

Grade 11

Western Music

Romantic Period (1820 - 1900)

Introduction

This period represented a turning point in musical history. One of the key features of Romantic Music is its strong association with other art forms, particularly literature or painting. Music of the Romantic period contrasts with the classical period in mood and form. Romantic period composers were more interested in what they said in music and did not hesitate to express their personal feelings and placed emotion above form. They developed the German Art Song called “Lied” and brought it to perfection during this period.

Gioacchino Rossini (1792 - 1868) Italian

About: He wrote operas both serious and comic. His brilliant opera overtures are still often performed in the concert repertoire today.

Main works: William Tell Overture(Guillaume Tell)



Franz Peter Schubert (1797 - 1828) Austrian

About : In a short lifespan of less than 32 years, Schubert was a prolific composer, writing some 600 lieder. He also nearly completed a tenth symphony. He was considered “The father of Lied” for developing and Perfecting the German Art Song “Lied”.

Main works :

- The Trout song,
- The “Trout” Quintet
- Symphonies (9 symphonies)
 - * “The Unfinished” symphony
 - * The Great C Major symphony
 - * Impromptus
 - * Piano Sonatas
- String Quartet
 - * No. 14 in D minor

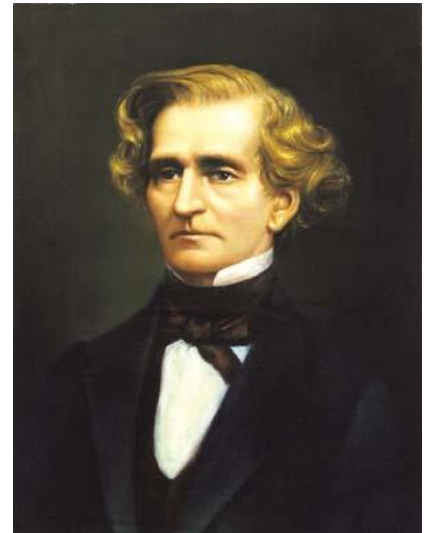


Hector Berlioz (1803 - 1869) French

About : A romantic composer who introduced the tradition of orchestral conducting as it is today, attributed to him. Berlioz made significant contributions to the modern orchestra with his treatise on instrumentation.

Main works:

- Orchestral works
 - * Racockzy March
 - * Symphonies
 - * The Damnation of Faust
 - * Symphony Fanatstique
 - * Romeo and Juliet (Dramatic symphony which includes voices and orchestra)
- Opera :- The Trojans



Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) German

About : He was a wealthy composer who had his own private orchestra in his home. A composer, pianist, organist and conductor of the early Romantic period. Apart from a composer, he was a writer, painter and a brilliant conversationalist in 4 languages.

Main works:

- Concerto
 - * Violin Concerto
- Orchestral work
 - *Incidental Music - A Midsummer Night's Dream (Wedding March)
 - *Oratorio – Elijah
- Keyboard works
 - *Song Without Words
- Overture
 - *The Hebrides Overture



Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849) Polish

About: He was born of mixed French and Polish parentage, Chopin began to compose before he was 7, and made his first public appearance as a pianist at 16. He enrolled at the Warsaw Conservatory, graduating three years later, he decided to seek his fortune abroad. In France. He was often referred to as “ The poet of the piano” since wrote exclusively for the piano. He lived most of his life in France. He introduced **Rubato** in his music.

Main works:

- *4 Ballades
- *17 polish songs
- Keyboard works
 - *Waltz in D Flat Major (Minute Waltz / dog waltz)
 - *51 Mazurkas
 - *17 Waltzes, Polonaises, Nocturnes and Études



Robert Schumann (1810- 1856) German

About: A composer and an influential music critic. Schumann left the study of law, intending to pursue a career as a virtuoso pianist but an injury to his right hand ruled out the possibility of a career pianist. He composed music specially for children. His wife Clara Wieck interpreted his music on the piano. He published a twice weekly magazine called the “New Journal of Music”

Main works:

Piano works

- *Scenes from childhood (Kinderszenen)
- *Kreisleriana
- *Album for the young
- Symphonies :- Spring, Rhenish
- About 250 songs including song cycles
- Opera - Genoveva

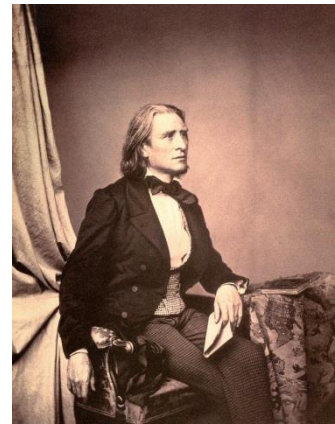


Franz Liszt (1811- 1886) Hungarian

About: He was considered the “Paganini of the piano.” Virtuoso pianist, conductor, and teacher. An outstanding teacher, and a dedicated champion of the “music of the future”. He became music director to the dual court at Weimar. Later became Abbey Liszt performing minor holy orders.

Main works:

- Orchestral works
 - * 19 Hungarian Rhapsodies
 - * Symphonies – Faust symphony and Dante symphony
- Piano works
 - * Libestraume
- Songs
 - * 55 songs
- Oratorio :- Legend of St' Elisabeth



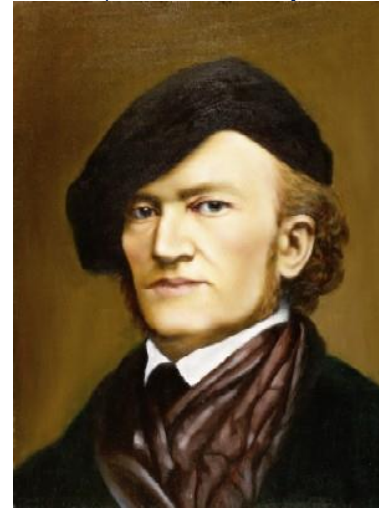
Richard Wagner (1813-1883) German

About: Wilhelm Richard Wagner was a German composer, theatre director, polemicist, and conductor, primarily known for his operas which he referred to as Music Dramas. Unlike most opera composers, Wagner wrote both the libretto and the music for each of his stage works. He was called as the “Father of Musical Drama”. He managed to persuade the King of Bavaria King Ludwig to build a festival theatre at Bayreuth, where his operas are still performed at an annual festival directed by members of the Wagner family. His first performance at the theatre was “The Ring”.

Main works:

• Music dramas

- *Tannhauser
- *Lohengrin (Bridal Chorus)
- *The Flying Dutchman
- * Tristan and Isolde



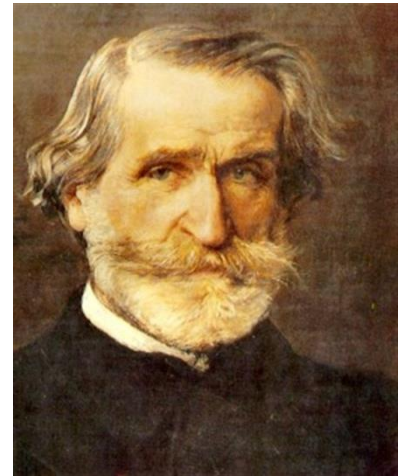
Giuseppe Verdi (1813- 1901) Italian

About: a composer who was an ardent nationalist and wanted to liberate Italy from Austrian domination. He was a native son of Italy and became a MP in the 1st free Italian Parliament and wrote many operas to his credit. **Aida** was composed to commemorate the opening of the Suez Canal.

Main works:

Verdi produced many successful Operas -

- * La Traviata,
- * Falstaff,
- * Il trovatore,
- * Rigoletto,
- * Othello,
- * Aida (Grand March)



Johann Strauss (1825- 1899) Austrian

About: He was called ‘The King of Waltz’. He was a composer, conductor and violinist. He specialized in Viennese Dance music and operettas.

Main works:

- The beautiful Blue Danube waltz.
- Tales from Vienna Woods.
- The Emperor waltz



Late Romantic Period

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) German



About: he was the great master of symphonic and sonata style in the second half of the 19th century. He can be viewed as the protagonist of the classical tradition of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven.

Main works:

- “A German Requiem” is a composition based on Biblical texts and often cited as one of the most important pieces of choral music written in the 19th century.
- Hungarian Dances - He didn't give these very popular gypsy dances an opus number because he didn't consider them original compositions. However, they are some of his best-known music, and are full of lively gypsy imagery.
- Wiegenlied Op. 49 No.4. This is popularly known as the “Brahms Lullaby”- one of the most famous songs in the entire world. Brahms composed this soothing melody for a friend's child.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893) Russian

About: Tchaikovsky could be claimed to the most popular “classical” composer. He wrote many Ballets based on Russian Fairy Tales and Legends. His music has always held a special appeal for its passion, Lyricism, extravagant emotionalism and growing orchestral colour.

Main works:

- Programme music

- *The 1812 Overture is a massive festival piece with church bells, cannons, and a great deal of Russian spirit!

- Ballets

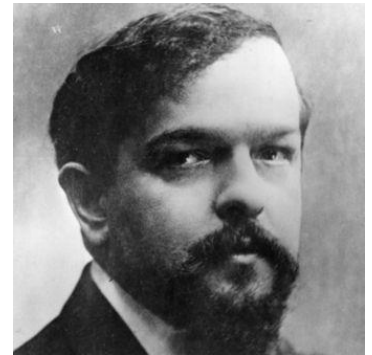
- * The Nutcracker,
 - * Sleeping Beauty
 - * Swan Lake.

- 6 symphonies.



Claude Debussy (1862 - 1918) French

About: One of the first Impressionist composers. Mood and atmosphere were much more important to him than intellectual musical structures. He frequently used the whole - tone scale which is a special series of notes in his music. He painted pictures with music.



Main works:

- Nocturnes
- Children's Corner Suite - Golliwog's Cake Walk.
- Preludes –Descriptive little pieces La – mer (A rich and dramatic tone poem depicting the natural elements of the ocean Waves and wind)
- The Submerged Cathedral.

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) French

About: He used Modes quite often in his music. A master Orchestrator. He was a follower of Debussy on impressionism. He was a brilliant pianist and often performed his own music.

Main works:

- Bolero- This is probably Ravel's most well-known piece. It's a fifteen minute long exercise in orchestration. The same melody is passed around nearly all the instruments and instrument combinations in the orchestra.
- Pavane

