below 28 Hz the waves are so slow that they tend to be heard as separate beats rather than as a continuous flow of sound. Above 4200 Hz the notes are so thin and piercing that they tend not to be perceived as musically pleasing.

As a result, symphony orchestras and classical music tends to be scored for notes that fall within the 28 Hz to 4200 Hz musical range and the instruments played cover this entire range giving composers the tools they need to produce all manner of musical sounds from high to low.

Basic Music Notation

Key

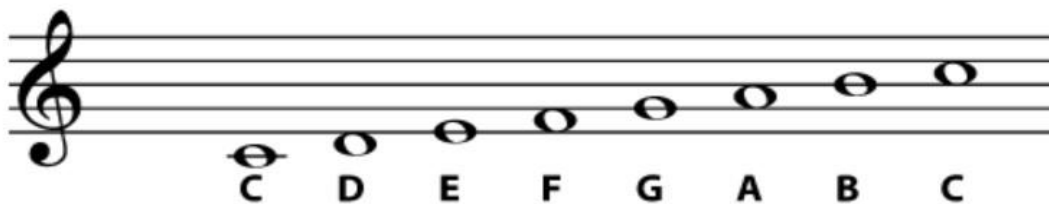
What does it mean to say that Beethoven's famous [Fifth Symphony](#) is in the Key of C Minor?

Traced back as far as 3000 B.C., western classical music is predominantly based on what is known as the heptatonic or seven-note scale designated by the letters A through G with each representing a unique frequency (hence, the famous Do-Re-Me-Fa-So-La-Te-Do, the last Do being eight notes (aka "octave") above the first Do.

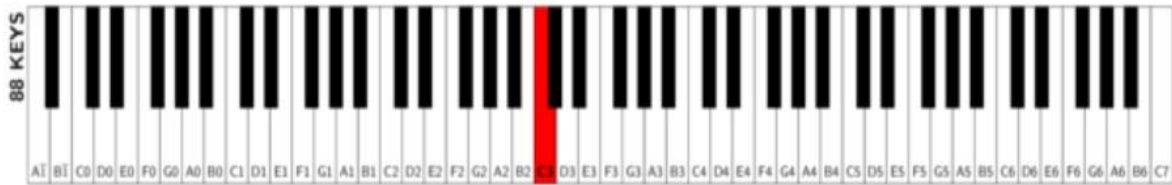
C Major Scale



<http://piano-music-theory.com>



On a grand piano with 88 keys (52 white + 36 black), starting from the lowest note on the left side of the keyboard all of the *white* keys are labeled A through G with this repeating to the very highest note, key #88 (C7, this being seven octaves above where we started). Going from left to right each successive key has a slightly higher frequency.

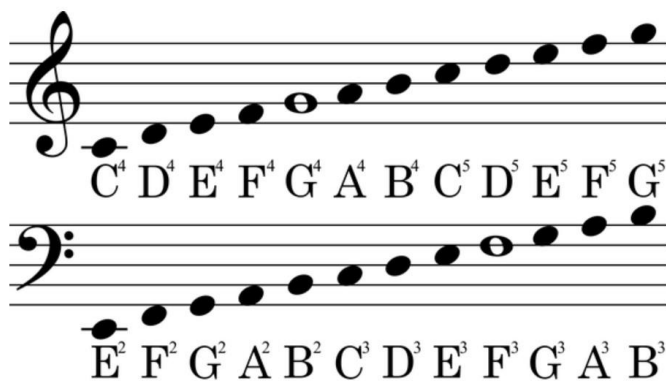


For example, Middle C (key #40 highlighted in red) sounds at 260 Hz. The white keys on either side of it sound at 247 Hz and 294 Hz, all the way up to 4200 Hz.

As an aside, much third-world music and pop/rock music follows what is known as the Pentatonic or five-note scale based on the five black keys on a piano. In this scale, what we call an octave then consists of five notes instead of seven and the octave spans six black keys instead of eight white keys.

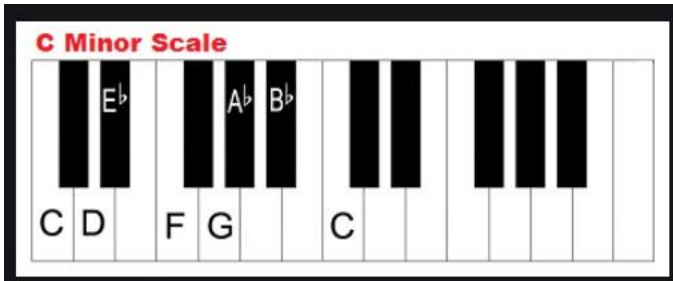
Referring to the chart below, we see that the Treble Clef, for higher-pitched music (330Hz – 690Hz), is a glorified G and is meant to show by the line on the staff it encircles which note is to be designated a G with all other notes falling into place from there.

A Bass Clef, for lower-pitched music (98Hz – 220Hz), is a glorified F and shows which line is to be designated F, again all other notes falling into place from there.



When music is said to be in a certain key (e.g. Beethoven's 5th symphony in C Minor) by convention this refers to the first note in a particular scale. A scale, such as the Minor scale, is simply a series of 7 pitches of increasing frequency (taken from the 12 pitch chromatic scale which counts both white and black keys) whose pitch differences are based on a pre-defined pattern.

Here, for example, is the [C-minor scale](#). As shown, it's first note is C. Subsequent notes included in this scale are, in turn, D, E-flat, F, G, A-flat, and B-flat. This pattern repeats for lower and higher octaves.



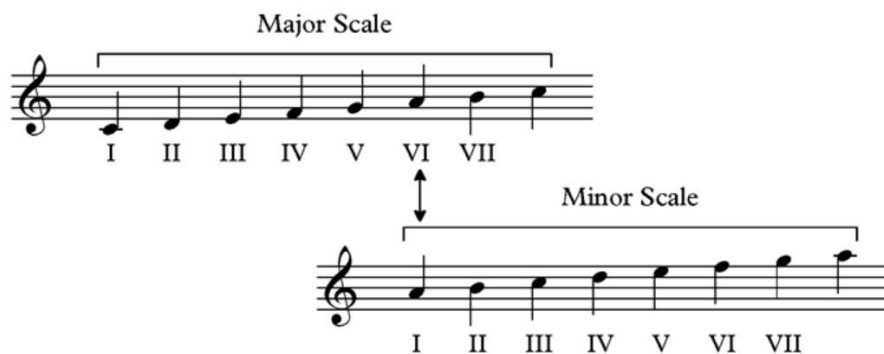
These scales, pre-defined patterns of tones, on which most classical music is based, were arrived at through centuries of trial and error. Ultimately, convention settled on those series of pitches that simply happen to sound good together to our human ear.

The tonal pattern for major and minor scales are:

Major: TTSTTTS Minor: TSTTSTT

Where T = a whole tone jump (i.e. the frequency difference between two white keys that are separated by a black key on a piano) and S = a semi-tone jump (i.e. a frequency difference between a white key and its adjacent black key or between two white keys not separated by a black key).

Here are the notes of the C-major and A-minor scales:



The Major scale is often said to produce a somewhat happy sound while the minor scale produces a somewhat serious sound. Beethoven's 5th Symphony in C Minor certainly produces some serious-sounding sounds!

Here are two Classical musical examples, both performed by pianist Maurizio Pollini:

- [Chopin Nocturne #11 in G-minor](#)
- [Chopin Nocturne #12 in G-major](#)

And here are two pop music examples featuring pop-legend, Michael Jackson:

- "[Beat It](#)" in E-flat minor
- "[The Girl is Mine](#)" in A-major (accompanied by Paul McCartney)

Since around 1600 A.D. convention has been that **most classical compositions linger in the specified key long enough to give the listener a sense of an aural home base** (i.e. the composer builds the composition uses notes almost exclusively from that particular scale). Musically, this gives our ears a sense of where are we starting from.

Of course, a composition of any length that remains in the same key risks becoming boring. So most music, after firmly creating in the listener's mind a firm sense of what the home base sounds like, sets off into other keys for variety, this process being referred to as 'modulation'.

The more notes in common between two keys the less striking the modulation; the fewer the notes in common the more striking the modulation.

When the composer has finally said all they wish to say and they want to bring the musical journey to an end, *most compositions ultimately return to the same key from which they started*, thus providing the listener with an aural sense of returning home, their listening journey satisfyingly concluded.

Notes

By their position on the staff, notes indicate the relative frequency of subsequent tones. By their type, they also indicate how long each tone is to sound relative to others.

For example, a quarter note sounds for $\frac{1}{4}$ the length of time as a whole note while a sixteenth note sounds for $\frac{1}{4}$ the length of time as a quarter note.

Time Signature

A time signature consists of two numbers, one above the other. The top one indicates how many beats there are to a bar while the bottom one indicates what type of note gets the beat.

Examples include a march in 2/4 time and a waltz in 3/4 time (e.g. Tennessee Waltz).

Here is an example of standard music notation, this from one of the many waltzes of Frederic Chopin, three beats to a bar based on quarter notes:

Waltz in A Minor

B 150

Frederic Chopin

Allegretto

The musical notation is presented in a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The time signature is 3/4. The piece is marked *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *Allegretto*. The first measure contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter rest. The second measure contains a quarter note B4, a quarter note C5, and a quarter note D5. The third measure contains a quarter note E5, a quarter note F5, and a quarter note G5. The fourth measure contains a quarter note A5, a quarter note B5, and a quarter note C6. The notation includes various musical symbols such as beams, slurs, and fingerings (1, 2, 3, 5, 2, 3, 1).

The Building Blocks of Music

Music consists of the following components: Melody, harmony, tempo, rhythm, and form.

Melody

Melody is a succession of tones making a pleasing sound. There's that subjective "pleasing" word again! But there are sounds that humans generally find pleasing and others that just don't sound right.

Early-stage contestants on the TV show, "American Idol" provided an abundance of examples. Our ears clearly pick up on the fact that many of the notes they are singing are "out of tune" and jarring to our ears.

What they are singing are notes that do not fall on our standard staff but rather somewhere in between the lines at a frequency that cannot be represented by standard music notation. It is a "sour" frequency to our ears.

For whatever reason, humans do tend to find some sounds pleasing and others harsh. It has been suggested that "sour" sounds were the sounds of danger to our ancient ancestors.

Composer, Igor Stravinsky, has this to say about melody: *"Melody is the most essential element, not because it is the easiest to perceive, but rather because it is the dominant voice of the symphony. However, if melody were all of music, what could we prize in the various forces that make up the immense work of Beethoven in which melody is surely the least."*

Harmony

Harmony is the simultaneous sounding of notes, one part being the main melody and the other(s) being accompaniment (e.g. singer and piano accompaniment). Without harmony a melody lacks depth, color, and richness.

As we will soon see, Renaissance polyphony and Baroque counterpoint both boast excellent examples of pieces where several melodies run simultaneously making for ingeniously-beautiful music, often of considerable complexity.

Tempo

Tempo is how fast the music is to be played, often denoted by Italian words such as Adagio (slow), Andante (moderate), Allegro (fast), and Presto (very fast).

Rhythm

Rhythm is the arrangement of long notes, short notes, long pauses, and short pauses that gives a piece of music its sense of motion. Changing the tempo does not alter the rhythm or the relative duration of the individual notes, it simply speeds the music up or slows it down.

For example, this short opening section from what is likely the most recognized piece in the classical music repertoire: Short Short Short Longgggg, Short Short Short Longgggg, this from [Beethoven's Fifth Symphony](#). This is written out musically as three eighth notes followed by a half note:

The image shows a musical score for the opening of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. It consists of five staves: Violins 1, Violins 2, Violas, Cellos, and Basses. The music is in 3/4 time and marked 'ff' (fortissimo). The rhythm is three eighth notes followed by a half note. The notes are G4, A4, B4, and C5. The score is written in a grand staff format with a common key signature of one flat (B-flat major or D minor).

Form

A composer typically does not create music by simply jotting down musical ideas in free-flowing form but, rather, follows tried and true standard musical forms that have been found to be pleasing to the ear.

On the issue of form Stravinsky said, "*Tonal elements become music only by being organized.*" Arnold Schoenberg added, "*In music there is no form without logic, and there is no logic without unity. The principle function of form is to advance our understanding. By producing comprehensibility, form produces beauty.*" And according to Ernst Toch, "*Form is the balance between tension and relaxation.*"

Examples of standard forms include:

Symphony – a large-scale composition for orchestra, typically consisting of four sections known as movements, usually of differing tempos (e.g. [Mozart's 40th symphony](#) – Molto allegro (very fast); Andante (moderate); Allegretto (a little slower than allegro); Allegro assai (rather fast)).

Concerto – a composition typically for one solo instrument and orchestra (e.g. a violin concerto), usually consisting of three sections whose tempos are fast, slow, fast. (e.g. [Max Bruch – Violin Concerto #1](#) – Allegro moderato (moderately fast); Adagio (slow); Allegro energico (energetically fast)).

Sonata form – consists of three sections, an initial musical statement, development of that statement, and a reprise of the initial statement but not verbatim.

Oratorio – a large-scale composition for vocal soloists, chorus, and orchestra usually based on Biblical events (e.g. [Handel's Messiah](#)).

Strophic – A A A A A All verses are set to the same music, sometimes with a refrain (i.e. a line of lyrics repeated at the end of each verse). Much popular music follows this pattern.

Theme & Variations – A A' A" A''' A'''' The initial theme (A) is repeated but in slightly altered form (A', A'', etc).

Binary (two-part) Form – A B Consists of two different sections of music (e.g. verse and chorus with the chorus being very similar to a refrain in the Strophic form). Also used in much of popular music.

Ternary Form – A B A The first and third parts are the same with a contrasting middle section.

Rondo – A B A C A D A E Repetition of the original material (A) separated by new material.

These and other standard forms tend to follow specific rules. They were derived through much trial and error in working out what sounds best. The Baroque period of J.S. Bach and his peers as well as the Classical period of Haydn and Mozart are particularly noted for their emphasis on correctness of form.

What sets the great composers apart from the also-rans, particularly in these two musical periods, is their ability to infuse these seemingly rigid musical straightjackets with wit, intelligence, creativity, and enchanting sonority.

As we will soon see, these strict rules of form began to be loosened during the Romantic period and certainly in the modern era, this to permit greater range of emotional expression.

The Ancient and Medieval Periods – 5 A.D to 1300 A.D.

The enormous expanse of time covered in this section reflects the reality of the times, this being the near-static nature of life. Your life would be expected to be little changed from that of your parents or grandparents. This obviously differs greatly from today's fast pace of change due in large part to rapid technological advancement. Music reproduction alone in my relatively brief lifetime has gone from LPs and spools of magnetic tape to 8-track to cassette to CD to iPod to wireless internet downloads.

5 A.D. – According to the Christian faith, Jesus Christ was born in 5 A.D. and crucified in 33 A.D. This story plays an important role in the history of our western classical music.

312 A.D. – the Roman emperor Constantine declares himself a Christian and in 352 A.D. mandates that Christianity is henceforth to be the official religion of the Roman empire.

Constantine builds a new capital and names it Constantinople (today's Istanbul, Turkey) which would eventually surpass Rome itself. By 1054 A.D. disagreements would lead to a split between the western church of Rome and the Eastern Orthodox tradition:

- WEST: Latin; church supreme over all aspects of life; clergy are celibate.
- EAST: Greek; Emperor is supreme over all aspects of life and is viewed as God's Viceroy on earth; clergy could marry; use of saintly icons. Russian Christianity adopts the Eastern tradition in 988 A.D.

400 A.D. – The Latin version of the Bible is completed, a document that will have immense impact on music for at least the next 1200 years.

476 A.D. – After a century of attacks by various barbarians (Huns, Visigoths, Vandals, Ostrogoths, etc.) and the loss of its vital African grain producing province to the Vandals, the last Roman emperor is deposed. Italy now looks to the emperor, now resident in Constantinople, as their leader.

596 A.D. – Pope Gregory the Great launches one of the greatest missionary initiatives of all time, sending St. Augustine to England to be the first Archbishop of Canterbury.

610 A.D. – According to the Islamic faith, the Koran is revealed to Muhammad who, through diplomacy and holy war, is said to have united the Arab peninsula. Within seventy years of his death in 632 the armies of Islam will conquer most of the old Roman empire and occupy present day Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Azerbaijan.

With 5000 miles of territory now under common control, free trade flourishes to a previously unprecedented extent. Coupled with agricultural advances (heavy plough, iron tools, efficient harnessing of animals, wind and water mills) population growth and the creation of major cities is made possible (Baghdad by 800 A.D. has a population of 2 million people).

800 A.D. – Charlemagne is crowned emperor by Pope Leo III in St. Peter’s Basilica and rules all of what is now western Europe.

976 A.D. – Construction of St. Mark’s Basilica in Venice begins but will not be complete for 118 years.

c1000 A.D. – The Vikings land in Labrador, Newfoundland, and New England. The population of the world is estimated at 600 million, up from 200 million at the beginning of the millennium but not even one-tenth of today’s estimated 8 billion. Life expectancy is around age 50. Society consists of those who fight, those who pray, and those who farm.

Civil war and Turkish attacks steadily weaken the Islamic empire. A re-conquest by European powers is begun epitomized by the First Crusade, launched by the Pope in 1095.

At a time when the largest libraries of Europe hold around 400 volumes, that of Islam in Cordoba, Spain holds 400,000 including translations of the Greek philosophers and scientists. The re-conquest would provide access to these treasures of knowledge, thus increasing the demand for education.

1054 A.D. – the Byzantine branch of Christianity separates from the Roman branch to become the Greek Orthodox rite. It assumes the Asian bias toward preservation of existing melodies without change. It therefore falls upon Western Christianity to develop, change, and with increasing sophistication, record the emergence of new music. Even today, religious music of the Eastern Orthodox tradition sounds much as it did centuries ago.

1100 A.D. – inspired by Charlemagne’s decree in 800 A.D. that every bishop provide elementary education to those who could benefit, the first universities in Europe appear. They offer training in medicine, law, theology, and philosophy. At that time philosophy was the equivalent of what we would today refer to as the sciences.

The Music of Ancient Times to 1300 A.D.

Discovered in France and dated to 13,000 years ago a stone carving appears to depict a man playing a tune on a bison horn. From 10,000 years ago we have a bone flute. Egyptian hieroglyphics dating from 3000 B.C. show string harps and various percussion instruments. From the dawn of our existence then, it appears mankind has created music.

In 540 B.C. Greece, Pythagoras uses strings of different lengths to define the relationship of different pitches (e.g. a 6-inch string when plucked sounds the same note as one that is 1 foot long but is one octave higher). String instruments from the violin, to the bass, to the harp as well as the piano are all based on this principle. For example, the highest note on a harp (at 3100 Hz) is produced by its shortest string, just 2.5 inches long while its lowest note (at 33 Hz) sounds on one some five feet long.

Greek and Asian music tradition being oral, not written, leaves no record of its musical accomplishments.

With Constantine's support, the subsequent spread of Christianity would almost single-handedly bring about the development of our Western classical music and would incorporate even older Jewish chant and Greek and Roman music tradition.

Why was Christianity's impact key to our classical music tradition? Simply put, in an age of mass illiteracy, educated clergy were among the only group capable of recording and protecting sacred music for posterity. Popular music from that era, with no such advocate, was lost to the dust of time.

600 A.D. – Pope Gregory oversees the assembly and documentation of an extensive collection of early church music, his name being immortalized through association with this body of work, posthumously referred to as Gregorian chant. Other forms of chant also existed at that time, their unique characteristics reflecting the influences and peculiarities of the regions in which they flourished.

Church music was monophonic choral music (i.e. just one note is heard at a time, no harmony), instrumental accompaniment having been banned by Church leaders due to its association with pagan Roman tradition. Music's role was to promote an ambience conducive for prayer and meditation of the glory of God.

The three types of texture differ sharply, even graphically.

a. Monophonic—Gregorian Chant

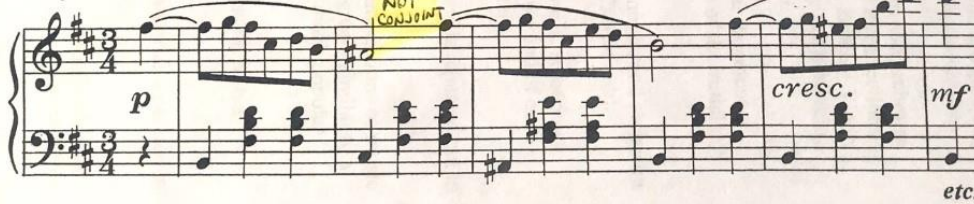
 = MELISMA



b. Polyphonic—Chorus from *Messiah*



c. Homophonic—Chopin Waltz



As our modern musical notation was to remain unknown until around 1600, oral history remained the dominant means of passing works on from one generation to the next.

Around 800 A.D. chant “tunes”, of which there are roughly 3000 known compositions, began to be documented with simple dots, referred to as “neumes”, that conveyed whether the music was rising or falling:



In 870 A.D. a monk in northern France, based on earlier prototypes, creates a system to indicate pitch, duration, and emphasis.

Music for the Christian church revolves around Mass, the re-enactment of the Last Supper of Jesus Christ, and consists of two types, one an invariable text in five sections referred to as the "Ordinary":

- Kyrie (*Lord Have Mercy*).
- Gloria (*Glory to God in the highest*)
- Credo (*I believe in one God, the Father almighty*)
- Sanctus (*Holy Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are filled with your glory*), and
- Agnus Dei (*Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, grant us peace*).

The other type, known as the "Proper", used variable text changing with the day or season of the Church year. This consisted of:

- Introit (for the ceremonial entrance of the clergy)
- Gradual
- Alleluia
- Offertory (sung during preparation of the bread and wine, these representing the body and blood of Jesus Christ)
- Communion (sung during the distribution of the bread and wine to the congregation).

Unlike later periods of music, little is known of the composers of medieval chant due, no doubt, to the fact that each toiled anonymously in the service of the Church, not for personal fame.

Chant is characterized by the following:

- 1) Monophonic – all of the performers are singing the exact same note at the exact same pitch. The simultaneous sounding of different pitches (known as a "chord") to create harmony was not used.
- 2) Melisma – the stretching of one syllable over many notes to create long, flowing melodies that float along peacefully and meditatively. Fast, bouncy, dance-like music is reserved for secular song, not religious ceremony. (**Glo-o-o-ria in excelsius De-e-e-o** (*Glory to God in the highest*))
- 3) Conjunct – subsequent notes are close in pitch to one another; there are no dramatic leaps up or down but rather small steps in pitch from one note to the next.
- 4) No beat – calm, smooth, soothing, and meditative was the ideal to be achieved. If your calling was drummer then your place in life was among the unemployed! 😊



Music Examples

(Wherever music examples are provided, click on the hyper-links to listen to the music)

- 1) **Gregorian chant:** There are three different Christmas masses celebrated by the Catholic Church – Christmas Eve, Christmas morning, and just before mid-day on Christmas day.
- 2) **Sarum chant:** This is a British Christmas Mass dating from 1256 representative of the Salisbury Rite (or ritual) that would have been performed after midnight on Christmas Eve and so appropriately named the 'Mass at Cock Crow'.
- 3) **Aquitaine chant:** This is a French Mass dating from around 1000 A.D. representative of the Aquitaine Rite and illustrating early polyphony (i.e. the use of harmony). Note the added richness and interest that harmony lends to a piece of music.
- 4) **Russian orthodox chant:** The unchanging nature of the orthodox tradition is demonstrated here by the fact that this piece was written by Sergei Rachmaninov, born 1873, roughly a millennium removed from the golden age of sacred chant.

The Renaissance – 1300 A.D. to 1600 A.D.

Renaissance, French for rebirth, is an apt description as the period 1300 to 1600 was exactly this; a rebirth of the arts and science, a recovery from the medieval Dark Ages where wave after wave of barbarian assaults had, in many areas of life, obliterated the cultural, technological, and social achievements of ancient Greece and the Roman Empire.

The fall of Constantinople, capital of the Byzantine Empire, in 1453 to the Turks brought many Greek scholars to Italy and beyond whose traditional focus on mankind rather than the otherworldly realm of religion had important influence on literature, philosophy, art, politics, science and religion.

For the first time artists sought to portray the human body realistically; philosophers sought answers through reason and rational thought rather than appeal to the supernatural.

The Renaissance is also the age of global discovery with all of the great sea-faring nations sending now-famous explorers around the world in search of territory and treasure.

Lastly, the first signs of challenge to the authority of the Roman Catholic Church are seen to emerge, where powerful rulers begin to supersede papal control.

Historical Highlights

1290 – Spectacles are invented in Italy.

1305 – The papacy moves from Rome to Avignon in southern France and soon leads to the great schism with two, and at one point three, simultaneous popes vying for control of the Roman Catholic church.

1342 to 1351 – Bubonic plague starts in Asia and moves on to devastate Europe. The Black Death kills one-third to one-half of the people of Europe whose population will not return to 1350 numbers for another 150 years.

1453 – Constantinople falls to the Muslims of Turkey. Suleiman the Magnificent cements his fame as a leader and warrior.

1455 – Gutenberg prints the first book in Europe using movable type. The first printed music appears in 1500.

1492 – Unlike Europeans, the Chinese and Islamic rulers of this period viewed the outside world with suspicion. It was left to little Portugal to launch the European age of discovery patiently exploring the west African coast. Diaz would round the Cape of Good Hope in 1487, Vasco Da Gama would reach India in 1488. By 1557 the Portuguese would have a trading base in Macau, China. Gold from Zambezi bought spices from the East Indies which paid for each expedition.

Spain, England, France, and Holland would copy Portugal's success. Columbus lands in the Bahamas "discovering" North America, yet spends the remainder of his life protesting that it was Asia, not America, he had reached.

By the 1500s Spanish conquistadors had laid waste to the ancient South American civilizations of the Incas, Aztecs, and Mayas.

1497 – Italian explorer Giovanni Caboto, anglicized to the more familiar 'John Cabot', reaches Newfoundland claiming it on behalf of King Henry VII of England. He reports schools of cod so plentiful they sometimes stop his ships.

1498 – Columbus discovers South America. The watch is invented in Germany.

Circa 1500 – The works of Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Donatello, Raphael, Botticelli, and Machiavelli are created.

1502 – The first printed publication featuring the music by a particular composer are published, this of the [Masses of the renowned Josquin des Pres](#).

1506 – Construction begins of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome with completion in 1626, capable of accommodating 60,000 people.

1509 – At the age of 18, Henry, Prince of Wales, succeeds his father as King Henry VIII and marries Catherine of Aragon, his brother's widow.

1516 – Coffee is introduced to Europe.

1517 – Martin Luther, an Augustinian monk, posts his 95 protestations against Catholic practices, one of which, the sale of forgiveness of sins in the afterlife in return for a fee, he found particularly disgraceful. His views are disseminated widely throughout Germany through the new technology of printed pamphlets.

Excommunicated for his views in 1520, his life is protected by the ruler of Saxony, his native state, thus pitting the German state against the papacy. The word "Protestant" first comes into use and by 1555 Germany is divided between Catholic and Protestant states.

Protestantism would have an important impact on classical music due to its foundation in the more guttural German language as opposed to the more flowing Italian.

1522 – Magellan’s shipmate, Del Cano, completes the first circumnavigation of the world, proving the earth is not flat. The astronomer Copernicus states that the Earth is not the center of the universe. The first atlas of the world is produced.

1534 – King Henry VIII of England, in a dispute with the Catholic church which refuses to annul his first marriage, declares himself ‘Head of the Church in England’ leading to the formation of the Anglican tradition. His 2nd marriage lasts just two years with Anne Boleyn executed in 1536.

Also in 1534, Jacques Cartier arrives in Quebec and claims the continent for King Francis I of France.

1543 – Portuguese traders arrive in Japan.

1555 – Tobacco is first introduced to America from Spain.

1558 – Queen Elizabeth I ascends to the throne of England and rules until her natural death in 1603. Sir Francis Drake, Sir Walter Raleigh, and the explorer Martin Frobisher all serve her majesty with distinction during her reign.

1565 – The lowly potato is introduced into Europe from South America.

1583 – The first known life insurance contract is written. *(With life expectancy at the time being just 55 years, the first life insurance advertising campaign touting Freedom 55 falls flat. Okay, yes, I’m kidding! 😊)*

1589 – Forks come into use for the first time, this in the French court. Galileo is appointed a professor of mathematics at the University of Pisa and will face the Inquisition in 1615 for his heresy about Earth’s position in the universe. Shakespeare writes Romeo & Juliet and Midsummer Night’s Dream.

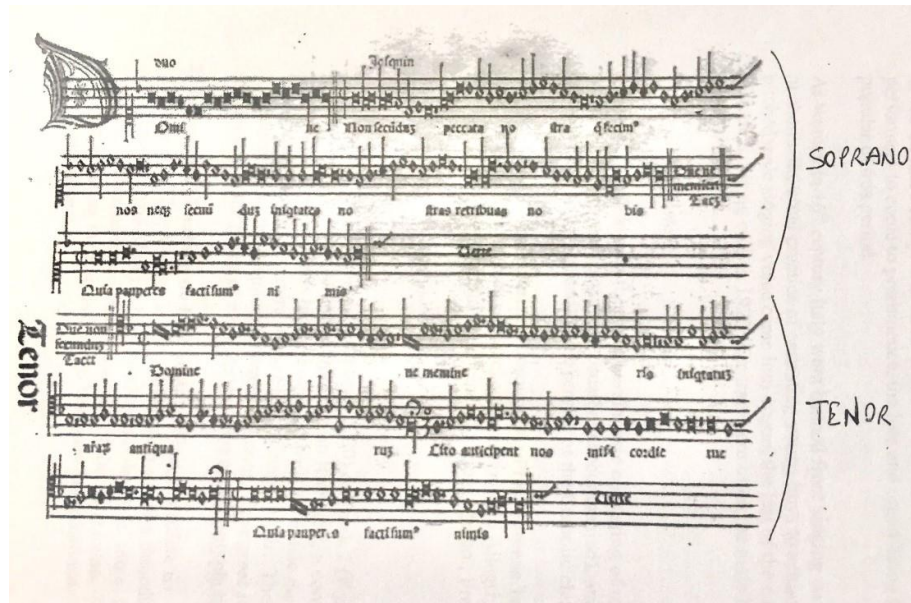
1596 – The first bathroom is installed, this at the Queen of England’s palace in Richmond.

1600 – The land mass of Russia is as large as the whole of Europe. Ruled by the autocratic tsar, Ivan the Terrible, in 1564 it is run as a gigantic royal domain with indentured serfs.

The Music of the Renaissance – 1300 A.D. to 1600 A.D.

The most impressive works continue to be unaccompanied choral music, primarily Masses created in the service of the Roman Catholic Church.

While monophonic chant continues to be composed, the distinguishing feature of the music of the Renaissance is a transition to polyphony, this being the combination of two or more melodies sung simultaneously resulting in harmonies of distinctive beauty.



The challenge for the composer of polyphony was to weave together these competing melodies, all being of equal importance, in a manner that avoids sonic clashes, known as dissonance. Think of the racket made by overlapping conversations in a busy restaurant – certainly not conducive to sacred services!

Intended for church services, music of this period is noted for its serenity, its beauty, and its near total lack of dissonance.

Instruments continue to be used primarily for secular (i.e. non-religious) music, but which ones is uncertain as music was not written specifically for a given instrument or groups of instruments. Popular songs were accompanied by whatever instruments were on hand or desired by the audience!

Instruments were grouped by loud and soft, loud being the horns and trumpets and soft being bowed vielles (the nasal, thin-sounding ancestor of today's violin), lute (related to the guitar), recorder, shawm (similar to today's oboe), and exchiquier (related to the harpsichord).

Instrumental music would remain subordinate to choral music until around 1500 A.D. Our violin, viola, cello, and double bass all make their first appearance during the 1500s, improvements on earlier prototypes.

From Germany, Protestantism would spread into France, the U.K., and the Netherlands. Based on the less-fluid Germanic language, music for the Protestant church became more syllabic than mellismatic (for example, it is much easier to stretch out the word "Attenzione" than "Achtung"), had sharper rhythms, clearer punctuation, and each note became significant. The long, smooth lines of Catholic music became much condensed in Protestant music.

1545-1563 – The Catholic Church convenes the Council of Trent to begin a Counter Reformation as an answer to the Protestant problem. One important outcome for music is the purging of choral music of excessive polyphony deemed to make the sacred words unintelligible. Also banned were distracting leaps in pitch. Of course, instrumental accompaniment continued to be banned other than church organs.

The period 1550 – 1600 produced the Golden Age of sacred polyphony with the Italian, Giovanni di Pierluigi de Palestrina, deemed by many to be this era's greatest composer. [His music](#) is typified by a serene, reserved smoothness of line with no large gaps between notes and a near complete lack of dissonance. Despite intricate layering of melodies, the sacred texts continue to be heard and understood as per the Council of Trent edict.

While Italy was the leader in sacred polyphony, other countries were also producing choral masterpieces. In Spain, [Tomas Luis de Victoria](#); the Netherlands, Josquin des Pres. England, [William Byrd](#) and [Thomas Tallis](#) (and the use of English in addition to Latin in church music).

In the late 1500s instrumental music became an independent art as a growing middle class created a demand for popular music to be played at home as their way of emulating the aristocracy. Printing presses permitted widespread distribution of printed music with notation gradually improving to record more complex music.

This was also the time for virtuoso performers to come to prominence, the lute and organ being the most popular of this period.

As women in 16th century Italy were banned from singing on stage or even in choirs, the cruel practice of castrating young boys to achieve a high-pitched male singing voice came into vogue, the last of the castrati, Moreschi, dying in 1922. Castrati were often the male heroes of many a Baroque opera.

Composers of Note

All are primarily known for their choral music consisting of masses, motets (choral setting of a religious text, usually unaccompanied), and requiems (choral tribute to a deceased) in the service of the Catholic church:

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina; Josquin Des Pres; Thomas Tallis; William Byrd; Orlando Lassus; Johannes Ockeghem; Gregorio Allegri; Tomas Luis de Victoria; Jacob Obrecht; Jean Richafort ; Alonso Lobo ; Frei Manuel Cardoso.

Music Examples

- 1) **Jean Richafort** – *Requiem*. Richaforte, born 1480, was a Franco-Flemish composer and a contemporary of the great Palestrina. His music was highly esteemed, becoming part of the standard repertoire of the Sistine Chapel choir. He wrote his Requiem in honor of the great Josquin Des Pres, one of the giants of early Renaissance choral polyphony.
- 2) **Giovanni di Pierluigi de Palestrina** – *Missa Benedicte Es* . Written in 1562, Palestrina's Missa Benedicte Es (Blessed are you Mass) is based on Josquin des Pres' motet Benedicte Es which, in turn, is based on a plainchant of the same name. It was very common during the Renaissance to base new compositions on those of other composers.
- 3) **William Byrd** – *O Lord, Make Thy Servant Elizabeth*. Born in 1543, English composer of sacred music for Anglican worship, William Byrd wrote this Anglican anthem in honor of his Queen, Elizabeth.
- 4) **Frei Manuel Cardoso** – *Requiem*. Born in 1566, Cardoso represents the epitome of the Portuguese school of polyphony that reached its peak well after the rest of Europe had moved on to the Baroque era. A member of the Carmelite order, Cardoso wrote in a style barely changed from that of Josquin des Pres some 100 years earlier.
- 5) **Gregorio Allegri** – *Miserere* (Track 1 – 12:30). Born in 1582, Gregorio Allegri attained immortality through this Miserere, a piece surely performed more often than any other Renaissance choral piece. The Papacy, knowing they had a hit on their hands, forbade any copies to leave the Sistine Chapel. This monopoly was broken only when Mozart attended a performance of the piece and proceeded to copy it out *from memory*, receiving a special accommodation from the Pope for this amazing feat.

The Baroque – 1600 A.D. to 1750 A.D.

Baroque is a Portuguese word meaning “irregular pearl” and was used pejoratively to describe the art, architecture, and music of the period because it was perceived at the time to be in poor taste relative to the clean lines and simple designs of the Renaissance.

The term today means ‘that which is perceived to be needlessly decorative and complicated’.

In a continuation from the Renaissance, rational thought and logic are given even greater preeminence, ultimately impacting the direction of music.

In the 1600s all European states recognized the existence of hereditary, land-owning nobility, roughly one-third of European territory falling under their direct control. In England, 400 noble families owned one-quarter of the entire country.

By the 1700s the privileges of the nobility were being actively challenged laying the foundations for the ideology of revolution – the overthrow of nobility – that would be unleashed during the Classical period.

Historical Highlights

1603 – The royal crowns of England and Scotland are united into one with the two countries formally uniting in 1707.

1607 – First permanent English settlement in North America at Jamestown, Virginia.

1608 – Champlain, on behalf of France, builds a settlement, Quebec, in New France. Their rule would endure until 1760 with the loss of territory to the British. Meanwhile, in London, the Royal Blackheath Golf Course is founded.

1609 – The telescope is invented by the Dutch.

1613 – Champlain explores the Ottawa River.

1616 – The great playwright, Shakespeare, dies.

1619 – William Harvey discovers the circulation of blood. His findings are disputed by many physicians of the time. Two of the cadavers he dissected were his father and sister.

1620 – The first weekly European newspaper is started in Amsterdam. Also in 1620 the Mayflower lands in New England at Plymouth Rock.

Period artists include Rembrandt, Rubens, Van Dyk, Bernini, Breugels, Velazquez, and Vermeer. Notable scientists include Bernoulli, Edmund Halley, Isaac Newton, Johannes Kepler, and Leeuwenhoek.

1626 – St. Peter's Basilica in Rome is completed having been started in 1506.

1636 – Harvard, the first university in North America, is founded.

1642 – Montreal is founded. Isaac Newton is born.

1643 – At age 5, the Sun King, Louis the XIV, takes over the reins of power in France. During his 70-year rule he spends massively on the arts culminating with the construction of his immense palace at Versailles.

1647 – The first newspaper ads appear.

1670 – Hudson's Bay Company is incorporated by royal charter to conduct trade in the area draining into Hudson's Bay. Minute hands appear on watches for the first time.

1684 – LaSalle explores the Mississippi and claims Louisiana for France. New Orleans is founded in 1718.

1700 – the eleven British colonies in North America are only two days' travel from untouched Indian territory. Boston, the largest town, has only 8000 people. With respect to household lighting, the average Briton consumed 580 lumen-hours/year from candles, wood, and oil. Today, using electric lights, he consumes 46 million lumen-hours/year.

1703 – Sir Isaac Newton is elected President of England's Royal Society.

1705 – Sir Edmund Halley correctly predicts the return, in 1758, of the comet now known as 'Halley's comet', having been previously seen in 1682.

1720 – Wallpaper becomes fashionable in England (*perhaps by no coincidence, there is a concomitant increase in the divorce rate. Okay, yes, I'm kidding again!* 😊)

Between 1720 and 1820 more than six-million Africans are transported for slavery, the British, French, and Portuguese handling 90% of the trade. It will take until the late 1700s for public opinion to turn against the practice.

1732 – Covent Garden opera house opens in London.

1742 – Swiss astronomer Anders Celsius invents the centigrade thermometer.

The Music of the Baroque – 1600 A.D. to 1750 A.D.

The music of the Baroque is typified by:

- Lively music with much emotional extravagance.
- Lots of notes in the written music, much busier than that of the Renaissance, as is evident below in J.S. Bach's Prelude No. 2 in C minor:

Prélude No. 2 in C Minor

from "Das Wohltemperierte Klavier" Book I
BWV 847

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685 - 1750)



- A motoric quality where the music seems to continually surge forward.
- Brilliant sounding.
- Logical musical forms that provide strict intellectual control of the music.
- The introduction of the soon-to-be-dominant Major and Minor scales in place of the old Church scales (that consisted of just the white keys on a piano).
- During both the Baroque and Classical periods the main structure followed was one of establishing a home key, moving away from that key for interest and tension, and then returning to the home key – a musical journey with a return home always the ultimate destination.

With the relative demise of the Church and its insistence on choral music only, instrumental and secular music soon eclipses religious choral music as the predominant format for composers.

Nonetheless, new choral formats such as opera, oratorio (large scale compositions for orchestra, soloists, and chorus usually based on religious texts), and cantata (shorter version of the oratorio) make their debut during the Baroque.

The chief patrons of music are nobles rather than the Church. Many aristocrats maintained their own court orchestras.

Opera of the period tends to be more showpieces for highlighting the talents of individual singers rather than attempts at serious drama.

The master violin makers Antonio Stradavari, Andrea Guarneri, and Nicolo Amati all come to renown during the late 1600s and early 1700s, some of their instruments today valued well over a million dollars.

The father of Galileo, Vincenzo, a member of an influential group of artists and amateur musicians who, under their host, Giovanni de Bardi, Count of Vernio, suggest improvements to the spectacular musical shows of the time known as Intermedii or interludes, often lasting several hours, consisting of songs, instrumental pieces, and ballets all set in lavish stage settings and typically used to celebrate a wedding or birthday. This group, known as the Camerata, suggested the show be centered on a story line rather than a series of unrelated sections.

This leads to what we now refer to as opera, the first to have survived being 'Euridice', by Jacopo Peri, composed for the wedding of Maria de Medici and Henry IV of France and first performed in October 1600. It consisted of recitatives (quasi spoken/sung pieces used for plot development), choruses, and instrumental links.

Popular musical forms of this period include:

- Concerto – a single instrumental soloist (violin in this era as the piano is not to be invented until the mid-1700s) plus orchestra and consisting of three parts – fast, slow, fast.
- Concerto grosso – two or more instrumental soloists plus orchestra, also in three parts, and sonata (consisting of four parts: slow-fast-slow-fast).
- Sonata – for solo instrument (e.g. Bach's unaccompanied [violin sonatas](#)); solo instrument plus accompaniment; or two solo instruments plus accompaniment (known as a trio sonata, this being the most popular form of chamber music during the Baroque, chamber music being music composed for a small group of instruments with no doubling of parts).

Baroque orchestras varied widely in both makeup and size but were much smaller than the orchestral forces of later eras, typically around 20 musicians. Often money and player availability were the key factors involved. Some Baroque composers did not even bother to stipulate which instruments or how many were required to perform their compositions!

Composers of Note

- **J.S. Bach** (Lutheran cantatas; masses including the great 'Mass in B Minor'; solo organ; solo piano; solo violin; solo cello; piano concertos; orchestral suites; Brandenburg concertos).
- **Antonio Vivaldi** (violin concertos including his most famous work, 'The Four Seasons'; wind concertos; cello concertos; sacred choral music; chamber music);
- **Arcangelo Corelli** (Concerti grossi).
- **George Friderick Handel** (opera; concerti grossi; oratorios including the 'Messiah'; organ concertos; 'Music for the Royal Fireworks'; 'Water Music'; solo piano suites; chamber music).
- **George Phillip Telemann** (wind concertos; 'Water Music'; chamber music)
- **Domenico Scarlatti** (keyboard sonatas)
- **Claudio Monteverdi** (opera ; sacred choral music including his famous 'Vespro della Beata Vergine'; madrigals)

Music Examples

- 1) **Antonio Vivaldi** – *Flute Concerto in G minor*. Commissioned by the Amsterdam publisher, Michel-Charles Le Cene in 1728, Vivaldi's flute concerti display the instantly enjoyable charm that have made him one of Classical music's favorite, if far from its greatest, composer.
- 2) **Tomaso Albinoni** – *Concerti a cinque, Opus 9, No. 3*. Born in 1671 to a wealthy paper merchant, Albinoni was one of the very few composers of his time who, as a result of being a man of independent means, did not seek out either a church post or a position in a noble court. While he wrote some fifty operas, he is today known almost exclusively for his amiable violin concerti. Part of Albinoni's work was lost in WW II with the destruction of the Dresden library leaving little known about his life or compositions after 1725.
- 3) **George Frideric Handel** – *Messiah (For Unto Us a Child is Born)*. The Messiah is Handel's supreme achievement and an oratorio without rival. Invited by the City of Dublin in 1741 to direct one of his compositions for charity, Handel decided to write a new composition for the occasion, an oratorio based on the life of Jesus from his birth, through his crucifixion, and finally to his resurrection. Often going without food or sleep, the huge score took him only 25 days to complete,. When he completed the Hallelujah Chorus he told his servant, "I did think I did see all Heaven before me and the great God Himself" and when his task was finally completed he stated, "I think God has visited me." Long before the day of the concert all seats in the music hall were sold out.

At its London premiere in 1743 none other than King George II was in attendance. So moved was he by the Hallelujah chorus that he rose involuntarily and stood through to its completion. Seeing their king standing, the audience also rose to its feet thus starting a tradition that continues to this day.

- 4) **J.S. Bach** – *Cello Suite No. 1*. Between 1717 and 1723 Bach created six of the greatest pieces of music for cello ever conceived, all the more miraculous given the low esteem in which the cello was held at that time, it being used mainly for accompaniment. The renowned cellist, Mstislav Rostropovich, claimed he would play one movement from the Cello Suites every day.
- 5) **J.S. Bach** – *Tocatta & Fugue in D minor*. Bach's Tocatta & Fugue is surely the best-known of all organ works.
- 6) **Jan Dismas Zelenka** – *Sinfonia for 8 instruments*. Born 1679 in Prague, Czechoslovakia (in what was then Bohemia), Zelenka, was recognized as an excellent composer by none other than J.S. Bach. However, like Bach, Zelenka failed to secure senior positions and so toiled under others of no greater skills (i.e. Johann David Heinichen, Johann Adolf Hasse). While mainly a composer of sacred choral music, his orchestral music was unusually virtuosic and demanding for its time.

The Classical Period – 1750 to 1820 A.D.

The overthrow of nobility takes centre stage with revolutions occurring in Hungary, Russia, France (1789), the U.S. (1776), the Netherlands (1788), Belgium (1789), and Switzerland (1780).

By 1800 a legally-defined group of burghers (bourgeois) consisting of traders, professions, and industrialists outnumber the nobles and stand against noble privilege.

In the late 1700s England becomes the home of the Industrial Revolution bringing technological innovation to bear on the production of coal and iron as well as the uses of steam power. By 1830 England produces more iron than the rest of Europe and the U.S. combined.

Historical Highlights

1751 – The first English newspaper in Canada, the Halifax Gazette, makes its appearance.

1752 – Benjamin Franklin invents the lightning rod, their first installations on buildings occurring in 1769.

1760 – New France (Quebec) is taken over by the British followed shortly by the Treaty of Paris that transfers most of France's holding in North America to Britain.

1762 – Jean Jacques Rousseau publishes "The Social Contract" that argues the only legitimate governments are those subject to the will of the people. He was ordered arrested and fled to Switzerland. In similar fashion, Voltaire also attracted ire for mocking the privileges of the aristocracy

1768 – The first of 100 weekly publications appears as part of the Encyclopedia Britannica.

1770 – The steam engine and water-powered spinning wheel are invented that, coupled with the rule of law and international free trade, contribute to the Industrial Revolution in England that slowly spreads to much of the developed world.

1775 – The American Revolution against an over-bearing England begins. General George Washington lead the American continental army.

1776 – On the 4th of July 1776 the American Declaration of Independence from Britain is proclaimed by Congress. Thomas Jefferson embodies the ideals of the new country when he pens the words "That all men are created equal ..."

- 1777 – The chemist, Lavoisier, proves that air is composed mainly of oxygen and nitrogen. He is later executed during the French Reign of Terror in 1794 as punishment for having formerly been part-owner of a tax collection business.
- 1786 – American inventor, James Rumsey, designs the first mechanically-driven boat. Internal lighting of homes by gas makes its first appearance (in England and Germany). Newspapers reported the new lighting to be “glaring” and “dazzling white”. In fact, such lights gave off no more light than one of our 25 watt bulbs, a brightness we would describe as decidedly dim.
- 1787 – The U.S. dollar bill makes its first appearance.
- 1788 – The British colonize Australia.
- 1789 – George Washington becomes the first president of the United States of America, a country made up of 4 million people in 13 states.

That same year the French Revolution begins abolishing the feudal system, eliminating the monarchy, and establishing France as a republic. The last king, Louis the XVI is guillotined in 1793 along with his queen, Marie Antoinette later that year. In the 16 months from early 1793 to July 1794 some 43,000 people are executed during the French Reign of Terror.

After the end of the Terror, Napoleon Bonaparte begins his ascent to self-declared Emperor of France in 1799, this in direct contradiction of revolutionary ideals. Beethoven, for one, tears in half the title page to his newly-composed 3rd symphony that he had dedicated to Napoleon, this in disgust with Napoleon’s self-aggrandizement. He writes on the title page, “To celebrate the memory of a great man”.

By 1810 most European countries west of Russia are under the direct or indirect control of Napoleon’s France. The 700-year-old Holy Roman Empire, a loosely united amalgam of some 300 mainly Germanic duchies, kingdoms, and empires (including Prussia in the north and Austria in the south) and historically run by a member of the Austrian Hapsburg dynasty, comes to an end in 1806 at the hands of Napoleon’s army.

- 1791 – The British separate Quebec into Upper (English) and Lower (English & French) Canada. The Act of 1791 sets out the rights of French Canadians to retain their language, civil law, and Catholic religion.

- 1796 – Edward Jenner introduces vaccination against smallpox. Nitrous oxide is introduced as an anaesthetic for surgery.
- 1801 – The Union Jack becomes the official flag of the U.K. of Great Britain.
- 1803 – To gain unhindered access to the Mississippi River, in a deal referred to as the “Louisiana Purchase”, the U.S. buys Louisiana, Arkansas, Iowa, Nebraska, North & South Dakota, the western half of Minnesota, most of Kansas, Oklahoma, Montana, Wyoming, and most of Colorado from France – the price tag being \$11.25 million.
- 1807 – Street lighting by gas makes its appearance in London.
- 1809 – Beethoven is given a comfortable salary for life by three Viennese aristocrats to keep him from moving to Germany and working for Napoleon’s brother, King Jerome of Westphalia. Prior to this Beethoven supported himself through teaching, performing in noble homes, selling regional rights to his music, and overseeing all aspects of public concerts right down to selling the tickets.
- 1810 – Beethoven requires an ear trumpet for conversation. By 1810 friends will communicate with him only through writing in what he refers to as his “conversation books”.
- 1812 – Napoleon invades Russia with catastrophic consequences for his army; only 20,000 return to Paris from the original 550,000. Napoleon is finally defeated at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 and is exiled to St. Helena.
- In this same year, in anger at the British and French boarding and plundering American shipping as part of the Napoleonic war between Britain and France, President James Madison declares war on Canada. A combined French/English force drive the Americans back in the War of 1812.
- 1813 – Britain takes over India. McGill University is founded in Montreal. The waltz becomes popular in Europe.
- 1819 – In England, the maximum working day for juveniles is fixed at 12 hours.

The Music of the Classical Period – 1750 to 1820

Also known as the Viennese period, the chief patron of music remained the nobility, particularly those from the Habsburg (Austro-Hungarian) empire, Vienna being its capital. The giants of the Classical period, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven make Vienna their adopted home.

The Classical Period is typified by an absence of any vulgar or sensational effects, especially over-emphasis of emotional content.

Music continues to be composed using the Major and Minor key systems.

With the invention of the piano-forte (literally, "soft-loud") which is able to control both note duration and volume, the harpsichord quickly fades into oblivion.

Symphonic music makes its introduction, its structure based on Baroque opera with its contrasting arias (typically beautiful songs used to build character identification) and recitatives (transitional, unstable half speech-half sung passages used for plot development).

The composition of an orchestra becomes standardized but the total number of players remains well below what we now consider a standard orchestra, today typically consisting of over one hundred musicians.

Chamber music flourishes (i.e. music for small ensembles with no doubling of parts).

Opera is further developed with an emphasis on more realistic plots. Unlike most opera written during the Baroque period that today are only rarely performed, many Classical-era operas remain stalwarts of today's operatic repertoire (e.g. The Magic Flute; Don Giovanni; Fidelio; The Marriage of Figaro).

The music is sophisticated, intelligent and written with clarity following strict rules of construction and admired for its logic of design.

The Age of Enlightenment (1730 – 1780) sees the rise of the middle class whose increasing wealth and political power gives rise to:

- Education of the masses.
- Cosmopolitanism where national differences are downplayed. Composers increasingly adopt a common style accessible and pleasing to a wide audience.
- Pursuit of happiness and entertainment resulting in a demand for a simpler music playable by the masses, not just by professional musicians. The flourishing of chamber music reflects this new demand (chamber music being for small groups with one player per part, Joseph Haydn's string quartets being one eminent example).

In contrast to music of the Baroque, Classical period music is typified by:

- Flexible, less predictable rhythms.
- Less motorific.
- Greater variation in dynamics from soft to loud.
- Larger orchestras.
- Greater emphasis on melodic variation over the course of a piece.
- Clearer instrumental textures with a single accompanied melody (i.e. homophony), replacing the overlapping melodies of Renaissance and Baroque polyphony.
- Unlike Baroque's unchanging sameness throughout a piece, Classical music developed a sense of musical narrative that has a beginning, a middle, and an end emphasized by cadences, the musical equivalents of commas, semi-colons, colons, and periods.

Here is an example of music from the Classical era, this Mozart's Rondo in A minor:

9. Rondo in a
KV 511

Datiert Wien, 11. März 1787

The image shows a musical score for Mozart's Rondo in A minor, KV 511. The score is in 3/4 time and features a piano accompaniment with a vocal line. The tempo is marked 'Andante'. The lyrics are 'ere - seen - do'. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'p', 'f', 'cresc.', and 'ten.'.

In addition to refinement of the Baroque forms of concerto and sonata, the sonata-allegro form makes its appearance, this consisting of at least two contrasting themes, the outcome being the ability to create a conflict and/or narrative between the themes.

The basic format is A – B – A' – Coda (i.e. conclusion). The first, third, and fourth movements are typically in the same key with the second in a related key. The first movement is typically an allegro (i.e. fast movement), the second a contemplative slow movement, the third a dance-like minuet or scherzo, and the finale a lively conclusion. The [Fourth movement of Mozart's Symphony #40](#) is an example.

Orchestras of this period would typically consist of roughly 30 musicians, up from the 20 of the Baroque. For example, Beethoven's Symphony #1 calls for strings + 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, and timpani.

Composers of Note

- **Joseph Haydn** (symphonies; concertos; masses; chamber music including string quartets; piano sonatas; opera).
- **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** (symphonies; concertos including piano concertos; masses; chamber music; piano sonatas; opera including The Magic Flute; Requiem).
- **Ludwig Van Beethoven** (symphonies; chamber music including string quartets; piano concertos; violin concerto; piano sonatas; overtures; masses; opera – Fidelio)
- **Franz Schubert** (symphonies; chamber music including Arpeggione sonata, Trout piano quintet, string quartets; solo piano; lieder; masses; opera).
- **Luigi Boccherini** (cello concertos; symphonies; chamber music).
- **Gioacchino Rossini** (opera).

Music Examples

- 1) **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** – *Piano Concerto #21 - Adagio*. Mozart wrote a total of 27 piano concertos, considered to be among the finest examples of the genre from any period and still a mainstay of the classical music repertoire today and surely for all of time. The slow movement from his piano concerto #21 is especially beautiful.
- 2) **Ludwig van Beethoven** – *Symphony #5 – Allegro con brio*. Surely the most recognizable opening bars in all of classical music belong to Beethoven's Fifth symphony. Traditionally interpreted as portraying the "struggle against fate", contemporaneous composers Ferdinand Ries and Carl Czerny both maintained that the four-note opening "Da da da daaaa" came to Beethoven while he was listening to the chirping of a goldfinch.

- 3) **Joseph Haydn** – *String Quartet Op. 76, No. 1*. “Papa” Haydn, as he was fondly referred to for his kind and gentle disposition, composed 83 string quartets over a period of forty years and came to be known as the father of both the string quartet and the symphony (of which he wrote 104).

While his early quartets are graceful and highly decorated as befit the aristocracy, his music gradually took on stricter logic and firm structure reflecting the decline of the noble class and the passing of world leadership to the rising middle class of merchants and shopkeepers. His Op. 76 quartet is an example of this new style.

- 4) **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** – *Horn Quintet, KV407*. The most delightful of all Mozart’s quintets, his horn quintet was written in 1782 for his long-time friend and horn virtuoso, Joseph Leutgeb, who earned a living mostly as a cheese maker.
- 5) **Franz Schubert** – *Arpeggione Sonata*. Originally written in 1824 for a now-defunct instrument, the arpeggione, a cross between a guitar and a cello, the piece has long since been performed exclusively on the cello. Its sweet sound belies the fact that it is notoriously difficult to play as the printed notes give no hint to the actual complexity of the playing.
- 6) **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** – *Vesperae Solennes de Confessore*. Vespers are the sixth of seven specified times for prayer in the Roman Catholic canon, coming in early evening but now also including Sundays. Written in 1780 for Salzburg Cathedral for use on a saint’s day, it fully satisfies the request for conciseness from Archbishop Colloredo, a conciseness that would also carry through into Mozart’s Salzburg masses. The Laudate Dominum, taken from the vespers, ranks among the most beautiful of all Mozart’s vocal writing.
- 7) **Ludwig van Beethoven** – *Moonlight Sonata – Adagio*. Composed in 1801 and the most popular of his thirty-two piano sonatas, Beethoven came to regret the popularity of his Piano Sonata #14 complaining “surely I have written better things.” Never intended by Beethoven to invoke a moonlit night, it obtained its moniker some thirty years later when music critic, H.F.L. Rellstab, wrote that the music reminded him of “a boat passing the scenery of Lake Lucerne in the moonlight.”
- 8) **Giachino Rossini** – *Barber of Seville – Largo al Factotum*. Debuted in Rome in 1816, Rossini’s masterwork is possibly the most famous and best comic operas ever written. Beethoven himself professed that “It will be played as long as opera exists.” Berlioz, Brahms, and Wagner also held “Il Barbiere di Siviglia” in the highest esteem. Miraculously, Rossini crafted his masterpiece in the space of just thirteen days.

The Romantic Period – 1820 to 1910

Britain continues to dominate world trade in the early 1800s. From 1825 to 1870 they will put in place 15,000 miles of freight rail to facilitate their rapid industrialization.

Belgium (1830), Germany and France (1870), and the U.S. finally become beneficiaries of the Industrial Revolution, now in its second phase featuring not coal, iron, and steam but steel, electricity, and petrochemicals. By 1900 Germany and the U.S. will produce more steel than Britain.

Mechanized farming, steamships, telegraph, telephone, and refrigerated shipping all play key roles in the rapid development of the global economy and increasing global wealth.

Growing nationalism in South America gives the world's newest world power, the U.S.A, cause to assert its authority over its region. One example of this is the Monroe Doctrine issued by President James Monroe. It promises to protect all the new South American republics from European imperialists.

The population of the U.S., swelled by massive European immigration, grows from 4mm in 1790 to 13mm in 1830, 50mm by 1880, and 106mm by 1920.

Freed from the land by mechanized, high-intensity farming, the movement from the farm to cities turns into a major event in the structure of society. While only 3% of U.S. citizens lived in cities in 1790, this increased steadily to 16% by 1860, 33% by 1900, and 60% by 1920 (as of 2020 this figure stood at roughly 80%).

High population density, low growth, and few economic opportunities resulted in massive emigration from Europe to the New World with some 6 million Italians, 1 million Irish, 7 million British, 2 million Hungarians, and 2 million Russians leaving their native countries and heading predominantly to the U.S.. In all, over the course of the 20th century, some 60 million Europeans would emigrate to the U.S., Canada, and Australia.

Along with their much-needed manpower, they also brought their religion, predominantly Christianity. Indeed, today's world would look far different had such emigration occurred from Confucian China or from the Islamic world.

Revolution against nobility and foreign rule would continue with upheavals experienced in Italy, France, Prussia, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. Germany and Italy both experience unification. Greece becomes independent of Turkey (1830). Serbia, Romania, and Bulgaria also become independent states (1878). The U.S. civil war from 1861 to 1865 leaves some 600,000 dead.

In the late 1800s, in response to the decline of the formerly powerful Ottoman (Turkish) empire, European powers carve up Africa in what is referred to as the age of Imperialism.

Simultaneously, with the decline of the Chinese Manchu empire, Britain, France, and Japan assert control over parts of China. In like manner, Britain and Russia impose their power over Iran while Britain also assumes control of India. (1858).

Foreign rule leads to inevitable backlash with revolutions in the early 1900s in Iran, Turkey, and China to reassert their independence. This also marks the start of resistance in India against British rule. The age of Imperialism will soon experience significant reversal in the aftermath of the devastation of WW I.

Historical Highlights

1821 – Michael Faraday of Britain invents the electric motor and generator.

1822 – The first camera is invented in France.

1825 – The first passenger steam railway begins operation (Britain).

1833 – Slavery is abolished throughout the British empire.

1836 – Davy Crockett is killed at the Alamo. Texas wins independence from Mexico.

1838 – The first electric telegraph.

1840 – The first postage stamp (Britain).

1841 – The first university degrees granted to women in the U.S.. Medical schools of the time paid body snatchers to rob graves for much-needed cadavers, these for research. Bodies fetched about \$1500 in today's dollars.

1844 – The first international cricket match is played, between the U.S. and Canada (Canada won).

1846 – The Oregon Treaty sets the U.S./Canada border. The first inexpensive newspaper in England appears, the Daily News, its editor none other than Charles Dickens. American dentist, Dr. Morton, uses ether as an anaesthetic. Chloroform is introduced for anaesthetizing surgery patients.

1848 – Karl Marx publishes his Communist manifesto. The first Women’s Rights Convention is held, this in the U.S., marking the start of the fight for women’s right to vote. Nonetheless, even by 1914 only women in Finland, Norway, New Zealand, Australia and eleven of the then 48 states of the U.S. would have the vote. Non-native Canadian women over the age of 21 will wait until 1914 to gain the right to vote in federal elections and 1916 for provincial elections (except in Quebec which forbid women to vote until 1940).

1851 – Isaac Singer invents the continuous-stitch sewing machine.

1853 – Livingstone of Stanley & Livingstone fame begins his African explorations.

1855 – The Bessemer process for mass steel production is introduced.

1858 – The Crimean War between Russia and the combined forces of Britain, France, and Turkey legitimizes the new profession of nursing, one of the few career opportunities for women. Florence Nightingale plays a key role. Ottawa becomes the capital of Canada.

1859 – Darwin’s “The Origin of Species” is published. The first oil well is drilled (Pennsylvania).

1860 – Abraham Lincoln is elected President of the United States and issues the Proclamation of Emancipation of slaves in 1863. The South secedes leading to the American Civil war of 1861 to 1865. The first British Open golf championship is held.

1861 – Louis Pasteur develops the germ theory of disease and invents pasteurization two years later (for wine). Charles Dickens writes “Great Expectations”.

1867 – The British Parliament passes the British North America Act conferring independence for Canada. Sir John A. Macdonald becomes its first Prime Minister. Russia sells Alaska to the U.S. for \$7.2 million.

1869 – Manitoba and B.C. become part of Canada.

1876 – The telephone is invented by Scottish-born Alexander Graham Bell.

1879 – Based on the recent invention of Thomas Edison, the first electric street lights make their appearance.

Artists of note: Renoir, Monet, Degas, Cezanne, Manet, Rodin, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Toulouse-Lautrec, Picasso, Chagall, Frank Lloyd Wright, Matisse.

1885 – The Canadian Pacific railway is completed. Daimler & Benz develop the automobile.

1886 – Hydroelectric installations are begun to tap the power of the Niagara Falls and open in 1896.

1888 – J.B. Dunlop invents the first air-filled tire.

1892 – German inventor, Rudolf Diesel, patents his internal combustion engine.

1895 – The first motion picture is developed (France). Marie Curie discovers Xrays. Canada's population reaches 5 million.

1896 – Nobel laureate, Guglielmo Marconi, builds the first radio transmitter, sending a wireless signal from Britain to St. John's, Newfoundland, the receiving antenna suspended by a kite. The first modern Olympics is held (Athens).

1897 – German chemist, Felix Hoffman, working for the Bayer chemical company, invents Aspirin.

1900 – Sigmund Freud develops psychoanalysis. Max Planck formulates quantum theory.

1901 – Australia is founded.

1903 – The Wright brothers successfully fly the first petrol-powered airplane. The first Tour de France bicycle race takes place. Britain sets a 20mph speed limit for cars. Henry Ford founds the Ford Motor Company. The first crossing of America by car takes place in the blistering time of 65 days.

1904 – Work begins on the Panama Canal.

1905 – Albert Einstein publishes his Theory of Relativity ($E=MC^2$). The first movie theatre is established (Pittsburgh). Shortly after losing a war to the Japanese, Russia undergoes a revolution.

1907 – The first daily comic strip appears, this in the San Francisco Chronicle (Mr. Mutt, later renamed Mutt & Jeff). The second Sunday in May is declared Mother's Day. Father's Day would follow in 1910.

1909 – Robert Peary reaches the North Pole.

The Music of the Romantic Period – 1820 to 1910

Romantic in this context does not refer to romance but, rather, is based on the essence of a literary form from the Middle Ages called a “romance” which encompassed tales of heroes, legends, and the supernatural.

The Romantic Period is characterized by:

- Abandonment of the Classical period’s strict musical structures, cultured refinement, and suppressed emotionality in favor of experimentation, reduced emphasis on melody, and bold emotional expression. This comes at the cost of reduced clarity of musical development and weakened compositional structure.
- Disappearance of the aristocratic patron. Composers now have to make a living as a performer, conductor, or teacher.
- Instrument development leads to advanced expressive and technical capabilities leading to a warmer, richer sound. The golden age of the piano is but one result. The number of touring virtuoso performers increases as music is written specifically to highlight their talents.
- Opera and ballet go from success to success with much of today’s standard repertoire coming from classics of this period (Barber of Seville, Rigoletto, La Boheme, Carmen, Swan Lake, Giselle, The Nutcracker, etc.)
- Growing global wealth and the introduction of music as a staple school subject results in music reaching a much wider audience. Non-professional musicians become important consumers of classical music.
- There is a growing sense of nationalism with the resulting incorporation of native folk influence into classical music.
- Music is increasingly viewed as being linked to the other arts including poetry, drama, painting, but also philosophy where music would tell a story, portray an image, or convey a mood, all referred to as program music.

- As shown in the score below by composer, Richard Strauss, Romantic melodies contain wider leaps in pitch between notes and a wider dynamic range in general. While music from the Classical era can be pressed into use as unobtrusive background music, the same cannot be said of much of Romantic music whose wider dynamic range would force you to periodically turn it down or turn it back up!

Richard Strauss

poco ritardando

The image shows a page of a musical score for Richard Strauss. It features a vocal line on a single staff and piano accompaniment on two staves. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 2/4. The tempo marking is *poco ritardando*. The lyrics are: "Jo-cha / Jo-ka - - - na-an, / na-an, du warst / thou wert schön / fair!". There are triplets of eighth notes in the vocal line. Performance markings include *dim.* (diminuendo), *espr.* (espressivo), and *pp* (pianissimo). The score is written in a clear, professional hand.

- Melody in much of the music from the Classical and Romantic periods was based on four symmetrical phrases each four measures in length separated by regularly spaced cadences. This regularity differs from the free-flowing melodic development of Medieval, Baroque, and Modern/Contemporary compositions.

Even Haydn and Mozart found this formal structure stifling and so began to introduce asymmetries with musical phrases of three, five, or six measures which resulted in increased musical interest. It was Wagner who completely did away with symmetrical melody in order to properly portray the emotions of his opera characters.

Here is an example, this from Wagner's opera, Tristan & Isolde:

The image displays a page of musical notation for Wagner's opera Tristan & Isolde. It consists of five systems of piano accompaniment. The first system is marked "Lento e languido. Langsam und schmachtend." and includes a "dim." marking. The second system features a "cresc." marking. The third system includes "piu" and "dim." markings. The fourth system is marked "poco rall." and "riten.", with "cresc." and "dim." markings. The fifth system is marked "a tempo" and "dim.". The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of two sharps (D major), and various rhythmic values and dynamic markings.

- Toward the end of the Romantic period composers begin to move away from the use of Major and Minor keys toward chromaticism, the use of all 12 tones of the octave (i.e. on a piano, the seven white and five black keys). This results in greater musical tension as compositions modulate continuously through many different keys. The listener is confronted with greater difficulty following the musical journey.
- Orchestra size increases dramatically from the 20 musicians of the Baroque and 30 of the Classical era, now numbering well over 100 in many instances. This makes for a much greater range of orchestral colors. Instruments now making regular appearances on the concert stage include the trombone, piccolo, triangle, cymbals, bass drum, harp, tuba, bass trombone, English horn, bass clarinet, contrabassoon, and grand piano.

As one example of orchestra size, Mahler's Symphony #2 (the "Resurrection Symphony") calls for strings + 4 flutes, 4 piccolos, 2 oboes, 2 English horns, 3 clarinets, 2 E-flat clarinets, 1 bass clarinet, 4 bassoons, 2 contrabassoons, 10 horns, 8 trumpets, 4 trombones, bass tuba, organ, 2 harps, 2 sets of timpani, 2 bass drums, 1 kettle drum, 2 snare drums, cymbals, high and low tam tams, 2 triangles, 1 glockenspiel, 3 deep bells, 1 soprano, 1 alto, and a large mixed chorus!

Composers of Note

- **Ludwig Van Beethoven** (late string quartets (Opus 127, 130-133, 135); Symphony #9; Missa Solemnis).
- **Johannes Brahms** (4 symphonies, 2 piano concertos, violin concerto, German Requiem, chamber music).
- **Gustav Mahler** (10 symphonies, lieder).
- **Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky** (6 symphonies, 3 ballets (Nutcracker, Swan Lake, Sleeping Beauty), 3 piano concertos, violin concerto, chamber music, opera, choral music, orchestral music (e.g. 1812 overture)).
- **Felix Mendelssohn** (5 symphonies, 2 piano concertos, violin concerto, chamber music, orchestral music (e.g. Midsummer Night's Dream)).
- **Robert Schumann** (4 symphonies, piano concerto, violin concerto, cello concerto, chamber music).
- **Antonin Dvorak** (9 symphonies, orchestral music, chamber music).
- **Frederic Chopin** (piano music, 2 piano concertos).
- **Claude Debussy** (Orchestral music (e.g. Prelude a l'apres midi d'un faune), chamber music, piano music).
- **Camille Saint Saens** (3 symphonies, 5 piano concertos, 3 violin concertos, 2 cello concertos, orchestral music, chamber music).
- **Nikolai Rimsky Korsakov** (orchestral music (e.g. Scheherazade)).
- **Gabriel Faure** (chamber music, piano music, choral music (e.g. Requiem)).
- **Edvard Grieg** (chamber music, piano music, piano concerto, orchestral music).
- **Max Bruch** (3 violin concertos)
- **Hector Berlioz** (orchestral music (e.g. Symphonie Fantastique), choral music).
- **Anton Bruckner** (9 symphonies, sacred choral music).
- **Franz Liszt** (piano music).
- **Georges Bizet** (one symphony, orchestral music, opera (e.g. Carmen)).
- **Johann Strauss II** (orchestral music (e.g. Blue Danube waltz), opera).
- **Modest Mussorgsky** (orchestral music (e.g. Pictures at an Exhibition)).
- **Bedrich Smetana** (orchestral music, opera, chamber music).
- **Sergei Rachmaninov** (3 piano concertos, three symphonies, choral music)
- **Vincenzo Bellini** (opéra (e.g. La Sonnambula)).
- **Gaetano Donizetti** (opera (e.g. Lucia di Lammermoor)).
- **Richard Wagner** (opera (e.g. Tristan und Isolde)).
- **Giuseppe Verdi** (opera (e.g. Rigoletto), Requiem).
- **Giacomo Puccini** (opera (e.g. La Boheme)).

Music Examples

- 1) **Felix Mendelssohn** – *Violin Concerto*. Summoned by the new king of Prussia, Frederick William IV, to move to Berlin and head the Royal Academy of Music, Mendelssohn unhappily complied, thus delaying completion of his violin concerto until 1845 after being granted his freedom to leave the royal court in 1844. The premiere of the concerto was conducted by Danish composer, Niels Gade.
- 2) **Peter Tchaikovsky** – *Piano Concerto #1*. Tchaikovsky composed his first piano concerto in 1874 specifically for the famous Russian pianist, Nicolas Rubinstein. However, Rubinstein found the piece unappealing, declaring it to be bad, trivial, and vulgar and so refused to play it without major revisions. Tchaikovsky was so angry he declared that not one note would be changed and turned it over to German conductor and pianist, Hans von Bulow, to premiere the piece, not in Russia but in Boston, where it enjoyed phenomenal success. Rubinstein, realizing his sorely mistaken judgment, played the piece to great acclaim at the Paris Exhibition of 1878. It remains today one of the most popular piano concertos in the classical music repertory.
- 3) **Sergei Rachmaninov** – *Piano Concerto #3 – 3rd movement*. Surely representing the pinnacle of Romantic piano concerti, Rachmaninov crafted his 3rd piano concerto in 1909 for his first American tour, apparently to earn enough money to buy a car, then still a novelty, his financial resources confiscated during the 1905 Russian Revolution. His second concert in New York is conducted by one Gustav Mahler.
- 4) **Peter Tchaikovsky** – *Symphony #4 – Fourth movement*. The 4th symphony was written at a difficult time in Tchaikovsky's life, this being a disastrous marriage as well as the arrival of a secret patroness for whom the symphony was dedicated. After three previous tries this was Tchaikovsky's first symphony to make it into the permanent repertoire.
- 5) **Anton Bruckner** – *Symphony #9 – Second movement*. In his early 70s and suffering from a severe heart condition, Bruckner suspected he did not have long to live while working on this 9th symphony. To a visitor he stated, "I have done my duty on earth. I have accomplished what I could and my only wish is to be allowed to finish my Ninth Symphony. I trust death will not deprive me of my pen." Alas, his wish was not to be fulfilled, his final work remaining unfinished at the time of his death. As per his request, Bruckner was buried under the organ of St. Florian church in Austria where he had played for so many years.

- 6) **Gustav Mahler** – *Symphony #5 – Adagietto*. In 1901 the then 41-year-old Mahler composed his 5th symphony and conducted it at its premiere in 1905. The Adagietto fourth movement, one of the most beautiful slow movements in the entire symphonic literature, was written as a love letter to his then 22-year-old bride-to-be, Alma Schindler, the musical daughter of a well-to-do Viennese family. Unfortunately for Mahler, Alma went on to have a number of blatant affairs, one with the now-famous architect Walter Gropius, founder of the illustrious Bauhaus school of art and design. For advice on his marital problems Mahler sought advice from none other than Sigmund Freud.
- 7) **Antonin Dvorak** – *Piano Quartet in E flat Major, Op 87*. Dvorak's publisher, Simrock, pushed him to write a second piano quartet, his first having been issued in 1875. He finally agreed and, within a span of just one month, had it completed. In a letter to a friend he wrote, "As I expected, it came easily and the melodies just surged upon me, Thank God!". The premiere took place in Prague in 1890. Although written during Dvorak's nationalistic period, it does not show extensive use of Czech folk themes.
- 8) **Johannes Brahms** – *Clarinet Quintet*. Despite the greatness of his symphonies and popularity of his concertos, it is his chamber works that are often considered to be his most treasured compositions. Written in 1891, Brahms' Clarinet Quintet made such a deep impression at its debut that the musicians were recalled many times to the stage and could not leave until repeating the second movement adagio.
- 9) **Anton Bruckner** – *Te Deum*. Premiered in 1886 by the Vienna Philharmonic under Hans Richter, over the next ten years that remained to Bruckner, his Te Deum would be performed another thirty times in locations as far afield as Oslo, Amsterdam, and Cincinnati, the latter performance boasting 800 singers, a 120-strong orchestra and an audience of 7,000. Gustav Mahler was so moved by the Te Deum that he paraphrased Bruckner's stipulation "for choir, soloists, and orchestra" with "for the tongues of angels, for seekers after God, for tortured hearts, and for flame-chastened souls."
- 10) **Gabriel Faure** – *Requiem*. Although his mother had died in 1888 and his father two years earlier, Faure maintained that he wrote his Requiem not for them but solely "for the pleasure of it." While standard practice at the time was for a Requiem to have bold passages expressing the fear of death, Beethoven, who wrote no Requiem himself, disagreed. In his opinion such a piece ought to be quiet music – "it needs no trump of doom; memories of the dead require no hubbub." Faure obviously agreed, penning one of the most peaceful, contemplative Requiems since the Renaissance. In his own words, death is "a happy deliverance, a reaching for eternal happiness rather than a mournful passing."

- 11) **Frederic Chopin** – *Nocturne in C minor, Op. 48*. In the late 1700s and early 1800s a Nocturne was a vocal piece popular in the social salons of the time. True to this heritage, Chopin assigned his Nocturnes to his students to help them develop a beautiful 'vocal' tone in their playing. At each point where a singer would take a breath Chopin instructed his students to "take care to raise the wrist so as to let it fall again on the singing note with the greatest possible suppleness imaginable."
- 12) **Claude Debussy** – *Claire de Lune*. Begun in 1890 but not completed until 1905, *Claire de lune* deservedly remains one of the most popular pieces in the entire piano literature.
- 13) **Claude Debussy** – *Prelude a l'apres-midi d'un faune*. A London review from 1904 reads, "A vacuum has been described as nothing shut up in a box, and the prelude entitled *L'Après-midi d'un faune* may aptly be described as nothing, expressed in musical terms. I was glad when the end came." Despite this inauspicious review, its debut in 1894 was received so enthusiastically by the audience that the entire piece had to be replayed from start to finish.
- 14) **Modest Mussorgsky** – *Night on Bald Mountain*. According to the *Musical Times* in 1898, *Night on Bald Mountain* "is as hideous a thing as we have ever heard – an orgy of ugliness and an abomination. May we never hear it again!" Despite the terrible review, Mussorgsky's musical depiction of a witches gathering on Bald Mountain in the glorification of Satan, while never performed during his lifetime and revised extensively by his good friend, Nicolai Rimsky Korsakov, ultimately achieved widespread popularity.
- 15) **Johann Strauss II** – *Blue Danube Waltz*. When music and Vienna are mentioned in the same breath it is the Strauss family, father Johann (who played at the coronation of Queen Victoria in 1838), Johann II (the best known of the Strauss family), Josef, and Eduard who come to mind, the waltz and polka kings of Europe and the world from 1830 to 1900.
- Johann II's *Blue Danube waltz*, surely the most famous waltz ever written, was first performed in 1867 and quickly circled the globe making its American debut in 1872 under Strauss's baton. For this performance he led an orchestra of a thousand musicians and a choir of a thousand voices.
- 16) **Felix Mendelssohn** – *A Midsummer Night's Dream - Wedding March*. It has been said of Mendelssohn that no composer came close to his ability to evoke the world of fairies. Commissioned by his king, Frederick William of Prussia, to write music for the Shakespeare play, Mendelssohn added twelve new numbers to his remarkable overture written at age 17. The play with his music was premiered at Potsdam in 1843.

- 17) **Georges Bizet** – *Les Pecheurs des Perles*. While justly famous for his great opera “Carmen”, it was the Pearl Fishers at just age 25 that launched Bizet’s career. While it ran for only 18 performances in 1863 and then went un-performed for another thirty, it has taken its well-deserved place as a staple crowd pleaser in today’s operatic repertoire.
- 18) **Giuseppe Verdi** – *Il Trovatore – Anvil Chorus*. The Troubadors is the hardest, most popular of all Verdi’s operas. It has been said that there are more outstanding arias and ensemble numbers in *Il Trovatore* than in any other Italian opera. Premiered in 1853 in the most inauspicious conditions, a flood in Rome forcing patrons to wade through rivers of water and mud to get to the theatre, it was nonetheless a monumental success. As reported in the *Gazzetta Musicale*, “The music transported us to heaven.” Shortly after its premiere three separate opera companies had to be formed in Venice to give simultaneous performances to meet the enormous demand.

The Modern Period – 1910 to Today

A number of major trends define our modern era:

- The sovereign state with defined borders becomes the universally-adopted national structure replacing formerly ill-defined borders encompassing people and territory under the control of a monarch.
- Global wealth increases substantially but its division becomes less equally distributed with 50% of the world's population consuming 85% of the world's goods and services.
- In developed countries, medical advances (e.g. penicillin) and improved hygiene (e.g. elimination of cholera in Europe by 1911 through the adoption of iron pipes for water and glazed pipes for sewage) leads to population growth no longer driven by higher birth rates but rather through longer lives.
- Developed society now expected change, rather than stasis, to be the new normal. It was felt that all problems could be overcome through the new wonders of science whose complexity now outstripped the ability of the average citizen to understand it.
- For much of the 1900s major currencies were backed by gold and most major countries minted gold coins which were accepted worldwide.
- Democratic principles steadily became the predominant, if still not universal, political reality around the world with hereditary monarchy in decline.
- Society increasingly structured itself around city life as fewer farmers were required to feed the world.
- The U.S.A. would usurp Britain as the new world superpower.
- Education becomes of increasing significance as the complexity of life and adoption of new technologies increases.
- The corporation becomes the primary structure for deploying capital, the profit motive driving innovation, increased production, and growing global wealth.
- The automobile would become a standard family possession. Its steady adoption changed society with massive road construction, urban sprawl, commercial development, enhanced shipping, faster mail and newspaper delivery, etc. etc.

- Air travel would become routine in much of the world significantly shrinking the world and exposing many to other cultures.
- Communications would improve to the point where conversations and information could be sent around the world in seconds rather than days.
- Radio (1920s) and television (1950s) would prove to dominate family entertainment.
- The concept of actively striving for happiness in life as a goal took shape, replacing millennia of mere unchanging simple subsistence and stoic acceptance of one's lot in life.

Historical Highlights

1911 – Roald Amundsen reaches the South Pole. Charles Kettering develops the first practical electric starter for cars.

1913 – Niels Bohr formulates his theory of atomic structure with electrons circling a neutron/proton atomic core. Mahatma Gandhi is arrested as head of the Indian Passive Resistance Movement.

1914 – Start of WW I (ending in 1918 involving 63 million soldiers and resulting in 21 million wounded and 8.5 million killed including 61,000 Canadians at a time when Canada's entire population is only 8 million vs. 2020's 38 million). Henry Ford introduces the auto assembly line.

Artists of note: Charlie Chaplin, Edvard Munch, Wassily Kandinsky.

1915 – Henry Ford develops the first farm tractor. The first transcontinental phone call between Alexander Graham Bell in New York and Dr. Thomas Watson in San Francisco takes place.

1917 – The Russian Revolution leads to the first socialist state.

1918 – Daylight Savings Time is introduced in North America, intended as a measure to increase output to fight WW I. A worldwide influenza pandemic strikes killing 22 million people.

1919 – First air crossing of the Atlantic from Newfoundland to Ireland, the flying time being 16 ½ hours.

1920 – First public radio broadcasts (U.S. & Britain). Jazz makes its first appearance. Women in the U.S. win the right to vote. The sale of alcohol is prohibited in the U.S.

1922 – Insulin is developed by Canadians Frederick Banting and Charles Best.

1923 – Hyperinflation in Germany brought on by onerous reparation payments demanded by the victors of WW I results in the German Mark falling in value to 4 million to one U.S. dollar.

1927 – Babe Ruth hits 60 home runs in one season for the New York Yankees. Sold to the Yankees by the Red Sox in 1920, the “Curse of the Bambino” is held responsible for Boston’s dismal World Series drought that ended only in 2004.

1928 – First colour motion picture demonstrated by George Eastman. First scheduled TV broadcasts by WGY of Schenectady, NY.

1929 – Stalin takes leadership of Russia. The U.S. stock market crashes. The world enters the Great Depression. Canada’ population hits 10 million.

1933 – Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany. Stalin’s collectivization policy leads to famine in Soviet Ukraine and the death of 3.3 million people.

1936 – First TV shows (Britain). Hitler initiates the first of his many state occupations sending troops into Austria, soon followed by Czechoslovakia, Poland, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, and France.

1938 – The 40-hour work week is established in the U.S. An estimated 250,000 Soviet citizens, mainly Poles, are executed simply for being Polish, having Polish-sounding names, or found attending Polish church services.

1939 – Penicillin is developed. FM radio is invented. WW II begins. Britain and France declare war on Germany.

1941 – The Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor bringing the U.S. into WW II. Germany invades Russia. Joe Dimaggio hits safely in 56 consecutive games for the New York Yankees. Teammate, Lou Gehrig, dies of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), thereafter known as ‘Lou Gehrig’s disease’. Herbicides and pesticides become commercially available which, along with genetically-improved grains, results in the Green Revolution with food production increasing dramatically in western countries.

1942 – The first nuclear reactor is made.

1945 – The U.S. drops atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Japan surrenders bringing an end to WW II. Fatalities are estimated at 35 million (43,000 Canadians) plus another 10 million in Nazi war camps. The United Nations is formed.

1946 – The first electronic computer is developed. Civil war in China sees Mao Zedong (incorrectly rendered as Mao Tse-Tung by Western media) drive the Kuomintang out of China proper into Taiwan.

1947 – The first faster-than-the-speed-of-sound (supersonic) jet flight. India and Pakistan are separated and become independent nations. The cold war between the U.S. and USSR begins.

1948 – The transistor is invented leading to the appearance of the popular transistor radios. The state of Israel is established. The first Arab-Israeli war begins (ending in 1949). Mahatma Gandhi is assassinated, this coming just one year before India was able to adopt its own constitution, finally free from British rule.

1950 – The Korean War begins.

1951 – The first nuclear power station is constructed. Colour television makes its debut but takes another fifteen years to become commonplace in homes.

1953 – James Watson and Francis Crick determine the structure of DNA. The first link between smoking and lung cancer is announced.

1954 – Jonas Salk, developer of polio vaccine, starts the first inoculation of school children in Pittsburgh. U.S. and Canada agree to build a series of radar installations across northern Canada to give warning of a Soviet missile attack.

1956 – Rock & Roll makes its debut. Rocky Marciano retires undefeated as world heavyweight boxing champion. Yours truly is born in Niagara Falls, Ontario! 😊

1957 – Russia launches Sputnik, the first satellite. A 13-year-old becomes U.S. chess champion – Bobby Fisher.

1959 – Start of the Vietnam War (ending in 1975). Fidel Castro becomes leader of Cuba and expropriates U.S. sugar plantations. Many African states become independent. Stereo recordings come into use.

1960 – The laser is invented. The first weather satellite is launched.

1961 – The Berlin Wall is built by Russia and will remain in place until 1989.

1989. The USSR puts the first man in space, Yuri Gagarin.

1963 – President John Kennedy is assassinated by Lee Harvey Oswald who in turn is gunned down by U.S. nightclub owner, Jack Ruby, the murder captured on live TV.

1964 – The Beatles burst on to the music scene. Cassius Clay, later known as Muhammed Ali, captures the world heavyweight boxing crown from convicted murderer, Sonny Liston.

1967 – During Montreal's Expo '67 celebrating Canada's 100th birthday, President Charles de Gaulle of France utters his famous "Vive le Quebec libre" to which a furious Prime Minister Pearson replied, "Canadians do not need to be liberated." The Sovereignty Association Movement was launched later that year by Rene Levesque. Canada's population reaches 20 million.

1968 – Civil rights leader and 1964 Nobel Peace Prize winner Reverend Martin Luther King is assassinated in Memphis by James Earl Ray. Senator Robert Kennedy is assassinated in Los Angeles by Sirhan Sirhan.

1969 – The U.S. puts the first man, Neil Armstrong, on the moon.

1970 – Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau invokes the War Measures Act sending 10,000 troops into Montreal and Ottawa in response to the FLQ (Front de Liberation du Quebec) abduction of the British Trade Commissioner James Cross and abduction and murder of the Quebec labor minister, Pierre Laporte.

Four Kent State University students, protesting the Vietnam War, are killed by the National Guard.

1973 – OPEC triples the price of oil. The speed limit in the U.S. is decreased to 50mph to conserve gasoline.

1974 – President Nixon resigns over the Watergate Affair, an attempted cover-up of the break-in into Democratic National Committee' headquarters. Hammerin' Hank Aaron hits home run number 714 of his career, surpassing Babe Ruth. 'Streaking' (i.e. running naked through a public place) becomes a North American fad.

1976 – The death of Mao Zedong marks the beginning of the modernization of China.

1980 – Iraq, led by Saddam Hussein, and Iran, led by the Ayatollah Kohmeini, begin a war that will last eight years and claim an estimated 500,000 lives.

1989 – The Chinese government clashes with students seeking democracy leading to the Tiananmen Square Massacre. The USSR falls leading to the breakup of its empire. The Berlin Wall comes down.

1990 – East and West Germany are reunited. Iraq, still led by Saddam Hussein, invades Kuwait. His promise of unleashing ‘the Mother of All Wars’ against the U.S. and Allied soldiers is over in roughly 100 hours.

1997 – Canada’s population reaches 30 million.

2001 – Islamic terrorists bring down the twin World Trade Towers in New York City by crashing hijacked passenger jets into them.

2009 – Barack Obama, the first black President of the United States, is sworn in.

2019 – The novel virus, COVID-19, first detected in late 2019 causes a global pandemic killing over 2 million people worldwide by the end of 2020. Canada’s population stands at 38 million.

The Music of the Modern Period – 1910 to Today

The Modern Period is characterized by:

- Experimentation with new musical structures (e.g. atonality) often with limited listener acceptance, but also a conscious use of Baroque and Classical stylistic features.
- Following Wagner's example of casting aside the restrictive four-measure melodic structure predominant during the Classical and Romantic periods, as well as the Major/Minor scales, music increasingly lacks the repetitions and aural sign-posts that previously helped listeners follow the musical argument and feel a sense of departure, journey, and return.

As a result, modern music places greater demands on the listener who must practice active listening to gain full appreciation of the composition's language and story.

- While music prior to the modern era is generally structured along the smooth natural cadence of the human voice, modern music often breaks from this pattern and, in many cases, simply goes where human voices are incapable of following. Such music is described as angular rather than the curved lines of earlier music, these words describing how the notes appear when written down.

Of course, not all composers ventured from tradition. Here is a comparison of Samuel Barber's "*School for Scandal Overture*", a traditionally-scored piece, with Dmitri Shostakovich's "*Symphony #1*" and its more angular writing:

Samuel Barber – *School for Scandal Overture*



Dmitri Shostakovich – Symphony #1



- Modern harmony uses more notes per chord (a chord being the simultaneous sounding of different notes) and different spacing of the notes resulting in a more complex, pungent sound. Here is an example from Igor Stravinsky's ballet, "Petruskha":



- An increasing use of dissonance with more judicious use after about 1930.
- Prior to the 1900s music tended to follow a regular rhythm (e.g. $\frac{3}{4}$ time – three beats to a bar, here consisting of quarter notes). Composers of the modern era, influenced by the jagged, irregular sounds of our modern society and by the new music of jazz, began to incorporate irregular beats into their music.

Here is an example from Igor Stravinsky's ballet, "Rite of Spring", showing a change in beats to the bar in each measure:



- All types of music styles from the past continue to be written.
- Patronage continues to shift from the wealthy to the masses.
- Modern concertos re-establish the orchestra as equal to the soloist, unlike the Romantic period where solo parts were written basically to showcase the virtuoso's talents, the orchestra playing a comparatively bit part.
- Impressionism makes its debut as do tone poems which use literal effects to paint musical pictures.
- Fewer catchy tunes than the Romantic, Classical, and Baroque periods. In general, the music of this period sounds more serious and makes greater demands on the listener's attention. It tends to make for terrible background music!
- From the enormous orchestras of the late 1800s composers begin to scale back, favoring the smaller forces of the Classical era in order to once again emphasize musical clarity, textural transparency, and refinement of expression.
- Compositions become concise with sparse scoring. Unlike the Romantic period where all musicians play most of the time to create a massive sound, modern composers have no qualms about letting entire sections of an orchestra remain silent for prolonged periods of time if this serves their expressive purpose.

Composers of Note

- **Richard Strauss** (orchestral music (tone poems), concertos, opera).
- **Jean Sibelius** (7 symphonies, violin concerto, orchestral music).
- **Bohuslav Martinu** (6 symphonies, 2 cello concertos, chamber music).
- **Sergei Prokofiev** (7 symphonies, ballet, 5 piano concertos, 2 violin concertos, orchestral music, chamber music, opera).
- **Dmitri Shostakovich** (15 symphonies, concertos, ballet, orchestral music, chamber music, piano music).
- **Darius Milhaud** (orchestral music).
- **Arnold Schoenberg** (orchestral music).
- **Amy Beach** (orchestral music, chamber music, choral music)
- **Alban Berg** (orchestral music).
- **Maurice Ravel** (orchestral music, piano concerto, ballet, chamber music, piano music, opera).
- **Aaron Copland** (3 symphonies, orchestral music).
- **Paul Hindemith** (symphonies, orchestral music, chamber music).
- **Francis Poulenc** (orchestral music, chamber music).
- **Bela Bartok** (chamber music, orchestral music, concertos).
- **Igor Stravinsky** (orchestral music, ballet, chamber music, opera).
- **Arvo Part** (choral music).
- **Samuel Barber** (2 symphonies, orchestral music, violin concerto).
- **Ralph Vaughn Williams** (9 symphonies, orchestral music, concertos, chamber music, choral music, opera).
- **Benjamin Britten** (orchestral music, chamber music, choral music, opera).
- **Robert Simpson** (10 symphonies, chamber music).
- **Arnold Bax** (7 symphonies, concertos, chamber music).
- **Malcolm Arnold** (9 symphonies, orchestral music, chamber music).
- **John Adams** (concertos, orchestral music, opera).
- **Leonardo Balada** (concertos, orchestral music).
- **Thomas Ades** (orchestral music).
- **Oswaldo Golijov** (orchestral music).
- **Philip Glass** (concertos, opera).
- **William Bolcolm** (chamber music, concertos).
- **Ernst Toch** (chamber music).
- **Elisabetta Brusa** (orchestral music).
- **Joan Tower** (orchestral music, chamber music)
- **Jennifer Higdon** (orchestral music, chamber music, choral music, vocal music, opera)

Music Examples

Modern

- 1) **Sergei Prokofiev** – *Piano Concerto #5*. Completed while in the French Mediterranean coast in the summer of 1932, Prokofiev's fifth piano concerto was premiered by the Berlin Philharmonic under the great Wilhelm Furtwangler. While well received, Prokofiev himself had doubts about the work.
- 2) **Samuel Barber** – *Violin Concerto*. This piece was commissioned in 1939 by an American businessman, Samuel Fels, for his adopted son Iso Briselli, a child prodigy on the violin. However, upon seeing scoring of the first two movements, Iso complained that it was too lyrical and did not contain enough fireworks to show off his virtuosity. Barber duly complied creating a final movement of unrelenting virtuosity. When presented with the completed score Briselli declared the final movement too difficult and unplayable.

Needless to say, the piece was never dedicated to Fels or Briselli. It premiered in 1941 with the Philadelphia Orchestra under the baton of Eugene Ormandy and remains a crowd favorite to this day.

- 3) **Aaron Copland** – *Symphony #3 – Fanfare for the Common Man*. Commissioned at the height of Copland's popularity in 1944 by the great conductor, Serge Koussevitzky, the third symphony received its first performance under Koussevitzky with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1946. Copland chose to incorporate into the work his 'Fanfare for the Common Man' of 1942.
- 4) **Dmitri Shostakovich** – *Symphony #7 (Leningrad)*. Shostakovich wrote his seventh symphony during the German siege of Leningrad that ran from September 1941 to February 1943 during which some 632,000 Russians died of hunger, cold, and aerial bombing. In October of 1941 Shostakovich agreed to be evacuated to Moscow along with many other of the cultural elite. Premiered in Kuibyshev in 1942 by the evacuated orchestra of the Bolshoi Theatre, the piece was played in besieged Leningrad in August of that year.

Microfilmed copies of the score were smuggled out of Leningrad by air to Tehran, driven by car through Iran, Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine to Cairo, then flown to Brazil where a U.S. navy aircraft flew it to New York City. Live performances were broadcast on radio stations throughout the United States (and also Britain). In the U.S. alone over 1942/1943 the piece received 62 performances under the batons of such famous conductors as Ormandy, Koussevitzky, Stokowski, Rodzinski, Monteux, and Toscanini.

Shostakovich's Leningrad symphony became a national rallying call to resistance and victory.

- 5) **Bela Bartok** – *String Quartet #4*. According to the composer and Bartok scholar, Halsey Stevens, "Bartok's fourth quartet comes close to being, if it does not actually represent, Bartok's greatest and most profound achievement."
- 6) **Amy Beach** – *Piano Quintet*. Overcoming societal bias against female composers, Amy Beach was the first successful female composer in America. Denied a teacher (reserved for males at the time), she learned composition through self-study.
- 7) **Dmitri Shostakovich** – *Piano Quintet*. Premiered in Moscow in late 1940 by the Beethoven String Quartet, the quintet was received with so much enthusiasm that the Scherzo and Finale had to be repeated in their entirety. That same year the quintet won the Stalin Prize of 100,000 rubles, likely the largest sum ever paid for a piece of chamber music.
- 8) **Sergei Rachmaninov** – *Vespers*. Vespers is one of the seven specified times for prayer in the Roman Catholic rite, falling in early evening but sometimes now made into a Sunday service.

Beyond the capabilities of most parish choirs, Rachmaninov's Vespers was composed with concert performance and professional singers in mind and received its premiere in Moscow in 1915. It remains one of the greatest pieces ever composed for the Orthodox church.

- 9) **Joaquin Rodrigo** – *Concierto d'Aranjuez – 2nd movement*. Composed in 1939, Rodrigo's Concierto d'Aranjuez stands as one of the most loved and popular concertos for any instrument of any time.
- 10) **Samuel Barber** – *Adagio for Strings*. Originally written as the slow movement of a string quartet, Barber later transcribed the piece for string orchestra. In this new form it was premiered by the NBC Symphony Orchestra under Arturo Toscanini in 1938. Possessing an intensely mournful tone, it was played at the funeral of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt as well as President John F. Kennedy.
- 11) **Giacomo Puccini** – *Turandot - Nessun Dorma*. When premiered at La Scala in 1926 under the baton of Arturo Toscanini, Puccini had already been dead almost two years. Its final passages were prepared by composer Franco Alfano based on sketches Puccini had left behind. While received less enthusiastically than Puccini's earlier masterworks, it steadily gained growing admiration and remains one of opera's favorite works.

Contemporary

- 1) **Philip Glass** (born 1937) – *Violin Concerto*. In a change from his minimalist music of the 70s that focused on rhythmic processes, in the early 80s Glass began to introduce melody and harmony into his music, the Violin Concerto being a particularly hypnotic example of his new compositional direction.
- 2) **Oswaldo Golijov** (born 1960) – *The Dreams & Prayers of Isaac the Blind*. Composed in 1994, *The Dreams & Prayers of Isaac the Blind* is Oswaldo Golijov's musical interpretation of a manuscript written in the 13th century by the great rabbi, Isaac the Blind, an epic tale covering the 6,000 years of Jewish history. Each movement is meant to sound like the languages spoken by the Jews during these times; Aramaic, Yiddish, and Hebrew. While composing the second movement his father would periodically call out, "There you go, another Yiddish chord!"
- 3) **Thomas Ades** (born 1971) – *Gefriolsae me*. Penned in 1990 for the King's College Choir, *Gefriolsae me* is an anthem setting of Psalm 51, verse 14, "Deliver me from guilt, oh God, thou God of my salvation. Open thou my lips and my mouth shall show forth thy praise."
- 4) **John Adams** (born 1947) – *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*. As the title suggests, *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* is four minutes of full-throttle fireworks. Premiered in 1986 under the baton of Michael Tilson Thomas, it remains one of Adams' most popular pieces.
- 5) **Jennifer Higdon** (born 1962) – *Violin Concerto*. In addition to winning a Pulitzer Prize in 2010 for her Violin Concerto, Higdon has also garnered three Grammy Awards (2010, 2018, and 2020).
- 6) **Joan Tower** (born 1938) – *Made in America*. The recording of 'Made in America' by the Nashville Symphony Orchestra won a 2008 Grammy Award for Best Classical Album and Best Orchestral Performance.
- 7) **Christina Volpini** (born 1992) – *As Within, So Without*. In Christina's own words, "As above, so below; as below, so above. As within, so without; as without, so within. This principle articulates the correspondence between the laws and phenomena of planes that overlay one another. Looking at what exists in a layer above or below may infer the pattern or shadow nature of what is in-between."

Why Music Changes

"Music was chaste and modest so long as it was played on simpler instruments, but since it has come to be played in a variety of manners and confusedly, it has lost its mode of gravity and virtue and fallen almost to baseness."

Boethius (c 480-524)

"Music was originally discreet, seemly, simple, masculine, and of good morals. Have not the moderns rendered it lascivious beyond measure?"

Jacob of Liege (c 1425)

"They are so enamored of themselves as to think it within their power to corrupt, spoil, and ruin the good old rules handed down in former times by so many theorists and most excellent musicians, the very men from whom these moderns have learned to string together a few notes with little grace. For them it is enough to create a tumult of sounds, a confusion of absurdities, an assemblage of imperfections."

G.M. Artusi (1600)

"The overture to Beethoven's opera Fidelio was performed recently and all impartial musicians and music lovers were in complete agreement that never was anything written in music so incoherent, shrill, muddled, and utterly shocking to the ear."

August von Kotzebue (1806)

"Serious music is a dead art. The vein which for three hundred years offered a seemingly inexhaustible yield of beautiful music has run out. What we know as modern music is the noise made by deluded speculators picking through the slag pile."

Henry Pleasants: The Agony of Modern Music (1955)

Given such a long lineage of near-universal animosity toward new music, why has each generation of musician patently avoided the path of least resistance and, instead, set off in new directions?

The answer is that art, as an integral part of life, has to change just as life itself changes. Music from each of the periods we have studied simply reflects the reality of those periods. As life changes, so too does music. Methods and techniques of the past lose their ability to communicate current reality and composers must find new approaches to speak to the listeners of *their* time.

In the words of Igor Stravinsky, referred to as a revolutionary in his time whose 'Rite of Spring' of 1913 provoked fist fights at its Paris premiere, *"I hold that it was an error to regard me as a revolutionary. If one only need break habit in order to be labeled a revolutionary, then every artist who has something to say and who, in order to say it, steps outside the bounds of established convention, could be considered a revolutionary."*

Great Music Through the Ages – A Review

Medieval Period (5 AD – 1300 AD)

- Unaccompanied monophonic choral music for the church.
- Meditative with no sudden leaps in pitch or widely varying dynamics.
- Easy to follow and understand.
- Sameness from piece to piece.
- *Example: Gregorian chant*

Renaissance Period (1300 AD – 1600 AD)

- Unaccompanied polyphonic choral music for the church.
- Meditative with few sudden leaps in pitch or widely-varying dynamics.
- Easily enjoyed if less easy to follow due to the many overlapping voices.
- More variation but still much sameness from piece to piece.
- *Example: Jean Richafort - Requiem*

Baroque Period (1600 AD – 1750 AD)

- Small scale secular instrumental music for the courts of nobility comes to the fore.
- Music for the church now takes a back seat to secular music. What is composed for the church is now accompanied homophonic choral music.
- Lively, motoric, tuneful, and generally happy sounding.
- Wider dynamic range but still generally modest.
- Easily enjoyed and relatively easy to follow due to logical musical forms.
- Greater variation in musical genres (chamber, orchestral, opera, choral, instrumental)
- *Example: Antonio Vivaldi - Flute Concerto*

Classical Period (1750 AD – 1820 AD)

- Larger scale secular instrumental music for nobility or commissioned by nobility.
- Refined, understated elegance that avoids sensational effects.
- Generally easy to follow due to strict use of the major/minor key system and regular rhythms.
- Generally easy listening but becoming more challenging toward the end of the period (e.g. Beethoven's last string quartets).
- Dissonance is used but very judiciously.
- Still modest dynamic range.
- Wide range of musical genres (chamber, orchestral, opera, choral, instrumental, symphonic)
- *Example: Joseph Haydn – String Quartet*

Romantic Period (1820 AD – 1910 AD)

- Large to gargantuan secular instrumental music for public consumption. With the loss of noble patrons musicians must perform, teach, publish, and conduct to support themselves.
- Expressive, lush scoring with wide leaps in pitch and much wider dynamics.
- Increasing use of dissonance to build tension.
- Moderately challenging listening with a move away from the use of the major/minor key system near the end of the period.
- *Example: Anton Bruckner – Symphony #9*

Modern & Contemporary Period (1910 – Present)

- Music continues to be composed for public consumption.
- Mix of all styles from past periods combined with plenty of musical experimentation.
- A return to smaller musical forces like the Classical period with emphasis on musical clarity, even sparseness, rather than grand gesture.
- The most challenging period for listening due to reduced use of repetition, complex chords, free use of dissonance, and a move away from the major/minor key system.
- *Example: Philip Glass – Violin Concerto*

Building a Classical Music Library

- 1) Pick up a copy of The Penguin Guide to Compact Discs as a wonderful source for what is available and recommended in classical music recordings. I've found that the descriptions also often provide some idea as to whether the piece is going to suit my taste.

My own copy, from 2002, remains perfectly suitable, and past versions can be sourced inexpensively on-line through Abe Books or Alibris. Classic recordings of the key repertoire rarely go out of production or can often be found on the internet.

The number of recordings critiqued for a piece is generally indicative of its recognized merit by professional musicians and critics. This does not, however, mean you should avoid pieces with only one version listed as lesser composers are almost certainly worth a listen as well.

- 2) Try out classical music sampler CDs to help find pieces you enjoy. Listen to classical music on the internet to widen your search. Source these pieces at the library to "test drive" the entire piece before purchase.
- 3) It may prove wise to start your search from the medieval period and work your way up through the ages to Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Modern, and finally, Contemporary as the demands placed on listeners generally increases with each subsequent period.
- 4) When you find a piece you enjoy, try other pieces by the same composer and other composers of that same period.
- 5) Try out various genres of the same period (symphonic, orchestral, instrumental, choral, chamber, opera, vocal).
- 6) If you find a piece challenging, try listening to it on headphones and *listen carefully*. Try to follow each of the various instruments or voices in turn. Listen to it several times to build familiarity.
- 7) Do not listen to classical music through speakers in the presence of others who make it known that they dislike classical music. This will only distract you from peaceful, careful listening, to say nothing of enjoyment.

- 8) Read the CD liner notes; download commentary or buy books that provide background commentary to the pieces as this will help you understand and expand your enjoyment. With opera this is absolutely essential as there is a story behind the music.
- 9) Don't give up on a period, composer, or genre. Come back to it periodically by which time your ear may have become accustomed to what, at first listening, was simply unintelligible.
- 10) Don't be afraid to fork out \$4 for a bargain bin used CD by a composer you've never heard of – you may just make a wonderful discovery!
- 11) Explore the budget-priced Naxos CD catalogue. They have created a huge selection of classical CDs that span both the core repertoire as well as delightfully-obscure composers of significant merit. In addition, their website has a wealth of educational material.

Suggested Classical Music Library

1) The Penguin Guide to Compact Discs

(I own the 2002 version which remains perfectly useful as a guide to top-quality CD recordings).

2) The Complete Book of Classical Music – David Ewen

(Biographies of many of the greatest composers up to 1900 including information on their key works).

3) The World of Twentieth Century Music – David Ewen

(The companion guide to The Complete Book of Classical Music covering composers of the Modern era from 1900 to about 1950, also including information on their key works).

4) The New Complete Stories of the Great Operas – Milton Cross

(Essential reading prior to and while listening to your favorite operas with story lines summarized and key arias and choruses highlighted).

5) James Galway's Music in Time – William Mann

(An enjoyable history of classical music intended for the general public).

6) What to Listen for in Music – Aaron Copland

(One of America's greatest composers, Copland provides his take on what serious lovers of classical music should be listening for in the music they enjoy).

7) Music and Imagination – Aaron Copland

(The composer's insight into classical music from the perspective of the composer, musician, and intelligent listener).

8) Listening to Music – Dr. Craig Wright

(The classic text that accompanies Dr. Wright's excellent (and free!) on-line music appreciation course through Yale University – highly recommended (<https://oyc.yale.edu/music/musi-112/lecture-1>)).

9) How to Listen To & Understand Great Music – Dr. Stephen Greenberg

(available in paperback or audio lectures through '[The Learning Company](#)', Professor Greenberg's enthusiasm shines through in this most enjoyable and informative lecture series).

Classical Music Buyer's Guide

The following is intended as a rough guide to building a classical music collection. The degree to which a piece may prove challenging to someone coming new to classical music is noted by use of an "Ease of Listening" (EOL) scale from 1 to 5 with 5 being the most challenging. This is shown in brackets beside a piece as (EOL = #). Where no ranking is shown it is assumed to be a 1 – easy listening.

Medieval Chant (5 AD – 1300 AD)

Given its relative sameness, virtually any CD of chant will prove enjoyable, all of it easy listening and meditative, almost all of it exclusively performed by male voices, as was the practice at the time.

For an enjoyable variation that includes female voices, try: *Chant Gregorien D'Aquitaine* on the Harmonia Mundi label (HMA 1903031)

Renaissance Sacred Choral Music (1300 AD – 1600 AD)

As with medieval chant, there is much sameness among Renaissance sacred choral music, almost all of it easy listening and meditative as befits its role as church music.

Nonetheless, I have always found myself drawn to the most mellismatic of composers (i.e. those who stretch out words over many notes in beautiful, long-breathed phrases).

Suggested listening includes:

- 1) Gregorio Allegri – *Miserere* (Gimmell – CDGIM 339). This comes coupled with a wonderful recording of Palestrina's *Missa Papae Marcelli*, possibly the pinnacle of Renaissance choral music. The Gimmell label was launched specifically to market recordings of the renowned choir, The Tallis Scholars, known for its immaculate, beautiful sound.
- 2) Frei Manuel Cardoso – *Requiem* (Gimmell – CDGIM 921).
- 3) Jean Richafort – *Requiem* (Harmonia Mundi – HMC 901730)
- 4) John Sheppard – *Media Vita* (Gimmell – CDGIM 016)
- 5) William Byrd – *The Three Masses* (Gimmell – CDGIM 345).

Baroque period (1600 – 1750)

As with Medieval chant and Renaissance sacred choral music, it is difficult to go wrong with music of the Baroque given its abundance of melody and generally sunny disposition. Outstanding examples include:

- 1) J.S. Bach – Just about everything Bach wrote is a masterpiece with particularly popular selections being:
 - *Brandenburg Concertos* (Philips – 468 1092 and 468 1102)
 - *Orchestral Suites* (Decca – 430 378-2)
 - *Schubler Chorales* (organ music – Naxos – 8.55315)
 - *Mass in B Minor* (Deutsche Gramophone (DG) – 415 514-2) (EOL = 2)
 - *The Art of the Fugue* (Decca – 289 467 267-2)
 - *Violin Concertos* (Philips – 420 700-2)
 - *Cello Suites* (Philips – 442 293-2) (EOL = 3)
 - *Sonatas & Partitas for Violin* (DG – 453 004-2) (EOL = 3)

- 2) George Frideric Handel – Once again, difficult to go wrong with anything written by Handel whose music invariably has an air of nobility about it. Highlights include:
 - *Organ Concertos* (Erato – 4509-91932-2)
 - *12 Concerti Grossi – Opus 6* (Philips – 410 048-2)
 - *Water Music* (DG – 419 861-2). This recording also includes the equally recommendable *Music for the Royal Fireworks*.
 - *Keyboard Suites* (EMI – 7243 5 69337 2 9)
 - *Messiah* (Decca – 414 396-2) (EOL = 2)

- 3) Antonio Vivaldi – One of the most popular and prolific Baroque composers. Recommended recordings include:
 - *The Four Seasons* (Philips – 422 065-2)
 - *Sacred Choral Music* (Philips – 420 648-2) (EOL = 2)
 - *Six Flute Concertos* (DG – 423 702-2)
 - *Wind Concertos* (Decca – 417 777-2)
 - *La Stravaganza* (Decca – 417 502-2)

- 4) In addition to Vivaldi there are a wealth of notable Italian composers including:
 - Tomaso Albinoni (*12 Concerti, Op 5* – Philips – 422 251-2);
 - Arcangelo Corelli (*Concerti Grossi, Op 6* – DG – 423 626-2) ;
 - Francesco Geminiani (*Six Concerti Grossi, Op 3* – Sony – SK 48043)
 - Pietro Locatelli (*Concerti Grossi, Op 1* – Naxos – 8.553445 and 8.553446)
 - Francesco Manfredini (*Concerti Grossi, Op 3* – Naxos – 8.553891)
 - Francesco Veracini (*Overtures & Concertos* - Naxos – 8.553413).

- 5) Other baroque composers of note include:
 - Dietrich Buxtehude (*Trio Sonatas* – ASV – CD GAU 110)
 - John Stanley (*Six Concertos in Seven Parts* – CRD – CDA66338)
 - William Boyce (*3 Symphonies* – DG – 419 631-2)
 - Willem de Fesch (*Concerti Grossi & Violin Concerti* – Olympia – OCD 450)
 - Georg Philipp Telemann (*Wind Concertos* – DG – 419 633-2).

Classical Period (1750 – 1820)

The Classical period is noted for its dignified, urbane nobility and logical, generally easily-followed musical development. Boisterous expression is at a minimum and ease of listening ranges from easy to moderate with few examples of overly-challenging pieces (and that tend to have been composed in the final years of each listed composer's life).

1) Franz Josef Haydn

- Haydn's music is filled with dignity and charm, guaranteed easy on the ear and an excellent entry point into music of the Classical period.
- *String quartets* – any of Haydn's string quartets are a model of grace and charm. The Naxos label has a wealth of them, such as *String Quartets, Op 71 #1-3* – Naxos – 8.550394.
- *Piano trios* – as with his string quartets, Haydn's piano trios are a delight. The full set can be found on the Philips label - 454 098-2
- Haydn's masses are also among the most elegant and noble, prime examples include his *Paukenmesse* (Philips – 412 734-2), *Organ masses* (Philips – 420 162-2), and *Schofungsmesse* (EMI – CDC 7 54002 2). (EOL = 2)
- *London Symphonies* (Philips – 442 614-2 and 442 611-2). (EOL = 2)
- *Paris Symphonies* (Decca – 473 801-2). (EOL = 2)

2) Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

- Likely possessing the most recognizable musical style, Mozart excelled in every genre he tackled leaving no weak link in any of his output. Like Haydn, his music is almost routinely easy on the ear although his late symphonies portend the arrival of the great Beethoven – explore at will and with enthusiasm! Some of my favorites include:
- All of his piano concertos, particularly those from #15 through his last, #27 (e.g. *Piano concertos #20 and #21* – Philips – 426 204-2).
- *Piano sonatas* (complete set on Philips – 422 517-2).
- *Piano-based chamber music* (Philips – 422 514-2).
- *Requiem* (Philips – 420 197-2). (EOL = 3)
- *Symphonies 40 & 41* (DG – 445 548-2). (EOL = 3)
- *Waisenhaus Messe* (DG – 427 255-2). (EOL = 2)

3) Ludwig van Beethoven

- Beethoven revolutionized music at a time when social revolution was sweeping the Western world. Musicologists often break his music down into three periods (up to 1800, 1800 to 1817, and 1817 to his death in 1827), the last during advanced deafness when he created what many consider to be his greatest, although more challenging, masterpieces (e.g. *Symphony #9*; *String quartets Op 127, 130-133, and 135*; *Missa Solemnis*).
- *Symphonies 1 through 9*. (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 – EOL = 2; 3, 9 – EOL = 4)
- *Violin concerto* (Teldec – 9031-74881-2) (EOL = 3)
- *Piano concertos 1-5* (DG – 427 237-2) (EOL = 2)
- *Piano sonatas* (Philips – 438 730-2) (EOL = 3)
- *Violin sonatas, Op 12* (Naxos – 8.550284)
- *Late string quartets* (Philips – 464 684-2) (EOL = 4)
- *Archduke & Ghost piano trios* (Philips – 464 683-2)
- *Mass in C Major* (DG – 429 510-2). This is coupled with an equally-powerful performance of Mozart's great Coronation Mass. (EOL = 2)
- *Missa Solemnis* (DG 429 779-2). (EOL = 4)

4) Franz Schubert

- Much of Schubert's music is utterly amiable although his latter string quartets and symphonies have a bite that may challenge a novice ear.
- *Symphonies 3, 5, & 6* (EMI – 7243 5 66999 2 2) (EOL = 3)
- *Symphonies 8 & 9* (DG – 453 664-2) (EOL = 3)
- *Trout quintet* (Decca – 452 393-2). This recording also includes Schubert's splendid *Arpeggione Sonata*.
- *Masses #2 & #6* (Telarc – CD-80212) (EOL = 2)
- *Piano sonata D960* (EMI 7243 5 55359 2 4). (EOL = 3)

Romantic Period (1820 – 1910)

The Romantic period is notable for the extraordinary quantity of high-quality and varied output from a large contingent of composers. Ease of listening falls mostly in the moderate range but is rarely overly challenging. Exuberantly-wide dynamics and large orchestral forces are the norm.

- Johannes Brahms
 - Symphonies 2-4 (EOL = 3)
 - 2 piano concertos. (EOL = 3)
 - Violin concerto (EOL = 2)
 - Quintets (complete set on Philips – 446 172-2) (EOL = 2)
 - German Requiem (EOL = 2)
- Gustav Mahler
 - 10 symphonies (EOL = 4)
- Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky
 - Symphonies 4-6 (EOL = 3)
 - 3 ballets (*Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty*) (EOL = 3)
 - Piano concerto #1 (EOL = 2)
 - Violin concerto (EOL = 2)
 - 1812 overture (Naxos – 8.550500). This recording also includes sonically spectacular versions of three other popular orchestral pieces by Tchaikovsky). (EOL = 2)
- Felix Mendelssohn
 - Symphonies 3-5 (EOL = 3)
 - 2 piano concertos (EOL = 2)
 - Violin concerto (EOL = 2)
 - *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. (EOL = 2)

- Robert Schumann
 - 4 symphonies (EOL = 3)
 - Piano concerto (EOL = 2)
 - Violin concerto (EOL = 2)
 - Cello concerto (EOL = 3)
 - Chamber music (EMI 7243 5 55484 2 9) (EOL = 3)

- Antonin Dvorak
 - Symphonies 5-9 (EOL = 3)
 - Cello concerto (EOL = 3)
 - American string quartet (Testament – SBT 1074) (EOL = 3)
 - Piano quartets (Hyperion – CDA66287) (EOL = 3)

- Frederic Chopin
 - 2 piano concertos. (EOL = 2)
 - Nocturnes (DG 447 096-2) (EOL = 2)

- Claude Debussy
 - Prélude à l'après midi d'un faune
 - Piano works (Decca – 443 021-2)

- Jacques Offenbach
 - Gaité Parisienne (EOL = 1)
 - La Belle Helene (opera) (EOL = 3)

- Camille Saint Saens
 - Symphony #3 (EOL = 3)
 - 5 piano concertos (EOL = 3)
 - Violin concerto #3 (EOL = 2)
 - Cello concerto #1 (EOL = 3)
 - Piano trios 1 & 2 (Naxos – 8.550935) (EOL = 2)

- Nikolai Rimsky Korsakov
 - Scheherazade (EOL = 2)

- Gabriel Faure
 - Nocturnes (EMI – 7243 5 69437 2 8)
 - Piano quartets (Hyperion – CDA66166) (EOL = 2)
 - Requiem (Telarc – CD-80135). This recording also includes the ethereal Requiem of Maurice Durufle. (EOL = 2)

- Edvard Grieg
 - Lyric pieces (Naxos – 8.553394, 5, & 6)
 - Holberg suites (ASV – CD QS 6094).
 - Violin sonatas (DG 437 525-2) (EOL = 3)
- Hector Berlioz
 - Symphonie Fantastique (EOL = 3)
 - Te Deum (EOL = 3)
 - Messe Solennelle (EOL = 3)
- Anton Bruckner
 - Symphonies 3-9 (EOL = 4)
 - Masses (DG – 447 409-2) (EOL = 4)
 - Te Deum, Psalm 105 (Hanssler – CD 98 119) (EOL = 4)
- Franz Liszt
 - Annees de Pelerinage (piano music – Naxos 8.550548, 49, 50) (EOL = 2)
- Georges Bizet
 - Symphony in C (EOL = 3)
 - Carmen (opera) (EOL = 3)
- Johann Strauss II
 - Waltzes, polkas, etc. (Les Strauss a Vienne – EMI – CZS 7 62751 2)
 - Die Fledermaus (opera). (EOL = 2)
- Modest Mussorgsky
 - Pictures at an Exhibition (EOL = 2)
- Bedrich Smetana
 - Ma Vlast (EOL = 3)
- Sergei Rachmaninov
 - Symphonies 1-3 (EOL = 4)
 - Piano Concertos 2 & 3 (EOL = 3)
 - Vespers (EOL = 2)
- Vincenzo Bellini (opera)
 - La Sonnambula (EOL = 3)
- Gaetano Donizetti (opera)
 - Lucia di Lammermoor (EOL = 3)
 - L'Elisir D'Amore (EOL = 3)
 - La Fille du Regiment (EOL = 2)

- Richard Wagner (opera)
 - Tristan und Isolde (EOL = 4)
 - The Ring (EOL = 5)

- Giuseppe Verdi (opera)
 - Rigoletto (EOL = 3)
 - La Traviata (EOL = 3)
 - Il Trovatore (EOL = 3)
 - Aida (EOL = 4)

- Giacomo Puccini (opera)
 - La Boheme (EOL = 3)
 - Madama Butterfly (EOL = 4)
 - Turandot (EOL = 3)
 - Manon Lescaut (EOL = 3)

Modern & Contemporary Periods (1910 – Present)

The Modern and Contemporary periods are notable for their wide range of styles and musical experimentation. Much of the music of these periods makes for more demanding listening but, nonetheless, rewards those willing to listen for what the composer is trying to say. Unlike the Romantic period, orchestral forces are once again reduced and exuberantly-wide dynamics are less frequent.

Modern Period

- Richard Strauss
 - Violin concerto (EOL = 2)

- Jean Sibelius
 - Symphonies 1-7 (EOL = 4)
 - Violin concerto (EOL = 3)

- Carl Nielsen
 - Symphonies 1-6 (EOL = 4)
 - Violin concerto (EOL = 3)

- Sergei Prokofiev
 - Symphonies 1 & 5 (EOL = 3)
 - Piano Concertos 1-5 (EOL = 3)
 - Cinderella (EOL = 2)
 - Romeo & Juliet (EOL = 4)

- Dmitri Shostakovich
 - String quartets 1-15 (EOL = 4)
 - Symphonies 5 & 9 (EOL = 4)
 - Violin concertos 1 & 2 (EOL = 3)
 - Piano concertos 1 & 2 (EOL = 3)
 - Ballet Suites (EOL = 3)
 - Piano quintet (EOL = 4)

- Darius Milhaud
 - La boeuf sur le toit (EOL = 3)
 - La Creation du monde (EOL = 3)
 - Le Carnaval d'Aix (EOL = 3)

- Arnold Schoenberg
 - Verklaerte Nacht (EOL = 4)
 - Pelleas & Melisande (EOL = 4)

- Alban Berg
 - Violin concerto (EOL = 5)

- Maurice Ravel
 - Ma Mere L'Oye (EOL = 3)
 - Piano concerto (EOL = 3)
 - Bolero (EOL = 1)

- Aaron Copland
 - Symphony #3 (EOL = 4)
 - Appalachian Spring (EOL = 3)

- Bela Bartok
 - String quartets 1-6 (EOL = 5)

- Igor Stravinsky
 - The Firebird (EOL = 4)
 - The Rite of Spring (EOL = 5)

- Samuel Barber
 - Violin concerto (EOL = 3)
 - Adagio (EOL = 1)

- Ralph Vaughn Williams
 - Orchestral music – various (Nimbus – NI 7013) (EOL = 2)
 - A London Symphony (EOL = 3)

- William Walton
 - Symphony #1 (EOL = 3)
 - Violin concerto (EOL = 3)
 - Viola concerto (EOL = 3)

- Edward Elgar
 - Enigma variations (EOL = 3)
 - Violin concerto (EOL = 3)
 - Symphonies 1-3 (EOL = 3)

- Benjamin Britten
 - Violin concerto (EOL = 4)
 - String quartets (EOL = 4)

- Malcolm Arnold
 - Symphonies 1-9 (EOL = 4)

Contemporary Period

- John Adams
 - Shaker Loops (EOL = 3)

- Leonardo Balada
 - Violin concerto (EOL = 4)

- Thomas Ades
 - Living Toys (EOL = 4)

- Osvaldo Golijov
 - The Dreams & Prayers of Isaac the Blind (EOL = 4)

- Philip Glass
 - Violin concerto (EOL = 4)

- William Bolcolm
 - Violin sonatas (EOL = 4)
 - Cello works (*Naxos – 8.559348*) (EOL = 4)

- Ernst Toch
 - Piano quintet (EOL = 4)

- Elisabetta Brusa
 - Orchestral works (Naxos – 8.555266 & 267) (EOL = 4)

- Christina Volpini
 - Visit Christina's website at: <https://www.cvolpini.com/about>

Appendix A - What Life Was Like

What Life was Like – Medieval Period (AD 800 – 1500)

Politics

From the fall of Rome in 476 AD Europe degenerated into a patchwork of small kingdoms, duchies, and tribal states constantly warring over land and power.

Society

The vast majority of people lived in self-sufficient communities as peasant farmers known as serfs beholden to their local lord. The majority of the remainder either fought for a noble or served the church. A small number were trades people. The children of the wealthy often apprenticed in banking and law. Some merchants began to band together to share the risk of importing goods from afar in a precursor to today's companies.

Few people outside of clergy were literate. Those who did take studies took notes using wood styluses on wax tablets.

Possession of land was often given to soldiers hired by the nobility. Such soldiers eventually came to be referred to as knights.

Towns had no means of waste removal so it was tossed into rivers or into the streets where some of it would be eaten by free-roaming pigs. Church bells tolled the time of day. There were no street lights (which would not appear until the 1800s), no sidewalks, and usually no paving. Criminals were publicly hung and left to rot until room was needed on the gallows for a new lynch victim.

As youngest sons could not inherit, they often became knights. To catch the eye of wealthy nobles they entered into jousting tournaments as a way to show off their fighting prowess. Such jousts eventually lost popularity around 1600.

Peasants lived in one-room huts along with their livestock. As candles were expensive, the setting of the sun dictated the end of the day. The largest meal was reserved for noon to avoid the darkness of the evening.

Peasant garb consisted of tunics and leggings, typically worn until they fell apart.

Women cooked, wove woolens, looked after the children, sheared sheep, and worked the vegetable garden. Brothels were also a common feature.

The daily grind of peasant life was periodically reprieved by pagan festivals, now incorporated into the Catholic calendar and given new names.

Marriage was viewed as a business deal arranged by parents to ensure the family's prosperity. While the church performed some weddings, most were simply private ceremonies.

Roughly 50% to 60% of children never lived to see their fifth birthday. Popular games included hide and seek, ball games, tops, hoops, dolls, whistles, and clay birds.

Dental hygiene consisted of rinsing your mouth with water, rubbing your teeth with a cloth or the ash of burnt rosemary, chewing herbs, using toothpicks, and a mint/vinegar mixture. To whiten teeth people rubbed them with powdered sage. The first toothbrush would not make its appearance until 1857, some four hundred years in the future at this point.

Deodorant consisted of oils from flowers mixed with herbs and spices.

The Church

To maintain their influence, the Catholic church sent missionaries to the nobility to convert them to Christianity, achieving much success. A major breakthrough was the Pope's crowning of Charlemagne as Emperor in 800 which set the precedent for the church to have a say in public affairs.

Catholic monasteries sprang up throughout Europe. In France alone from 1050 to 1350 there were 80 cathedrals and 500 large churches built requiring more stone than all the Egyptian pyramids combined. A large cathedral could take over 100 years to build. Some abbeys controlled as many as 3000 manor homes.

Many parents placed one or more children under the monks' care in what was a lifetime contract.

In 1100 it was not uncommon for priests and even bishops to be married although higher church authorities were already beginning to frown on this practice.

Daily life in a monastery consisted of 7 prayer sessions (which took up fully half the day), one full meal plus a cold evening snack, three hours of manual labor, and copying classic texts for posterity (such as Virgil, Ovid, and scholarly tomes).

Nobility & Upper Classes

Unlike peasants whose meals consisted mainly of bread, grain stews, vegetables, and ale (but only rarely meat), nobles feasted on starlings, gulls, herons, storks, ducks, vultures, pigs, geese, and fish all spiced with pepper, mustard, and garlic. Vegetables, being considered peasant food, were avoided as was fruit which medicine at the time considered unhealthy. Dessert consisted of sculptures made of sugared paste and jelly.

What Life was Like - Italy During the Renaissance (AD 1400 – 1550)

The Arts

Artists of note:

- Sculptors: Donatello, Michelangelo (*David, Pieta*).
- Architects: Brunelleschi (*dome of St. Mark's Cathedral – Florence*); Michelangelo (*dome of St. Peter's Cathedral – Rome*).
- Writers: Machievelli (*'The Prince'*, a guide to creating and maintaining a powerful state through cunning, deceit, hypocrisy, cruelty, ruthlessness, expediency, and even murder).
- Painters: Botticelli (*Birth of Venus*), Da Vinci (*Mona Lisa, The Last Supper*), Michelangelo (*ceiling of the Sistine Chapel*).
- Inventor: Da Vinci (*parachute, elevator, submarine, diving suit, life jacket, etc.*).

Artists mastered linear perspective and foreshortening to give their paintings the illusion of depth. They began to show life as naturally as possible.

General Society

Sons of merchants entered the business at 13 after schooling in grammar, geometry, and Latin. Daughters received home education.

Girls married as early as age 14. If not married by 18 they would feel life had passed them by, their only option being to enter a convent. Convents in 16th and 17th century Italy were largely dumping grounds for unattached women – widows, discarded mistresses, converted prostitutes, and the unmarried daughters of nobility. In Milan in the 1600s three-quarters of female nobility were sent away for life to convents. Boys, on the other hand, could remain bachelors well into their 30s. Orphanages and foundling hospitals ended up housing many abandoned children as a result.

Among pregnant women, one in ten died during childbirth.

Well-to-do women and young girls stayed home and, if out, were chaperoned. Lower-class women had greater freedom of movement. Men had total freedom.

To prevent ostentatious display of wealth, laws were passed restricting how much an outfit may cost and limited the amount of jewelry that could be worn.

Women typically dressed in three layers; a linen chemise, a wool or silk under-dress, and an ornate over-dress that skimmed the floor. An elaborate head-dress was standard. Men also had three layers, a long-sleeved skirt of linen, a close-fitting jacket, and full-length cloth stockings with leather soles.

Merchant guilds were active in all aspects of life from setting the annual number of working days, to political involvement, to commissioning public works of art and architecture (e.g. Michelangelo's 'David').

Belief in astrology was widespread – universities taught it, astrologers were part of every noble court, and sailors, doctors, popes, and brides all consulted horoscopes.

The Black Plague (bubonic plague) of the 1300s increased the frequency of bathing as prior to this it was widely believed that permitting water to come into contact with your naked body could make you ill. At the time, bathing was also considered sinful by the Church.

Nobles bathed more frequently than peasants with Queen Elizabeth I said to only have bathed once per month. Peasants often had to make due with a wet towel or a dip in a river. Filling a tub was a slow process as water had to first be heated and then carried in buckets to fill the tub. Because of this difficulty, many people bathed in the same water, the eldest going first and on down to the youngest child. By the end the water could be rather filthy, hence the origin of the saying, "Don't throw the baby out with the bath water."

Some of the larger cities had communal bath houses.

Soft soap was made of mutton fat, wood ash, and soda, often with flowers and herb oil added for scent. Hard soap was made of olive oil, soda, lime, herbs, and flowers.

Nobility often carried or wore "nose gays", this being a small bag containing flowers, herbs, oranges studded with cloves, or herbs and would hold it to their nose when walking through a crowd to mask the smell of the peasants.

Castle toilets, used only by the resident noble, often consisted of a stone bench with a hole in it, the waste dropping to a floor below to be mucked out by peasant staff. Toilet wipe consisted of straw, moss, leaves, wool, or linen rags. If a castle had no bathroom then chamber pots were used and remained in wide use until around 1800.

For peasants, a bucket was used to toilet and the contents dumped in a local river or in the woods. Water for cooking and cleaning came from the same river.

The Church

Renaissance popes were infamous for their self-interest, greed, and lascivious behavior, often fathering many children.

What Life was Like - England During the Renaissance (AD 1533 – 1603)

Politics

Spain, strongly Catholic, encouraged rebellious English Catholics to depose Elizabeth I in favor of her sister, Mary Queen of Scots (aka Bloody Mary) who was beheaded in 1587 on Elizabeth's order for her involvement in one such plot.

Elizabeth I was the daughter of King Henry VIII and his second of six wives, Anne Boleyn, who at the time of Elizabeth's birth was Henry's mistress as Henry was still married to Catherine of Aragon. Catherine was the widow of Henry's brother and also the daughter of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain, the sponsors behind Christopher Columbus's exploits. The Catholic church famously refused to annul his marriage to Catherine when she failed to produce a son. Unfortunately for Anne, after also failing to produce a son, was dubiously charged with offences by those in Henry's court who opposed her and was beheaded.

Henry left his successors in difficult straits having depleted the royal coffers through his lavish profligacy. He launched England into two costly wars with France in failed attempts to regain lost territory (and, in the process, antagonized France's ally, Scotland). Henry also made an enemy in Spain by creating the Anglican church.

The Arts

Elizabeth I favored traditional sacred music and so employed Catholic composers in her Chapel Royal.

The Globe Theatre opened in 1599 with Shakespeare's *Henry V*. The wealthy sat right on stage. Attendees would talk and even brawl during performances.

The Church

The law demanded that people attend church.

The Church held many celebrations, these largely funded by wealthy citizens. At Christmas, homes were decorated with pagan holly and ivy, people watched religious plays, held parties, played cards and board games, and sang carols.

At Shrovetide (3 weeks before Ash Wednesday) people ate foods forbidden during Lent, men played street sports such as soccer, held foot races, and frequented cock fights.

Protestant religious reforms greatly curtailed the number of holidays from 95 feast days to just 27. Congregational singing slowly replaced the organ and choirs.

Nobility & Upper Classes

The task of emptying the royal chamber pot was entrusted to the 'Groom of the Stool', a position so intimate and in frequent contact with the monarch that it was held in the utmost esteem, often staffed by the sons of noblemen and wealthy gentry. Only in 1901, under the orders of King Edward VII, was the position finally done away with.

Elizabeth I's morning exercise consisted of 6-7 galliards, a dance consisting of five linked steps followed by a leap in the air with the feet clapping together.

Her day then consisted of: affairs of state such as reading letters, ordering answers, considering what issues to put before council, and meeting with ministers. Later, she would take a walk in a shady garden or pleasant gallery either alone or in the company of a few learned men. She may also hunt or hawk. Evenings often featured entertainment such as dancers and plays.

The Queen often stayed at private homes during regular travels.

Wealth alone did not confer status, only ancestry counted, this confirmed by the College of Heralds who were not above accepting bribes to approve fake pedigrees. The order of status was: Farmers, laborers, tradesmen, then gentlemen who could become esquires or even knights, then nobility ranging from dukes, marquesses, earls, viscounts, and barons. No one entered nobility except through birth or if appointed by the king or queen.

Believing bad air caused disease, wealthy citizens carried pomanders, perforated metal balls filled with cinnamon, cloves, musk, and other aromatics to mask pungent odors caused by raw sewage and infrequent bathing.

The well-to-do decorated their homes with musical instruments, even if they were unable to play them.

General Society

Travel was by horseback as coaches were still a novelty.

Rural life centered around work, church, and ale houses. Most people, including farmers, lived in a village.

Most couples had 3-5 children. Once in their teens children would leave home to work as a farm hand, domestic servant, or apprentice.

Women ran the household, cared for the children, cooked, went to market for goods, and worked in the home, spinning, weaving, or dyeing cloth.

Homes had floors of packed soil or stones. Chamber pots were emptied into public cesspools or gutters.

Cock-fighting and bear-baiting were popular spectacles with all classes. Fishing was a popular pastime for all classes.

Vagrancy was illegal punishable by whipping and even hanging. In 1572 greater enlightenment to the plight of the unemployed led to taxes collected specifically to aid the poor.

Those institutionalized with mental illness were subjected to regular beatings. For entertainment, people would visit the mental institutions to watch the antics of the mentally ill.

At meals, place settings rarely included a fork, an piece of cutlery introduced from Italy and considered an effeminate novelty.

There were 153 church-decreed fish days per year, usually prepared by boiling. Salted meat was the norm for preservation. Only the well-to-do ate salads, the lower classes settling for eggs and bread.

A popular drink of the time consisted of ale mixed with breadcrumbs, egg yolks, and milk.

Much bookseller shelf space was taken up with bibles, grammar books, and almanacs. Domestic conduct books were also popular covering such topics as wife beating and arranged marriages. The Church reviewed every book prior to publication to ensure it followed both political and religious orthodoxy. Cheap popular publications covered sensational crimes, monstrous birth defects, and freak storms.

Defendants had no legal representation. Those in the infamous Tower of London charged with treason could be there for years without a trial and subjected to torture such as the rack or arrows through their fingers.

Science

Medicine advanced due in large part to the experience gained with wounded soldiers and the dissections of convicted felons.

Home remedies included boiled rose and violet leaves, dew, earthworms boiled in oil and wine, and snail innards.

What Life was Like – Northern Europe During the Renaissance and Early Baroque Period (AD 1500 – 1675)

General Society

God's wrath and eternal damnation were both real and terrifying to people of the Renaissance. Executions of those convicted of witchcraft were not uncommon.

Most people continued to live in small villages and worked fields around their homes.

As only a small percentage of people could read, publications of the day contained ample illustration to tell stories to the illiterate.

It was customary for male guardians to be appointed to administer an estate on behalf of a widow.

Even the most fashionable of ladies (let alone men) rarely took a full bath.

Education progressed a little, with children from 3-7 expected to learn their ABCs and Lord's Prayer. Girls were taught dressmaking and knitting. Children over seven were given bible studies, reading, writing, and arithmetic. Nonetheless, most girls dropped out before learning to read and many boys left to become apprentices. Punishment at school consisted of a whip or cane.

Science

To learn more about the human body, public dissections of cadavers were performed throughout Western Europe from about 1500 to 1750. Such advances were sorely needed as medicine had still not left behind such so-called remedies as bird droppings collected during a full moon. Lovesickness was still considered an actual malady.

What Life was Like - France During the Late Baroque and Classical Periods (AD 1660 – 1800)

Politics

The Philosopher, Emmanuel Kant, summed up this period, known as the Enlightenment, as "*Dare to know; have the courage to use your own reason.*" People began to question the authority of kings, clergy, the structure of the universe, and the existence of God.

In the 1700s France was the largest state in Europe with a population of ~20mm, 80% of whom were peasants who bore the tax load for the financial extravagances of their king, mainly Louis XIV who constructed his palace of Versailles over a 50-year period at immense expense. However, he also created academies for the arts, dance, sciences, architecture, and music and was an avid patron of leading artists and intellectual figures. Unfortunately, he also embroiled his people in constant wars.

Originating in Britain in the mid-1600s, Freemasonry spread throughout Europe and North America with 100,000 members in France alone. Followers included Mozart, Ben Franklin, and U.S. Revolutionary navy captain John Paul Jones. One of their oaths included these words, presaging the revolutions of the coming decades: "*All men are equal. None can stand above another and command him. People bestow sovereignty when they please and retract it when they please.*"

Nobility & Upper Classes

For King Louis XV, the first royal ritual was to greet him as he arose from bed. He would be met by his chief valet who opened his bed curtains and then led in a procession of the highest nobles in strict order of rank to greet the king that day. At bedtime, access to the royal bedroom was hotly contested with the highest honor being to hold the royal candlestick and light the king's way to bed. The king only granted favors to those he knew.

Marital fidelity was not a virtue expected of French kings, so royal mistresses were a regular feature at court. However, protocol dictated that at the onset of death, the liaisons were to be confessed to the Church and further contact, even for the funeral, strictly forbidden.

Aristocratic women wore hoop dresses often so wide that stairwells had to be specially designed to accommodate them and 2-3 seats in theatres were required. Hair styles towered so high that while riding in carriages women had to either kneel or point their heads out the window.

General Society

Peasants paid taxes to the king, lesser nobles, and to clergy, the latter two being exempt from most of the king's taxes. Hereby were the seeds of future revolutions planted.

Manners at the time looked down on physical intimacy with children.

The era is notable for the rise of the merchant class known as the bourgeoisie. Unlike the aristocracy, their marriages were based on love rather than family advantage. They relied on servants to do much of their household work – cooking, cleaning, shopping, mending, waiting on family and guests, washing clothes, and emptying chamber pots.

Police regularly banned and destroyed books deemed subversive to the unquestioned rule of the aristocracy.

Until 1792 in France divorce was not permitted. In its place, at least for the upper class, a public affair was considered an acceptable substitute.

In 1750 Paris had 6500 glass lanterns containing candles suspended about fifteen feet above the ground at forty-five foot intervals tended by 435 lamplighters. The candles usually burned out around 2am but did help reduce petty crime.

Books were considered treasured possessions. Literacy was roughly 45% among men and 25% among women. Periodicals containing political gossip made up the bulk of what was produced. In fiction, the novel made its debut and proved very popular. Fictional travel memoirs also proved popular. Borrowing libraries also made their appearance.

French peasants were chronically poor and malnourished, living mainly on bread and water porridge and infrequently on vegetables, chestnuts, and berries. Meat was rarely eaten.

A popular form of entertainment was dancing both in dance halls and in the street.

Science

Medicine relied heavily on blood-letting, enemas, and purging.

While an improvement from past eras, it is estimated that 45% of children died before age 10.

Pregnant women were bled from the arm, leg, and neck at regular intervals to get rid of "surplus" fluids.

Surgery was considered a lowly calling and many practitioners had little training, often beginning their careers as barbers.

In the early 1700s, glass started to replace oiled paper in windows.

What Life was Like – Europe During the Classical and Romantic Periods (AD 1789 – 1848)

Politics

In 1789 the leaders of the French Revolution drafted the “Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen” that declared all men equal. This encouraged other revolutions: Belgium became independent of the Netherlands; northern Italy battled for freedom from Austria; Poland fought against Russian control. In contrast, Britain avoided revolution by giving more citizens the right to vote.

Nobility & Upper Classes

Aristocratic women kept at least ten wigs and changed them frequently throughout the day. Men wore frock coats with long skirts over loose-fitting breeches.

By the early 1800s people bathed more frequently with the wealthy bathing almost daily, the peasants weekly. The first shower was invented in 1810 but was rare. The water was recycled so the next in line used dirty water.

Aristocrats used different courts than commoners. University students of noble birth sat separately from the lower classes.

General Society

Child labor was common-place with children as young as five working the coal mines due to their unique ability to reach deep into the narrow coal seams. Working days of 12-14 hours, six days a week were the norm.

Romantics promoted individual creativity over Classical rules, exalted emotion over reason, loved the wild beauty of nature and exotic, far-off places, and admired genius and heroism.

In the early 1800s the streets of Paris were filled with refuse and covered in a thick mud. The average citizen paid for water by the bucket sold by vendors pushing water casks on carts. Oil burning street lights began to make an appearance. All classes suffered from a lack of adequate heating, even Napoleon often standing near his fireplace when entertaining guests.

Tours of foreign countries became popular with the well-to-do.

Literacy among adults was only around 40% in the early 1800s. Primary education for boys in France did not become common until after 1833 when the government took over this responsibility. Girls' education was not made compulsory until 1850. The three R's plus French and moral/religious training comprised the curriculum.

Salons became the gathering point for French and Austrian artists, politicians, and intellectuals to discuss topics of the day, all led and mediated by a woman apprenticed specifically for such a role.

At informal gatherings people played instruments and sang to amuse themselves.

Commoners homes were often one-room affairs with floors strewn with straw. Windows were generally small and glassless protected only by shutters. By the 1800s plumbing became more common but often plugged up, leaving foul smells nowhere to go but throughout the home.

The Arts

While Classical artists painted for royal and aristocratic patrons, Romantic painters did so for themselves on themes of their own choosing, often scenes of ordinary life to sell to the bourgeoisie.

Science

In the early 1800s opium was considered a treatment for alcoholism, gout, cholera, hay fever, insomnia, and TB. Opium elixirs were given to babies to pacify them. Tinctures of opium known as laudanum were freely available at the local apothecary.

First in England and later in Europe, steam began to power forges, looms, pumps, ships, printing presses, and by 1830, trains and buses. In a ten-year period from 1838 to 1848 predominantly Irish laborers lay 8000 kilometres of railway track.

Global exploration and trade brought back many new ailments – diphtheria, typhus, typhoid, malaria, meningitis, and smallpox.

The first dentures, gold crowns, and porcelain teeth made their appearance. In 1790 the first foot-pedal driven dentist's drill was invented. It was not uncommon for barbers to also serve as dentists as well as surgeons.

What Life was Like – Habsburg Empire During the Romantic Period (AD 1848 - 1918)

Politics

The Habsburgs arrived in the Austrian lands in the late 13th century. Only in the 1500s, however, did they lay the foundation of their multinational empire, acquiring through dynastic marriage the kingdoms of Bohemia and Hungary-Croatia. Within its borders lived Germans, Hungarians, Italians, Czechs, Romanians, Poles, Slovaks, Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Jews, and Gypsies.

In 1866, after a crushing defeat at the hands of the Prussians (later, Germany), Emperor Franz Josef ceded legislative control to an elected parliament and formed a pact with Hungary that saw the empire divided into two equal parts – the Austro-Hungary Dual Monarchy.

Only substantial landowners could vote for city councilors. Franz Josef changed this to also include those men who voluntarily paid some property tax.

Nobility & Upper Classes

Class lines remained very clearly demarcated. To be able to attend functions at the court of the emperor, aristocrats had to prove that all of the ancestors as far back as their great-great grandparents had been of noble blood.

Of course, such requirements necessitated mate selection within a very limited gene pool – marriages to first and second cousins were commonplace among nobility with such inbreeding often leading to the birth of children with mental and physical abnormalities. Franz Josef himself, at the age of 24, married his first cousin, Elizabeth, age 15.

Such was the importance of class distinction that when Franz Josef's heir, his nephew Archduke Franz Ferdinand, chose to marry outside the circle of dynastically-approved families, his wife, the Countess Sophie, was not permitted to sit with her husband at the opera, could not enter a ballroom on his arm, and was not permitted to use the royal carriages.

Monarchs continued to believe that they had the Divine right to rule and legislative representation by their subjects never entered their thoughts. Franz Josef became emperor of the Habsburg empire at just 18, continuing an unbroken family line of rulers going back to the thirteenth century.

Franz Josef's typical day ran something like this:

- 4am: Rise and shine, bath in cold water, work on papers of state over a meagre breakfast of coffee, buttered roll, and sometimes a slice of ham.
- 7:30am: Meet with various military and cabinet officials.
- 10 – noon: Twice per week he would give audience to up to 100 commoners to hear and try to resolve their grievances and requests.
- Noon – 5pm: Continue to deal with affairs of state.
- 5 – 6pm: Dinner with family and guests, often a boring affair as etiquette dictated that one only spoke to the emperor if he spoke to you first. Dinner was also often very short as the meal was over when the emperor was done – and he ate little and ate quickly.

Visitors granted an audience with the emperor were expected to back out of the room so as not to turn their back on him.

When guests would visit aristocrats the house porter would ring the announcement bell as many times as custom required to signify the visitors gender or rank: 1 = Gentleman, 2 = Lady, 3 = Archduke, etc.

General Society

Coffee houses were the heart of the social, political, and intellectual life of Vienna. There patrons would read from a huge variety of newspapers (numbering well over 100 different papers), write, play cards, chess, or billiards, and discuss politics, art, theatre, and science. Sigmund Freud was but one of the many regular café patrons.

Life in rural areas outside of Vienna was marked by deep-seated poverty. Many left the countryside to try for better lives in the city, swelling Vienna from a population of 490,000 in 1859 to roughly 1.3 million in just thirty years.

Only a tiny percentage of the population lived in a single-family home. As many as four families could be found sharing a single room, sleeping on the floor or on top of tables. Given the lack of space at home, most commoners socialized in the streets and in parks.

Peasant homes were lit only by candles and oil lamps and had little or no heating or plumbing. Barely a quarter of households had an indoor toilet, it being not at all unusual for a dozen apartments to share one toilet on a landing or out in the adjoining yard. Some buildings provided but a single water faucet and many people had to fetch water from an outdoor pump or the nearest public fountain.

Such close living quarters favored the widespread proliferation of tuberculosis and gastric illnesses.

While education was mandated to age 14, the poor could ill-afford to keep their children in school that long, often finding at least part-time work for children as young as 11.

Most women worked in the clothing industry, although prostitution was also commonplace among the poor. Venereal disease proved a resulting common ailment.

A seven-day, 70-hour workweek was the norm for many, from 7 – 7 with one hour for lunch and one 30-minute break.

The 1880's saw the first labor laws that reduced the work week to no more than six 11-hour days, but many of the regulations applied only to large factories at a time when most firms consisted of fewer than five employees.

The Arts

The Strauss family rose to worldwide fame when Johann Strauss I developed the waltz, basing it on a slow 18th century Austrian folk dance known as the Landler. He and his co-developer, Joseph Lanner, sped up the tempo so that couples could whirl between the downbeats of $\frac{3}{4}$ time.

Compared to the stately minuet favored by the aristocracy, the waltz seemed almost subversive with one critic labeling it "a scandalous dance".

After Johann the elder abandoned his family for another woman, Johann Strauss II went on to take Europe and world by storm with his tuneful waltzes, polkas, marches, and quadrille, some 300 in all during just the first two decades of his career, one that would run for over fifty years up to his death in 1899.

Strauss's operettas such as *Die Fledermaus* and *The Gypsy Baron* also proved wildly popular in the late 1800s. Other composers such as Franz Lehár and Jacques Offenbach carried on the tradition into the early 1900s with such box-office smashes as *The Merry Widow* and *Orpheus in the Underworld*.

Science

The empress Elizabeth was known far and wide for her beauty, two of her beauty secrets being warm baths in olive oil and applying to her face a mask made of raw veal.

Appendix C - A Composer's World

Becoming a Composer

In earlier times, composition was hardly taught at all. If a boy (always a boy back then, never a girl) was found to be musically gifted they were apprenticed to a practical musician and exposed to a broad range of music and music experience, choral singing and learning to play various instruments being primary goals. Learning about the science of sound was also of paramount importance.

Today our university music departments teach composition and music theory but these in themselves cannot create a talented composer as art is an individualistic creative undertaking that cannot be taught beyond the technical aspects.

The Creative Process

Just as it is natural for an artist to paint, so is it natural for a composer to create music, not always of a high caliber, but music nonetheless. The creation of music is as much perspiration as it is inspiration and takes much hard, intellectual work.

Composer, Igor Stravinsky, commented thus on the creative process: *"The idea of discovery of a musical idea and the subsequent hard work is what appeals to me. The appetite that is aroused in me at the mere thought of putting in order musical elements that have attracted my attention is as habitual and periodic as a natural need like eating and sleeping."*

And these words from Sergei Rachmaninov: *"I try to make my music speak simply and directly that which is in my heart at the time I am composing. If there is love there, or bitterness, or sadness, or religion, these moods become part of my music, and it becomes either beautiful, or bitter, or sad, or religious. For composing music is as much a part of my living as breathing and eating. I compose music because I must give expression to my feelings, just as I talk because I must give utterance to my thoughts."*

Every composer begins with a musical idea, often insignificant in itself. Many keep a notebook handy to jot down these ideas as they come to them – from exactly where, they do not know – and ideas cannot be forced. Such ideas may be a few tones, a vague curve of sound, a brief melody, an accompaniment, or a purely rhythmic concept.

Again, Igor Stravinsky: *"A composer improvises aimlessly the way an animal grubs about. In the course of my labors I suddenly stumble upon something unexpected. This unexpected element strikes me. I make a note of it. At the proper time, I put it to profitable use."*

The composer examines the idea for its purely formal beauty – how it rises and falls. They look for its emotional significance and try to determine its essential nature (happy, sad, heroic, peaceful, etc.) and what might be done to develop it.

Intuition and experience helps decide what treatment best suits the material – symphonic, chamber, choral, opera, etc. As for choice of instruments, this is dictated solely by the composer's expressive purpose.

The composer then must come up with material complementary to the initial idea.

Then the truly hard work begins – developing the initial and supplemental ideas into more substantial pieces and working out how to fit them all together seamlessly so that they flow logically in a unified, satisfying whole.

Master composers are the ones able to envision what the final piece will look like in significant detail – not down to every note of course – but the general finished product, their end goal, remains fixated in their mind's eye as they work toward its completion.

The ability to imagine sounds in advance of them being heard in actuality is one factor that widely separates the professional composer from the layman. More than one celebrated composer has struggled to produce an adequate orchestral scoring of the music they hear in their heads.

Compositional Challenges & Considerations

During the development of musical ideas, composers face the following challenges:

- The need to build in guideposts of familiarity to help listeners envision where they are in the piece, where they have come from, and where they are likely going. Excessive novelty and unpredictability take so much effort to follow that emotional enjoyment becomes less likely.
- The organized treatment of even the simplest two-tone harmonies demands purposeful musical thinking to control not just the two independent melodic lines but also the resulting harmonic relationship between the two musical lines of thought.
- The performance venue must be taken into account as listeners in larger halls cannot tolerate excessive complexity. For example, Classical period composers used different techniques for their symphonic works versus their chamber works, scaling back the complexity of the former.

- Composers need to take into account the players' skills as well as the limitations of a human's ability to play the various orchestral instruments.
- A composer must take into account the acoustical properties and limitations of the various instruments. For example, fast tempo on low-pitched instruments is inappropriate as the low-frequency sounds take longer to dissipate leading to a blurred, muddy sound.

Composers' Thoughts on Music In Their Own Words

Paul Hindemith

The ancients viewed music not as mere entertainment as most listeners do today but as a branch of the sciences. Indeed, some of history's greatest scientific minds have been contributors to music theory including Ptolemy, Euclid, Euler, and Kepler.

Music was believed to govern the Earth, time, and the heavens. It was held to have a moral impact with the power to turn our soul towards everything noble, superhuman, and ideal.

While even the most cultured mind sometimes feels a desire for distracting entertainment, to dwell solely on this superficial plane of music enjoyment is to cheat yourself of the considerably broader and loftier power of music.

For genuine musical experience the mind must play an active role. The passive washing of sounds over us void of active intellectual participation cannot produce genuine musical experience.

Aaron Copeland

When I compose I am concerned not so much with whatever pleasure the music may give listeners but rather with the question whether I am being understood – are the listeners comprehending not just the basic surface emotions of the piece but also the subtle shades of emotion I am trying to convey?

Always remember that when you listen to a composer's creation you are listening to an individual with their own special personality that has been influenced by their unique life experiences and by the times within which they live.

Music can only be alive when there are listeners who are really alive. To listen intently, to listen consciously, to listen with one's whole intelligence is the least we can do in the furtherance of an art that is one of the glories of mankind.

Music can be appreciated on three separate planes: 1) The sensuous plane. 2) The expressive plane. 3) The musical plane. Most listeners restrict their involvement with music to the sensuous plane, bathing themselves absent-mindedly in the sheer enjoyment of sound. But serious music has much more to offer than simply sensuous interaction.

The intelligent listener must be prepared to increase their awareness of the musical material and what happens to it. They must hear the melodies, rhythms, harmonies, and tone colors in a more conscious fashion.

Listening is a talent and the higher forms of music imply the existence of a listener whose musical taste has been cultivated through extensive listening or training or both.

Just as the individual composer discovers himself through his creation, so the world at large knows itself through its artists and discovers the very nature of Being.

What do I put down when I put down notes? Emotional states: feelings, perceptions, imaginings, intuitions, all impacted by my background, my convictions, and our shared environment. By reflecting the world around us it gives meaning to the human condition. In giving meaning it therefore has a purpose; I believe a moral purpose as negative emotions cannot produce art.

William Schuman

Why should one have to learn or need guidance on how to listen to what one is hearing? The answer is simple: listening to music is a skill that is acquired through experience and learning. Knowledge enhances enjoyment.

Unfortunately for music, many listeners are content to sit in an emotional bath and limit their reaction to music to the sensuous element of being surrounded by sounds. But the sounds are organized; the sounds have intellectual as well as emotional appeal.

Popular music has a special purpose: to entertain while demanding the least amount of effort on the part of those exposed. To attempt to compare the worth of popular music with that of so-called serious music is a non-issue.

Igor Stravinsky

There is a tendency to turn the mind away from what I shall call the higher mathematics of music in order to degrade music into servile employment. The least informed of music lovers readily clings to the periphery of a work.

Music sense cannot be acquired or developed without exercise.

Appendix D - Selected Musical Instrument History

Flute

- The flute is the oldest wind instrument known, its basic principle likely discovered by Neolithic man. The shinbone, or tibia, of animals has always been a favorite material for making flutes and the Latin name for flute is tibia.
- The ancient Egyptians played the syrinx or pipes of Pan. For hundreds of years these lacked finger holes, a later invention thought to have been discovered by happenstance when decorative spots burned on to such instruments happened to burn all the way through the tubing.
- Is it more than coincidence that our major/minor music scale is comprised of eight notes to an octave and we just happen to have eight fingers free to cover holes on a flute?

French Horn

- The French Horn dates from 4000 B.C. in the form of the Hebrew shofar (a hollowed-out ram's horn) and is still in current use.

Trumpet, Cornet

- Both the straight-bore trumpet and tapered-bore cornet were derived from instruments used among the ancient Chinese, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans.
- Trumpets and Cornets were used for centuries in the exclusive service of royalty for their pomp and ceremony. Even as late as the 1600s the possession of a trumpet was considered a serious offence.

Trombone

- Trombone means "big trumpet" in Italian and was exactly this early on. The slide principal is thought to have been invented in northern Italy in the 1300s.

Oboe, English Horn, Bassoon

- Hieroglyphics depict the ancient Egyptians playing the double-reed shawm with actual specimens found in tombs from around 3700 B.C. Except for their mouthpiece that resembles a straw collapsed at one end, they were much like ancient cane flutes. However, the vibrating double reeds produce their distinctive nasal sound, most unlike the flute.

- Shawms spread through France and Germany after the return of the first Crusaders.
- The Italian churchman, Afranio of Ferrara, invented the shape of the bassoon around 1540, its novelty being the tubing doubling back on itself and so garnering the name "fagotto", or bundle of sticks. This is roughly the time the double-reed instruments entered the orchestra.

Clarinet

- The single-reed chalumeau, pre-cursor to the clarinet, was invented in ancient Greece and improved by German instrument maker, Johann Denner, in 1690. It was around this time that the name clarinet gradually came into common use.

Tuba

- The French churchman, Guillaume of Auxerre, in 1590 is credited for inventing the 8' long serpent which lasted as an important bass instrument for two-hundred years before being altered around 1800 into today's standard tuba shape.

Harp

- The origin of the harp is traced back to ancient Egypt and Greece but was not perfected until 1810 and so was seldom used by composers until then.

Harpsichord

- Invented around 1400 and strung with drawn iron wire from Germany, wire itself being a relatively new invention from around 1350.

Piano

- The piano is traced back to the monochord of the ancient Greeks, a device that consisted of a single string, likely of catgut or vegetable fiber. It was on this contraption that they learned the scientific basis for harmonic intervals, dividing the string into different lengths and so producing sounds of differing but mathematically-related pitches.
- Bartolomeo Cristofori of Florence is credited with inventing the pianoforte in 1709. The wooden frames of the day could handle only 10 tons of tension versus today's 30 tons. They easily warped due to tension from the piano wires and so went out of tune frequently.

- The first all-iron-frame piano was patented by the English firm of Allen & Thom in 1820. In 1859 German piano builder, Heinrich Steinweg (later Anglicized to Steinway) designed a sturdy cast iron frame.

Violin

- Three countries could potentially claim to be the birthplace of the violin: Arabia, Wales, and Greece.
- The Arabian rabab was a small stringed instrument played by plucking the strings. The Islamic invasion of Spain in early 700 A.D. introduced the instrument to Europe and it quickly became a favorite of the famous traveling troubadors of medieval Spain, France, and Italy. They referred to it as a fiddle.
- The invention of bowing a fiddle rather than plucking it came about around 800 A.D.
- The Welsh crwth, a sort of primitive lute, is referred to as early as 617 A.D. and appears to have been bowed, giving it potential claim to be the precursor to the violin.
- Neither the rabab nor the crwth had a sound chest like today's violin, leaving the Greek kithara as the most likely ancestor of the violin. While the kithara was plucked, not bowed, the word kithara is thought to be the source of the word "guitar", the word often used by troubadors when referring to their fiddle.
- The first true violin was made by Caspar Tieffenbrucker in northern Italy around 1470.
- Variations on the violin led to the creation of the violincello (shortened to cello), viola, and bass violin (known simply as a bass).

Percussion

- There has never been a time in human history when drums did not figure prominently among musical instruments, coming in many shapes and sizes.
- The ancient Egyptians used instruments similar to our kettledrums (a.k.a. *tympani*), tenor drums, tambourines, and cymbals.

Select Composer Biographies

Renaissance Period (1300 – 1600)

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina

- 1525 – 1594. Palestrina was born in the town of Palestrina, Italy, a small town near Rome.
- He was the leading musician of the Renaissance and widely considered the greatest composer before Bach and Handel.
- His music is of the Catholic church and Palestrina was deeply religious.
- There is an Italian warmth and glow in his music.
- His style had no rivals in the sixteenth century for mysticism, exaltation, spirituality, equilibrium of form and content, adaptability to the singing voice, and purity of texture.

William Byrd

- 1543 – 1623. Probably born in Lincolnshire, England.
- From 1570 to the end of his life he was Gentleman of the Chapel Royal to Queen Elizabeth, sharing the post with the great Thomas Tallis until Tallis's death in 1585.
- Byrd and Tallis were granted an exclusive patent by Queen Elizabeth to print and sell music in her realm. Despite their monopoly, the business fared poorly and had to be bailed out by the Queen.
- Byrd almost single-handedly helped to create the first important Latin and English church music in England.
- Critic, W.H. Hadow, regards his masses as "*the finest of their kind ever written by an English composer and of the highest rank the world over. Not Lassus or Palestrina ever rose to a loftier and more serene eminence.*"

Baroque Period (1600 – 1750)

J.S. Bach

- 1685 – 1750. Born in Eisenach, Germany.
- Bach was born into a musical family boasting seven generations of professional musicians. At one point in the early 1700s thirty Bachs held organ posts throughout Germany.
- Orphaned at ten, Bach was raised by his twenty-four-year-old brother, Johann Christoph, whose envy of Bach's musical ability led him to mete out harsh punishment. Having discovered that Bach was staying up late at night studying music scores by moonlight, Johann Christoph confiscated Bach's music.
- With no formal training other than what his brother could provide, Bach learned through self-study and often arduous travel to hear famous contemporaries.
- Bach was little respected at the St. Thomas Church in Leipzig where he toiled as staff musician. The church rector, Johann Ernesti, treated him with contempt, often subjecting Bach to much humiliation.
- The congregation was hardly more appreciative of him. It considered him little more than a hard-working musician who deserved no more than the humble salary and appalling living and working conditions that came with the post of cantor. Bach's station in life was considered to be on par with the town cobbler or tailor.
- Bach's duties as cantor included teaching a boys' class in Latin and music, serving as organist, composing music, and directing performances for church services. His annual salary was supplemented by fees earned from funerals, weddings, and other events.
- Bach made several tours of Germany, establishing a reputation as an organ virtuoso. In 1714, his performance so impressed the Prince of Hesse that the prince removed a diamond ring from his finger and presented it to Bach.
- Bach's first wife died in 1720. They had seven children together. His second spouse, a cultivated musician in her own right and daughter of the town trumpeter, bore him thirteen more children of whom only six made it to adulthood. This high incidence of early death was likely due to the dank, dirty, unsanitary living conditions he was forced to endure as a lowly church cantor.
- Known mainly as an organist, Bach's other music was so little appreciated at the time that immediately after his death a bundle of his cantatas sold for the equivalent of forty dollars. Some of his manuscripts were used by local merchants to wrap their wares. Two years after Bach's death, the plates of his magnificent, *The Art of the Fugue*, were disposed of for their scrap value.

- The fact that Bach was buried in an unmarked grave reflected the fact that his contemporaries, and even his own sons, considered him out of date and old-fashioned.
- For seventy-five years after Bach's death only a tiny fraction of his vast output had been published, the rest left lying about in manuscript. While a handful of notable musicians such as Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Schuman valued him highly, they were completely unaware of Bach's prodigious output. Indeed, Bach wrote so much music that, according to one estimate, it would take a copyist seventy years to transcribe all his scores on to paper.
- In 1829, some eighty years after Bach's death, Mendelssohn revived Bach's *Passion According to St. Matthew*. Its impact was enormous leading to a revival of other Bach compositions.
- In 1850 Schumann helped found the Bach Gesellschaft, its purpose to publish all of Bach's works. So vast was Bach's output that this took forty-six years to complete. It was at this point that the world came to realize the greatness of his art. Bach societies began to spring up all over Europe to perform his music. Bach had finally been recognized as one of the greatest music masters of all time, possibly *the* greatest.
- After Bach a new epoch *had* to come, for Bach himself had exhausted all the possibilities of the older one. Because of this, it is Bach's death that scholars have chosen to mark the end of the Baroque period.
- Suffering from an eye ailment in the last days of his life, Bach was blinded during a botched surgery performed by quack eye surgeon, John Taylor. Bach would die within a few months of the surgery, likely the result of an infection picked up during the operation.

George Frideric Handel

- 1685 – 1759. Born in Halle, Saxony (now Germany).
- Handel was only twelve when he was appointed assistant organist at Halle Cathedral.
- While he attended university for a brief while with the intent of becoming a lawyer, he soon discarded this plan to start a career as musician.
- At 21 he made a tour of Italy showing off his virtuosity on both the organ and harpsichord which made him famous throughout Italy.
- At 26 he left for England where his operas made him the most esteemed composer in England. Unfortunately, the public's taste changed and he was brought to the brink of financial ruin.
- To stem the tide he turned his talent to the creation of oratorios. Of these, the *Messiah* is his most famous and, at age 56, once again brought him to the pinnacle of English music.

- In 1751 he realized he was going blind. Unfortunately, he underwent surgery at the hands of the same quack physician, John Taylor, who had blinded Bach, with the same outcome. Nonetheless, he continued to give organ concerts and directed performances of his oratorios, his last public performance being of the Messiah just eight days before his death.
- Handel's body was buried at Westminster Abbey in recognition of the high esteem in which he was held.
- Handel's instrumental music is exquisitely melodic and carries a sense of nobility and dignity.
- However, it is his oratorios that cemented his place in music history.

Antonio Vivaldi

- 1669 – 1741. Born in Venice, Italy.
- Ordained as a priest at 34, at age 38 he assumed the post of Maestro di Concerti at a Venetian orphanage for foundling girls, some six-thousand of them.
- Vivaldi's output was vast. He wrote some forty operas, a hundred or so major choral works, four hundred concertos, about twenty-five secular cantatas, seventy-three sonatas, and various other items.
- His music revels in rhythmic energy and harmonic power.
- Vivaldi's music was also influential, his novel concept of the orchestra adopted by early symphonists such as Haydn and Mozart. Bach himself held Vivaldi's music in high esteem. As a boy Bach would copy out Vivaldi's concertos by hand to learn from them and commit them to memory. Later in life he transcribed them for different instruments.
- Despite professional esteem, the last months of Vivaldi's life were spent in obscurity and poverty such that by the time of his death in Vienna at age 72 he was buried a pauper, virtually forgotten, outside the Vienna city walls. One of the six choristers at his funeral was the young Joseph Haydn. It would take roughly two-hundred years for Vivaldi's music to be re-discovered and once again held in high esteem.

Dietrich Buxtehude

- 1637 – 1707. Born in either Elsinore, Denmark or Helsingborg, Sweden.
- In the writing of organ music and church cantatas, none exerted greater influence upon Bach than Buxtehude. In 1703, at the age of 18, Bach walked some 300 kilometres just to hear Buxtehude play the organ.
- Buxtehude was one of the earliest masters to write music for a concert audience as well as for the church.
- At age 30 he was appointed organist in Luebeck, a position he held for forty years to his death at 70.
- In 1703 Handel himself made the journey to Luebeck to seek the aging Buxtehude's position. However, he declined the post, being unwilling to accept the condition of marrying Buxtehude's youngest daughter.

Classical Period (1750 – 1820)

Franz Schubert

- 1797 – 1828. Born in Vienna, Austria.
- A musically-gifted child, at just nine years of age Schubert was enrolled in a school that trained singers for the royal court, one of his instructors being Antonio Salieri, Mozart's nemesis.
- At age thirteen he wrote his first piece, a fantasy for piano duet. By age sixteen he had already composed his first symphony.
- At seventeen his voice broke forcing him to leave the royal choir, becoming a school teacher instead, a role he detested. Nonetheless, he was able to endure this for three years during which time he composed an opera, two symphonies, three Masses, two string quartets, four piano sonatas, other piano pieces, and over a hundred songs.
- Finally, at age nineteen, he quit his role as teacher and became a full-time composer, supported financially by his friends.
- Unfortunately, fame would elude him almost up to his death so for much of his life he toiled away both unknown and poor. A concert of his works in Vienna just eight months before his death finally brought his stellar talent to the attention of the world. Even then, it would take many years for the full extent of his achievement to be appreciated because the manuscripts for most of his works, including a number of masterpieces, lay gathering dust in the homes of relatives and friends. Not until they were resuscitated through the painstaking efforts of musicians like Robert Schumann, George Grove, and Arthur Sullivan (of Gilbert & Sullivan fame) did it become evident just how much he had written during his brief thirty-one years and how much of it was music of the highest order.
- At Schubert's request, he was buried in a grave near Beethoven's, the composer he venerated above all others and who most influenced him.
- Schubert's supreme gift was melody and he is considered by many the greatest melodist of all time.
- Schubert produced masterworks in all the larger forms of music except opera. His work greatly influenced the later Romantic composers Schumann, Chopin, and Mendelssohn.

Franz Joseph Haydn

- 1732 – 1809. Born in Rohrau-on-the-Leitha, Austria.
- Haydn grew up in a home where musical performances were frequent events and his training began at the age of five.
- At age sixteen, his voice no longer high enough for the local cathedral choir, he set up home for himself in Vienna to start his musical career.

- At twenty-eight he married Maria Keller after Maria's sister, with whom Haydn was truly in love, suddenly entered a convent. This marriage was unhappy from the beginning and ended in a mutually-agreed permanent separation.
- At twenty-nine he was hired by Prince Paul Esterhazy and remained in his employ for thirty years directing palace performances of operas and instrumental music. During this time he composed some eighty symphonies, over forty string quartets, and numerous concertos, keyboard music, operas, and choral works.
- Though he rarely left the Esterhazy estate, his fame spread throughout Europe.
- In 1797, at the request of the government, Haydn wrote the Austrian national anthem.
- Although almost entirely self-taught, he mastered every scientific principle of musical composition known at his time.
- Despite writing several Masses of masterpiece quality, he identified himself absolutely with secular music and gave it a status equal to the music of the church.
- While he did not invent the symphony, he was the first to realize its full structural and aesthetic potential. He was, however, virtually the creator of the string quartet, composing music in this genre of such rich emotion that it quickly gained legitimacy in the family of musical forms.
- It is not an overstatement to assert that Haydn changed the course of music history and that nineteenth century music would hardly have followed the course it did had Haydn not lived. Mozart himself said of Haydn, "*He alone has the secret of making me smile, and touching me to the bottom of my soul.*"

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

- 1756 – 1791. Born in Salzburg, Austria.
- At just three-and-a-half years old Mozart would spend hours picking out musical chords. At four he gave demonstrations on the harpsichord; at six he performed throughout Europe playing to such powerful figures as Louis XV of France at Versailles and King George III of England in London. At the age of seven he completed his first sonata, at eight his first symphony, at eleven his first comic opera, and at fourteen his first opera seria.
- At fourteen he gave further notice of his genius. The papacy, knowing they had a "hit" on their hands in Gregorio Allegri's *Miserere*, decreed that no performance of it could take place anywhere but in Rome. The only manuscript was kept under lock and key. However, after only two hearings, Mozart wrote out the entire complicated polyphonic score *from memory*. So prodigious was this feat that the Pope himself conferred upon Mozart the Cross of the Order of the Golden Spur.
- While such stories lead one to conclude that Mozart was pure genius, his own words, written to his father, beg to differ: "It is a mistake to think that the practice of my art has come easy to me – no one has given so much care to the study of composition as I have. There is scarcely a famous master in music whose works I have not frequently and diligently studied."

- Edvard Grieg said of Mozart's music, "Even the most practiced eye and ear cannot discover the subtlest point of musical connection in his compositions". Joseph Haydn, after hearing a performance of six string quartets dedicated to him by Mozart remarked to Mozart's father, "I tell you before God and as an honest man that your son is the greatest composer I know, either personally or by name."
- Despite enormous success, he knew little more than humiliation and frustration in his home town. From age sixteen to twenty-six he was in the employ of the Archbishop of Salzburg who treated him hardly better than a menial servant, often subjecting Mozart to physical abuse and insults.
- No longer a child prodigy, Mozart lost the ability to excite admiration of his audiences. Not until age 30, in Prague, Czechoslovakia, would Mozart again taste adoration and success. Unfortunately, this was not repeated upon his return to Vienna.
- In the last two years of his life Mozart was reduced to begging friends for financial assistance. Nonetheless, though in ill health and low spirits, it was during these years that he wrote some of his greatest music – the *Requiem*, *The Magic Flute*, the *Ave Verum*, and his last two piano concertos. In these works Mozart gave a glimpse of what was to come in the subsequent Romantic period.
- Having produced more than six hundred works of remarkable genius and consistency, Mozart died at just age 35 while still working on his great *Requiem*. As was the custom at the time for middle-income families, he was buried in a communal grave along with 4-5 others, this at Vienna's St. Marx cemetery. As was also the custom, these bodies were moved a number of years later to make room for more bodies. It is at this point that the exact location of Mozart's grave was lost and what is marked today as his grave is simply an educated guess.

Ludwig van Beethoven

- 1770 – 1827. Born in Bonn, Germany.
- His childhood was spent in unhappy poverty under a tyrannical, drunkard father who wanted to make him into another Mozart. Beethoven was forced to practice for hours on end, sometimes in the middle of the night after his father had returned from an evening of drinking.
- He made his debut at age 8 (his father advertising him as age 6 but did not possess sufficient talent to excite the listeners).
- Taken under the wing of the court organist, Christian Neefe, Beethoven quickly developed into an accomplished musician becoming Neefe's assistant at age 14.
- He was an unkempt rather homely child who never fit in. Unsurprisingly, he never married, often falling in love with women far too young or too far above his rung on the social ladder. After his death, in a secret drawer in his desk, a love letter was found addressed to his "immortal beloved", the object of his affection remaining a mystery to this day.

- At 17 Beethoven paid a visit to Vienna where he greatly impressed the 31-year-old Mozart, then just four years away from his death. Haydn also commented on Beethoven's musical skills during a visit he paid to Bonn.
- At 22 Beethoven made Vienna his permanent home, studying under Haydn for a brief while. However, their differing personalities and views on music clashed violently. He then briefly studied under Antonio Salieri.
- At 25 he made his first public appearance as a pianist and received high acclaim.
- His debut as a composer did not occur until he was 30 years old.
- At 31 he became aware he was losing his hearing and withdrew even further from society and friends. He wrote, "I live only in my music." Over the next twelve years one great masterwork followed another during what is referred to as his middle period (*Symphony #3 – The Eroica Symphony; Fidelio; Rasoumovsky string quartets; Symphonies 4 – 8; Violin concerto; Mass in C Major; Piano Concerto #5 – The Emperor Concerto*).
- As his deafness worsened he became increasingly irritable, unreasonable in his demands on friends, and given to rages and suspicions. A little incident would be enough for him to break a long-term friendship. Nonetheless, many of his friends and wealthy patrons stood by him regardless, recognizing his genius.
- From 42 to 48 there was a lull in his output. However, he then entered his most creative phase, opening up horizons completely new to music. He now completed his masterful last string quartets, the last great piano sonatas, the powerful *Missa Solemnis*, and his majestic *Ninth Symphony*, thus fully ushering in the Romantic period.
- Beethoven's last public appearance took place in 1824 at age 54, three years before his death, with the premiere of his *Ninth Symphony*.
- Upon his death thousands lined the streets of Vienna to mourn his loss. Schubert himself was one of the torchbearers at the funeral.
- Few composers are considered transformative. Beethoven is such a composer.
- Beethoven was a son of the Enlightenment. The new ideas of freedom and the rights of man sweeping across Europe with Voltaire and Rousseau as their leading voices are heard loud and clear in Beethoven's music. Revolution was sweeping away the old order and Beethoven captured that spirit. In his own words, "I *must* write, for what weighs on my heart I *must* express." The refined confines of the Classical period simply could not accommodate what Beethoven had to say – music simply had to change and Beethoven broke down its door.
- As Beethoven once remarked bitterly when told by a violinist he had difficulty negotiating the technique required in one of the *Rasoumovsky string quartets*: "Does he really suppose I think of his puling little fiddle when the spirit speaks to me and I compose something?"
- Beethoven worked with the full awareness of his own enormous creative power. In the end, these powers gave Beethoven the means to create some of the most powerful music ever conceived.

Gioacchino Rossini

- 1792 – 1868. Born in Pesaro, Italy.
- If Rossini had not been born a genius he would have become a hack. He wrote too much and too quickly. For nineteen years he averaged two operas a year and in some years churned out four.
- He was satisfied with second-rate material if too much effort was required to achieve first-rate. To make his life easier he would shift material from one opera to another whether it fit or not and was not above incorporating the work of other composers into his own. And yet, when the spirit moved him, he was capable of creating an unblemished masterwork like *The Barber of Seville*, arguably the finest comic opera ever written.
- Rossini had a gift for melody and comic relief. Few before or since wrote so naturally and effortlessly for the human voice, whether solos or ensembles. In short, he was one of the most influential figures opera has ever known.
- Rossini was just 18 when his first opera, completed in just three days, was heard in Venice.
- Then suddenly, after nineteen years of prolific opera creation and at the peak of his powers and fame the great Rossini ceased writing opera for the remaining thirty-nine years of his life. The "great renunciation" remains without parallel in all of art. To this day nobody has satisfactorily explained why Rossini turned his back on opera. The best explanation to date is that a serious decline in his health sapped him of the inner resources required for the writing of operas.
- Despite poor health Rossini continued to live the good life, his final years spent entertaining the great and the good in lavish style at his home in Paris. Originally buried in Paris, his remains were subsequently removed to the Church of Santa Croce in Florence.

Romantic Period (1820 - 1910)

Felix Mendelssohn

- 1809 – 1847. Born in Hamburg, Germany.
- In stark contrast to the life of Beethoven, Mendelssohn led a blessed life. Born rich, physically attractive, and highly personable, he inspired affection as easily as admiration.
- Again, unlike Beethoven, his music is singularly free of struggle, torment, frustration, and passion. As a result, his music rarely soars to the heights achieved by other acknowledged masters.
- Extraordinarily precocious as a youngster, Mendelssohn was only nine when he made his debut as a concert pianist and at ten one of his compositions was performed in Berlin. His first masterworks, the *Octet for strings* and the *Overture to A Midsummer Night's Dream*, were produced while still in his teens.
- He was a great admirer of Bach's music, conducting the first performance of Bach's *Passion According to St. Matthew* since Bach's own day, some 100 years earlier. This concert was so successful that it helped set into motion a revival of Bach's music, lifting the great master from his long obscurity and neglect to a position of first importance in the world's music.
- When an academy of the Arts was planned in Berlin, the Emperor called on Mendelssohn, then age 32, to be its first head.
- Though not an innovator, he nevertheless succeeded in creating his own language. In the words of Wagner, he was "a landscape painter of the first order."
- Mendelssohn was also the incomparable musical interpreter of the fairy kingdom, bringing a grace, delicacy, transparency, and fleetness of motion to evoke the fanciful world of fairies, elves, and forest spirits.

Peter Ilitch Tchaikovsky

- 1840 – 1893. Born in Votinsk, Russia.
- After toiling three years as a clerk in the Ministry of Justice, Tchaikovsky decided to pursue his passion for music and entered the St. Petersburg Conservatory. He completed his studies at age 25 and assumed the post of professor of harmony at the Moscow Conservatory. His first symphony was performed three years later.
- In 1877 he married Antonia Miliukova, a high-strung, neurotic music student who, in her first interview with the composer, fell on her knees in adoration before him. There is documented proof that the only reason for the marriage was to silence rumors about his homosexuality. To no surprise, the marriage proved a disaster from the beginning and Tchaikovsky tried to commit suicide. Failing at that he fled to Moscow never to return to his wife. Antonia was later committed to an insane asylum three years after his death.

- Tchaikovsky's second significant relationship was with a wealthy patroness, Nadezhda von Meck, who, for thirteen years, endowed him with a handsome annual subsidy sufficient to make him financially independent. This permitted him to focus exclusively on his music. Her only stipulation was that they never meet – and they never did.
- During this period Tchaikovsky wrote some of his greatest masterworks – the opera *Eugene Onegin*, the *Capriccio Italien*, the *1812 Overture*, the *Violin Concerto*, and the *1st Piano Concerto*. His fame spread throughout the world and he received many awards including an annual pension from the Russian government when he was 48.
- Then, in 1890 at the age of 50, financial support from von Meck suddenly. In a letter to Tchaikovsky she referenced financial reversals that made it impossible for her to continue her support. No longer in need of her money he wrote several letters to her begging to maintain their friendship. His letters went unanswered. He soon discovered that her finances were undiminished – she had simply grown weary of their relationship.
- In 1891 at age 51 Tchaikovsky made his only visit to the U.S., helping to open the newly-built Carnegie Hall with a performance of his 1812 Overture.
- Back in Russia his chronic depression worsened but fortunately did not prevent him from completing his greatest symphony, *Symphony #6 - the Pathetique*. Shortly after its premiere Tchaikovsky became infected with cholera from drinking unboiled water – a most odd thing to do during a cholera epidemic. He died in St. Petersburg, his last words being the name of Madame von Meck followed by “the accursed one”.

Sergei Rachmaninov

- 1873 – 1943. Born in Onega, Russia.
- His father, a prominent landowner, squandered the family wealth and left the family penniless when Rachmaninov was only nine.
- At the age of twelve he entered the Moscow Conservatory where he studied under, among others, the greats Tanayev and Arensky and earned the attention of his idol, Tchaikovsky.
- Soon after his graduation at 19 he achieved international acclaim with his *Prelude in C-sharp minor* for piano.
- Though success came early, it did not stay. The premiere of his first symphony in 1897 proved a complete fiasco sending Rachmaninov into such despair that he composed nothing for the next four years.
- The break must have served him well as, upon his return to composing, he crafted one of the most popular piano concertos of the 20th century, his *2nd Piano Concerto*.
- In 1902, at the age of 29, he married his first cousin, Natalie Satina.
- In the early 1900s he toured the world as a piano virtuoso, often taking on the roles of both performer and conductor as he was also recognized widely as a very gifted conductor.

- Unsympathetic to the Soviet regime, Rachmaninov left his native Russia in 1917, living first in Switzerland and settling finally in Beverly Hills, California, becoming a U.S. citizen in the process.
- Like Tchaikovsky before him, Rachmaninov was mostly a sad, lonely man whose intense melancholy and perpetual feeling of desolation are reflected in much of the music he wrote.
- As a composer, while intellectually stimulated by the innovations of Stravinsky and Prokofiev, he himself was too much a traditionalist to ever follow in their path. Though never an innovator, he was able to write music of surpassing sentiment and beauty.

Anton Bruckner

- 1824 – 1896. Born in Ansfelden, Austria.
- Bruckner was a late bloomer, his reputation as a composer of significance not forming until he was 57 with the publication of his 4th symphony. In addition to receiving an honorary doctorate from the University of Vienna at this point in his life he also had bestowed upon him the Austrian imperial insignia by the Emperor himself, Franz Joseph.
- Bruckner was a man of simple means and profoundly religious, a man who worshipped both his God as well as the music of Wagner whose influence is felt in much of Bruckner's work. His affinity with Wagner's music targeted him for abuse and criticism from the anti-Wagner faction in.
- In his symphonic writing he sought to carry over some of the grandeur, sublimity, symbolism, and epic designs of the Wagnerian music drama. Even his religious music speaks not in a God-fearing whisper but in an adulation-filled, high-octane exclamation of the glories of God the Almighty.

Gustav Mahler

- 1860 – 1911. Born in Kalischt, Bohemia (now the Czech Republic).
- Mahler was gifted musically, entering the Vienna Conservatory at fifteen.
- At the age of 25 he began a distinguished career as a conductor, appointed to the Prague Opera, then musical director of the Budapest Opera, and finally the Vienna Royal Opera.
- During this time he combined his demanding duties as conductor and music director with composition, most of it during summer breaks spent by an Austrian lake. As a result, his symphonies were often years in the making.
- In Mahler's own words, "The symphony must be like the world. It must embrace everything." He translated this sentiment into symphonies of impressive power.

- So novel was his musical language that his first symphony, premiered at age 28, proved an utter fiasco. Likewise, his second and third symphonies were met with public and critical scorn. But Mahler remained unbowed. "My time will come," he said simply. And while waiting for recognition he continued producing monumental symphonies in the early 1900s.
- Much of his raw material was autobiographical – a Jew during a period of blatant anti-Semitism; one of fourteen children, several of whom died in childhood; the death of his eldest daughter at age five; and a stormy marriage to Alma Schindler, nineteen years his junior. Alma had a series of affairs, one with the famous architect Walter Gropius, founder of the Bauhaus school of art and design. For advice on his marital problems Mahler sought guidance from none other than Sigmund Freud.
- In 1907, at the age of 47, Mahler left Austria to become conductor of German operas with the Metropolitan Opera in New York as well as serving as principal conductor of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. It was during this period that he crafted his most gargantuan symphony, #8, the *Symphony of a Thousand Voices*.
- Stress, constant overwork, and a bad heart finally took its toll. In 1911 Mahler was sent to Paris for treatment but was transferred to Vienna shortly thereafter where he died.

Johannes Brahms

- 1833 – 1897. Born in Hamburg, Germany.
- Brahms was a gifted child, giving his first piano recital at just fourteen, including some of his own compositions. However, due to his family's poverty, he had to earn his living playing the piano in taverns, teaching piano, and taking on menial jobs.
- In 1853 at the age of 20 Brahms became friends with Robert and Clara Schumann. It was through Schumann's advocacy that Brahms' genius was first brought to the public's attention.
- Though he loved many women, including Clara Schumann after Robert's death, Brahms never married, spending most of his later years alone in a simple three-room apartment in Vienna.
- In direct contrast to his contemporary Anton Bruckner who suffered intense abuse at the hands of the anti-Wagner faction in Vienna, Brahms was subjected to ridicule by the pro-Wagner faction who, in promoting "the art of the future" saw in Brahms a composer who seemed to live in the past. He received further criticism for failing to compose music that followed a literary program in the manner of Liszt and Richard Strauss.
- While Brahms was no pioneer, he excelled at melding formal procedures of the past with the emotions and poetic speech of his own times. In Brahms, Classicism and Romanticism meet and become one. The assessment of time decreed Brahms to be the rightful successor to Beethoven

Johann Strauss II

- 1825 – 1899. Born in Vienna, Austria.
- His father, Johann Strauss, was in his own right a famous café-house conductor and composer of light music. Because his father opposed a music career for his son, Johann had to study music in secret. At age fifteen his father deserted the family giving Johann his opportunity to study music in earnest.
- In 1844 at age nineteen his first waltzes were premiered in a Vienna café-house and created quite a sensation. This marked the beginning of a reign both as conductor and composer that lasted to his death at age 72. He became the music idol, not only of Vienna, but of the entire world conducting his music to great acclaim in St. Petersburg, the 1867 World Exhibition in Paris, Covent Garden in London, and a series of huge concerts in the U.S.
- Johann Strauss was a popular composer who wrote dance music and operettas for mass consumption. But because he was gifted, his popular music rises above the banal to the level of art. The interest of his music lay mainly in its remarkable melodies and rhythmic invention; the harmony and instrumentation are always in immaculate taste; the spirit is always ebullient and effervescent.

Giuseppe Verdi

- 1813 – 1901. Born in Le Roncole, Italy.
- At the age of 23 Verdi has his first opera performed at La Scala. It proved such a success that he was commissioned to produce three more operas one of which, *Nabucco*, made him one of the most idolized opera composers of his time.
- His most popular works, *Aida*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Il Trovatore*, *La Traviata*, and *Rigoletto* were all produced during what is referred to as his second creative period, this from 1851 to 1871.
- For the next fifteen years Verdi wrote no more operas, penning his last masterpieces, *Otello* and *Falstaff* around 1890 at the age of 77.
- The beginning of Verdi's rapid physical decline – blindness, deafness, and paralysis – began shortly after the death of his wife Giuseppina in 1897.
- Verdi died in Milan in early 1901 at the age of 88, an event that was marked by a period of national mourning.
- Between them, Verdi and Wagner completely dominated the world of opera during the second half of the nineteenth century. Where Wagner penned massive symphonic structures, Verdi focused instead on vocal melody.

Modern and Contemporary Periods (1910 – Present)

Modern Period

Bela Bartok

- 1881 – 1945. Born in Nagyszentmiklos, Hungary.
- Bartok early musical talent writing piano pieces at age 9 and making his premiere as a piano virtuoso at age 10.
- A shy individual, Bartok lived a quiet life in Budapest devoted to teaching, composition, playing the piano and doing research into Hungarian folk music.
- To aid his exploration of Hungarian folk music he visited its remote regions, lived with peasants, and took copious notes. In all, he documented several thousand folk little-known songs and dances that proved far different than the gypsy melodies that Brahms, Liszt, and other composers had passed off as authentically Hungarian. As Bartok discovered, real folk music had a harder texture to it, was cruder in technique, edgier, and more austere in spirit. Its rhythms were irregular and its melodies, written in scales from Medieval times, had an exotic character to them.
- To no surprise, Bartok's own compositions were strongly influenced by the folk music he encountered featuring shifting accents and complex rhythmic patterns.
- Unfortunately, due to its novelty, he found little favor with concert goers accustomed to the traditional sounds of Mozart, Mendelssohn, Brahms, and Beethoven.
- Despite the fact that Bartok was one of the most original, independent and freshest voices in 20th century music, the bulk of his production was long neglected.
- In 1940, with Europe at war, Bartok came to the United States for what he thought would be a temporary resettlement – he was never to see his native land again.
- Though suffering from an incurable disease, living in poverty, and facing widespread neglect of his music, Bartok nevertheless managed to remain very productive, penning what many now count among his masterpieces.
- As is often the case with misunderstood artists, death finally brought him the recognition and appreciation that, for the most part, had been denied during his lifetime. Within a span of just a few weeks after his death, 48 major performances of his compositions took place and he was finally recognized as one of the leading composers of 20th century music.

Samuel Barber

- 1910 – 1981. Born in West Chester, Pennsylvania.
- A gifted child, at age 12 Barber took on a post as organist. Much of his later musical education took place at the then newly founded Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia.
- He began serious composing at age 18 and at 23 had one of his works, the *Overture to the School of Scandal*, performed by the renowned Philadelphia Orchestra.

- Between 1935 and 1937 he won the Pulitzer Fellowship and the prestigious Prix de Rome. While in Rome he wrote and premiered his 1st symphony and soon thereafter had it performed at the prestigious Salzburg Festival.
- Upon returning to the U.S. he became a member of the faculty of the Curtis Institute teaching composition and orchestration.
- During WW II, Barber served in the Army Air Corps which commissioned him to write his 2nd Symphony.
- In 1958 he was awarded a Pulitzer prize for his opera, *Vanessa*, and again in 1963 for his *Piano Concerto*. An honorary doctorate from Harvard followed.
- Barber's place as a composer of top rank was cemented by his orchestral arrangement of the slow movement from his string quartet, the now-famous *Adagio for Strings*, premiered by Toscanini and the NBC Symphony Orchestra in 1936.

Aaron Copland

- 1900 – 1990. Born in Brooklyn, New York.
- Copland began studying the piano when he was fourteen, going on to attend the Fontainebleau School of Music in France followed by three years of private lessons in composition and orchestration with the renowned teacher and organist, Nadia Boulanger.
- With the financial support of a wealthy patroness as well as Guggenheim Fellowships in 1925 and 1926, he was able to devote himself to full-time composition.
- He earned the moniker "Dean of American music" after winning a Pulitzer Prize, awards from the New York Music Critics Circle, an Academy Award for his music for *"The Heiress"*, and numerous other honors including election to the American Academy of Arts & Letters (1954), an honorary doctorate from Princeton University (1956), and the Presidential Medal of Honor from President Lyndon B. Johnson (1964).
- Copland wrote a number of highly-regarded books and articles on music aimed at the general public (e.g. "[What to Listen For in Music](#)").
- While critically acclaimed, Copland's music was largely ignored by the public. In an attempt to change this he made a conscious effort to simplify his music, writing music for school children, music for the movies (*Of Mice & Men*, *Our Town*, *The Heiress*, *The Red Pony*), music for the theatre, and music for the radio, often incorporating popular themes from Mexico, Cuba, and American folk music.
- Despite this shift, there was no dumbing-down of his music for the masses. Indeed, his artistic stature grew and his musical speech acquired more subtle emotional nuances.

Giacomo Puccini

- 1858 – 1924. Born in Lucca, Italy.
- Puccini was a descendant of a long line of musicians who had been famous in Lucca.
- He completed his studies at the Milan Conservatory, one of his professors being Amilcare Ponchielli, composer of the opera, *La Gioconda*.
- He attained worldwide recognition for his third opera, *Manon Lescaut*, in 1893 at age 35, following these up with *La Boheme* (1896) and *Tosca* (1900) which made him both internationally famous and very wealthy.
- *Madame Butterfly* followed in 1904 but proved a complete failure until major revisions made it too into another Puccini masterpiece. Personally attending its American premiere at the Metropolitan Opera House in 1907, Puccini was greeted by thunderous applause.
- Two years after his death, Puccini's last opera, *Turandot*, was performed in its unfinished state at La Scala under the baton of Arturo Toscanini.
- Puccini's operas remain among the most important and successful creations, finding a permanent place in the opera repertory.

Sergei Prokofiev

- 1891 – 1953. Born in Sontsovka, Russia.
- Prokofiev began studying music early with his mother and with the composers Gliere and Tanayev. At five he wrote his first piano piece and at eight a complete opera. At the age of twelve he entered the St. Petersburg Conservatory where he was a pupil Liadov and Rimsky-Korsakov. At 19 he graduated with highest honors.
- In 1918 he left the Soviet Union to tour the world making his American debut in a piano recital in New York City and receiving a commission from the Chicago Opera Company to write an opera – his *Love for Three Oranges*.
- In 1923, at age 32, Prokofiev began a ten-year stay in Paris during which time he established his reputation as one of the world's most powerful, original, and provocative composers of his time. Upon returning home in 1927 for a three-month visit he was given a hero's welcome.
- During WW II he became a national hero by writing functional pieces and major concert works inspired by the conflict. His seventh piano sonata titled *Leningrad* brought him the Stalin prize.
- However, as often happens in a totalitarian state, he suddenly fell afoul of the authorities and was publicly denounced in 1948 along with other high-profile Soviet composers (Khatchaturian, Miaskovsky, Shostakovich, among others), for "decadent formalism" and "cerebralism". The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. deemed that these musicians had let themselves be infected by Western musical thinking, with the result that the complex, dissonant music they wrote was far removed from the masses.
- Fearing for their lives, these composers publicly admitted they were at fault and pledged to write more nationalistic music from then on.

- However, Prokofiev was too honest a creative artist and too independent a musical thinker to write music to measure. Here is how Prokofiev described his approach to composition: "The principal lines which I have followed are these: the first is classical, its origin lying in my early childhood when I heard my mother play the sonatas of Beethoven. The second is innovation. The third is the motor element. The fourth element is lyrical. The fifth is "scherziness" or by three words indicating its gradations: 'jest,' 'laughter,' and 'mockery.'"

Dmitri Shostakovich

- 1906 – 1975. Born in St. Petersburg, Russia.
- Shostakovich attended the Leningrad Conservatory from age 13 to 19, his graduation piece in composition being his highly acclaimed *First Symphony* with which he achieved international renown.
- He was only 11 when revolution changed the political and social structure of his country. He consequently knew no other society than that of the proletariat (working industrial class). "We are revolutionaries," he said in an interview, "and as revolutionaries we have a different concept of music". Lenin himself said that 'music is a means of unifying broad masses of people. It must reflect the rich, full-blooded psychology of the proletariat and penetrate into the innermost masses of workmen and peasants, unite the thought and will of these masses, and raise them for further struggle and construction.'
- No other composer went from acclaim to denunciation in quite the way that Shostakovich did. The recipient of five Stalin prizes, he was also denounced publicly by the Communist Party on no fewer than four occasions (1930, 1946, 1948, and 1962). At such times even intimate friends turned against him.
- However, in 1966 at the age of 60 Shostakovich received the highest accolade awarded a citizen of the Soviet Union, the title of Hero of Socialist Labor, the first musician ever to receive this honor.
- In addition, Shostakovich was also awarded the International Sibelius Prize in 1958 and the Silver Insignia of Honor from the Austrian Republic in 1967.

Contemporary Period

Osvaldo Golijov

- Born 1960 in La Plata, Argentina.
- Golijov was raised in an Eastern European Jewish household surrounded by classical chamber music, Jewish liturgical and Klezmer music, and the new tango of Astor Piazzolla.
- In 1983 he moved to Israel to study music at the Jerusalem Rubin Academy, returning to the U.S. in 1986 to complete a PhD in music at the University of Pennsylvania.
- In the early 90's Golijov began to work closely with the St. Lawrence String Quartet and the Kronos String Quartet, both specializing in contemporary music.

- In 2002, the EMI release, '[Yiddishbuk](#)', a collection of Golijov's chamber music played by the St. Lawrence String Quartet was nominated for a Grammy.
- In 2006 the Lincoln Centre for the Performing Arts presented a sold-out festival called, 'The Passion of Osvaldo Golijov', featuring all his major works.

John Adams

- Born 1947 in Worcester, Massachusetts.
- Like Philip Glass and the other minimalists with whom he is often bracketed, Adams set out to reverse the influence of modernist cerebralism, to make it okay for composers to write unashamedly tonal music again. In his words, "tonality is not just a cultural invention, but a natural force, like gravity."
- Taught clarinet by his father (a successful dance-band saxophonist), Adams was encouraged by both parents to listen to a wide variety of music. Indeed, Adam's fondest childhood memory is that of being seated on a piano stool next to the legendary Duke Ellington at one of the Duke's concerts.
- Adams began composing at the age of ten and first heard his music performed at thirteen.
- Adams studied music at Harvard, becoming the first student ever to be allowed to submit a musical composition for a Harvard undergraduate thesis. While at Harvard he was also a reserve clarinetist for both the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Opera Company of Boston and, in this capacity, performed as soloist at the Carnegie Hall premiere of Walter Piston's *Clarinet Concerto*.
- Upon graduation in the late 60's he continued to study composition under the likes of Roger Sessions.
- The composer of greatest influence on Adams was John Cage (he of "prepared piano" fame) who gave him the courage to find his own voice as a composer and whose 1973 book, *Silence*, in Adams' own words, "dropped into my psyche like a time bomb." Cage posed fundamental questions about what music was and regarded all types of sounds as viable sources of music.
- With this influence, Adams became an intelligent synthesist, quite happy to incorporate into his works such wide-ranging sources as jazz, Arab music, church music, and folk tunes.

Philip Glass

- Born 1937 in Baltimore, Maryland.
- Glass's easily accessible brand of minimalism made him famous and wealthy. He is the first composer ever to win a wide, multi-generational audience in the opera house, concert hall, dance world, in film, and in popular music – simultaneously.
- Glass's style is unmistakable with its repetitions of cell-like phrases. Though often criticized as shallow and uneventful, Glass's music is insidiously effective and hugely catchy.

- Glass was an accomplished flautist and violinist by the age of 15 when he attended Chicago University to study math and philosophy.
- By the late 50's he was in New York studying with fellow minimalist, Steve Reich, at the Juilliard School and went on to study with Darius Milhaud at Aspen and Nadia Boulanger in Paris (who also taught the likes of Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson, and Quincy Jones).
- While in Paris, Glass worked with Ravi Shankar from whom he learned that there was another way music could be organized, around rhythmic ideas instead of around structure. Rhythm could be the structural basis for music rather than just an ornament.
- In 1976 he produced the hallucinogenic four-hour opera, *Einstein on the Beach*. A sell-out at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, a work that pushed minimalism into the mainstream.
- Glass's wide musical scope has seen him collaborate with such artists as Paul Simon, Linda Ronstadt, Yo Yo Ma, and David Bowie.

Christina Volpini

- Born in 1992, Christina Volpini is a Canadian composer whose music has been described as "very nuanced, rustling and whispering" (Neomemoire) and "focused intently on the subtle sounds that fall between the cracks." (Ludwig Van Toronto). Informed by the ephemerality and spontaneity of natural sonic environments, her work explores gradual unfolding through time, found objects, sonic spatialization, instrumental textures and liminal spaces.

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