

## **ROMANTIC (1820-1900): era of evolution**

Context: revolt against aristocratic and political norms of Enlightenment

- \* *Nationalism: excessive pride in one's country/culture drew attention to ethnic and local folklore and music.*
- \* *Scientific discovery changed the way of life: transportation, medicine*
- \* *Romanticism rose to prominence in England & Germany first from 1770s*
- \* *Rise of the middle class*

Musical Characteristics: manipulated emotion and melodrama, feeling instead of thinking.

- \* *Stressed personal expression of strong emotion, imagination, & rebelled against social conventions, rejected precepts of calm, order, harmony, and rationality.*
- \* *Deep appreciation of the beauty of nature*
- \* *preoccupation with heroic ideal and ethnic folk culture*
- \* *emotion over reason, senses over intellect*
- \* *inspired by non-musical resources: literature, history, and visual art*
- \* *instruments became easier due to valves on brass instruments and new key note systems on woodwinds, also new instruments like the saxophone*
  
- \* *wider dynamic range*
- \* *greater variety of instruments and unusual combinations*
- \* *longer, more lyrical, dramatic, and emotional melodies*
- \* *extreme tempos*
- \* *full harmonies with striking dissonance*
- \* *expanded formal structure*
- \* *greater technical virtuosity (especially pianists and violinists)*
- \* *increased use of native music, folk melodies*

### **Vocabulary:**

Gesamtkunstwerk (Wagner) united music and drama in one major artwork, accomplished through “endless melody” of leitmotiv.

Leitmotiv (Wagner) each character or prop had it's own “little melody”

Through-composed continuous music with no breaks

### **Important Musical Forms of the Romantic Period:**

Lieder (Lied) German “song” for voice and piano accompaniment.

Symphonic poem one movement orchestral work based on literature or character sketch created by Franz Liszt, best known form of programme music

Operetta lighter, shorter, comic opera created by Offenbach

**Symphony** Romantic symphonies remained faithful to classical concept of a symphony with larger orchestras and longer pieces, included new romantic feeling and pictorialism (Schumann, Mendelssohn), programmatic elements (Berlioz), Bruckner’s 9 symphonies represent the epitome of the Romantic era symphony.

Programme Music instrumental work associated with extra-musical images or narratives – it tells a story, illustrates a literary idea, or evokes a pictorial scene. Composers of programme music include Liszt, Berlioz, Tchaikovsky, Strauss, and Mussorgsky.

Concerto orchestra was elevated to a role equal to that of the soloist, piano concertos in particular became very popular.

Sonata Increased the importance of the piano accompaniment.

Lieder German art song with lyrics from 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> century poems, portrayed the imagery and mood of the text through a single vocal line and piano accompaniment.

Mass & oratorio Romantic music was primarily secular, but masses and oratorio were written to celebrate state occasions, expanded into large forms.

**Opera** The most important vocal music of the romantic period, especially France, Italy, and Germany. Grand spectacles to showcase virtuoso singing were bigger, longer, and more dramatic. French *Grand Opera* and *drama lyrique*, Italian *bel canto* (“beautiful singing”) of Rossini and Verdi had beautiful, ornate melodic lines, simple harmonic structure, and musical numbers that combines to form whole scenes. In Germany, Wagner’s *music drama* combined elements of Greek tragedy into *Gesamtkunstwerk* (“complete artwork”) and pushed boundaries of traditional tonality.

Operetta (“Little opera”) influenced in song and dance music of late 19<sup>th</sup> century – a play with overture, songs, entr’actes, and dances. HMS Pinafore, Pirates of Penzance (Gilbert and Sullivan), Die Fledermous (Strauss).

Ballet Dancers perform to music to tell a story or convey mood, choreographers began to commission original works in early romantic period.

### **Important Composers of the Romantic Period:**

#### ***CLASSICAL (Early) ROMANTICS bridge the gap (1820-1848)***

L.V. Beethoven His larger orchestra, longer instrumental forms, and more lyrical melodies brought in the romantic era. Ex: Symphony No. 9

Giachino Rossini (1792-1868) Transitional figure and most popular Italian opera composer of his time, most popular opera is *The Barber of Seville* (written in two weeks in 1816). Also William Tell (1829).

Franz Schubert (1797–1828) Viennese composer best known for chamber and piano music and lieder, accompaniments of lieder as interesting as vocal lines with subtle harmonies. Not well known in his own lifetime and only had one public performance which was not well received. Famous pieces include the *Erlkonig* and the *Unfinished Symphony*.

Hector Berlioz (1803-1869) Primarily orchestral composer, represented French romanticism and grew the orchestra. *Symphonie Fantastique* (1830), *Requiem* (1837), *Romeo and Juliette* (1839), *The Damnation of Faust* (1846)

Robert Schumann (1810-1856) German composer of chamber and piano music and lieder. Piano pieces include *Carnaval*, *Papillons*, and the *A-minor Piano Concerto*. Concentrated on one form at a time and often derived themes from words, he was a successful music critic and composer but bad conductor, wrote under the pen names Florestan (gushing) and Eusebius (level headed).

Johann Strauss (1804-1849) Wrote dance music (waltz, polka, march)

Frederick Chopin (1810-1849) Polish composer of technically demanding piano music including sonata, nocturne, waltz, etude, and new forms such as ballade.

Franz Liszt (1811-1886) Hungarian virtuoso pianist and composer who pioneered the modern solo piano recital, developed symphonic poem

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) German prodigy bridged classical and romantic eras and between Beethoven and Wagner, wrote symphonies, concertos, oratorios, piano & chamber music,

Carl Maria von Weber

### ***Late Romantics (1848-1900)***

\* *Distinct national styles develop*

\* *expansion of harmonic vocabulary pushed the edge of tonality*

\* *frequent modulation between keys and increased dissonance*

Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1909) greatest Italian opera composer stuck to diatonic harmonies, operas include Rigoletto, Il Travatore, La Traviata, Aida, Otello, Falstaff, and Requiem mass.

Richard Wagner (1813-1883) German composer of large-scale operas – featuring larger orchestras, prominent instrumental passages, *through-composed* structures to create *Music Drama*, harmonically-challenging with extreme chromaticism and shifting tonal centers, he originally wanted to be a playwright. Operas include *The Flying Dutchman*, *Lohengrin*, *Tannhauser* (1845), *Tristan and Isolde*, *The Ring Cycle*. Felt that all great work must be inspired by pre-Christian mythology,

Jacques Offenbach (1819-1880) French composer and cellist created the operetta, including *Tales of Hoffman* (1880)

Anton Bruckner (1824-1896) Austrian organist known for symphonies, masses, and motets representative of late romantic period through rich harmonies, melodramatic melodies, dissonance, unexpected modulations, and large symphony orchestras.

Johann Strauss II (1825-1899) Waltz king such as “*on the beautiful blue Danube*” (1867) and *Die Fledermous* (1874)

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) German composer and pianist known for chamber music and chamber-music qualities of symphonies spun from small motifs. Last of the true romantics and criticized for using conventional form and structure and no chromaticism or dissonance, best known for piano pieces, lieder, and art music. Famous works include the *Lullaby*, *Hungarian Dances*, and *Requiem*.

Georges Bizet (1838-1875) French composer known for the opera *Carmen* in 1875 (leading role for a mezzo!)

Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881) Russian Romantic nationalist strove to create uniquely Russian art music, inspired by Russian history and folklore. Powerful and sensitive pieces include *Pictures At An Exhibition* (1874) originally written for piano, orchestrated by Maurice Ravel. Also wrote *Boris Godunov* (1869, revised 1874, opera), and *St. John's Night on Bald Mountain* (1867).

### **The Five - The Russian Five -The Mighty Handful**

Modest Mussorgsky, Nikolai Romyk-Korsakov, Alexander Borodin (composer of the opera Prince Igor), Cesar Gui (music journalist) and Mily Balakirev – Russian nationalists who wanted to create uniquely Russian music rather than imitate older Russian art forms. Inspired by Russian history & folklore.

Nikolai Romyk-Korsakov (1844-1908) Russian nationalist who incorporated lyrical Russian folk melodies into music, wrote 15 operas, and re-orchestrated or arranged many of Mussorgsky's pieces to great acclaim. Bridged the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Pyotr Illyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893) Russian composer best known for ballet works (*Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *The Nutcracker*) and later symphonies (such as *Symphony No. 6 "Pathetique"*), and *B-flat Minor Piano Concerto*, also the operas *Eugene Onegin* and *Queen of Spades* and *1812 Overture*. Criticized for being too sentimental and emotional, he was the first to bring the traditions of Western symphonic music into Russian national style.

Glinka The father of Russian music, highly influenced by Russian folk music, wrote two important operas: *A Life for the Tsar* and *Ruslan and Ludmilla*.

Antonin Dvorak (1841-1904) Czech (Bohemian) nationalist composer known for complex melodic invention, use of Bohemian folk songs and syncopated rhythms from native dances (polka and mazurka). After visiting the US in 1892 he wrote the famous *New World Symphony*, inspired by American Indian music, cowboy songs, and Negro spirituals.

Edvard Grieg (1843-1907) Norwegian nationalist composer (called “Chopin of the north”) inspired by Norse folk and dance music, popular compositions include the incidental music to Henrik Ibsen’s *Peer Gynt* (1876).

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) Austrian composer who bridged the Romantic period and 20<sup>th</sup> century, great conductor and disciple of Anton Bruckner, combined romantic eloquence with subtle chromaticism and polyphony (anticipated the avant-garde). *Resurrection Symphony No. 2* included a huge orchestra and chorus (1888-1894), *Kindertotenlieder* (1901-1904).

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