The Romantic Period

In Tune With Music

Classical / Romantic Music Influence

Classical and Romantic Period music and composers continue to influence today’s pop culture. From heavy metal, to drumming, to popular music and even into cartoons….

Kill da Wabbit!!

From Wagner’s Ring Cycle

Disney’s Fantasia

Disney’s Sorcerer’s Apprentice

Romantic Period

1820? - 1900
Contrary to popular belief, this period isn’t called the Romantic Period because of Love.

In the Romantic Period, composers continued the ideals started in the Classical Period that music should be tied to emotions, and maximized it. Orchestras were larger, louder and softer, stories began to unfold in the music, and Motifs began to be popular.

All filled with the various human emotions we still have today.

Important things that happened during this time:

- 1830 - First Railroads
- 1831 - Greece gains independence from Turkey (with help from Britain)
- 1837 - Early Photography pioneered by Louis Daguerre
- 1838 - Trail of Tears, mass relocation of Native Americans
- 1846 - Great Potato famine in Ireland
- 1848 - Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels publish “Communist Manifesto”

At the beginning of the 1830s, nearly 125,000 Native Americans lived on millions of acres of land in Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, North Carolina and Florida—land their ancestors had occupied and cultivated for generations. By the end of the decade, very few natives remained anywhere in the southeastern United States. Working on behalf of white settlers who wanted to grow cotton on the Indians’ land, the federal government forced them to leave their homelands and walk thousands of miles to a specially designated “Indian territory” across the Mississippi River. This difficult and sometimes deadly journey is known as the Trail of Tears.
Trail of Tears

American Civil War 1861-1865

Resulted over a long-standing dispute over slavery.

Fighting started when Confederates attacked Fort Sumter in S. Carolina, shortly after Lincoln was elected.

Out of 34 states, 7 individually declared secession from the Union - later grew to 11 states. Confederate states were never recognized as a nation by US or rest of the world, even though Britain and France recognized it as a belligerent state.

American Civil War 1861-1865

4 years of intense combat left 620,000 soldiers dead - more than any other American-involved wars COMBINED. Close to a 1,000,000 died as a result of other things.

General Lee surrendered to General Grant at Appomattox on April 9, 1865.

Lincoln was shot 6 days later.

The Confederacy collapsed, slavery was abolished, and 4 million slaves were freed.

American Inventions

1st Telephone - 1876
1st Phonograph - 1877
1st Light Bulb - 1878
Daimler - Benz First Automobile

1886
First Zeppelin 1899
Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin - built it on a floating hangar (pictured). Called it a LuftSchiff - (Lifted Ship)
Wanted until Summer of 1900 for first flight.
The first flight lasted about 18 minutes and covered about 3-1/2 miles over the lake.

Romantic Architecture overview

Two principal characteristics distinguish 19th-century architecture:
1) the use of a variety of historical styles (Medieval/Neoclassical...)
2) the development of new materials and structural methods.
Factories, warehouses, railway terminals and hospitals were the new buildings being demanded as a result of the industrial revolution.
Architects now had to plan for a very rapidly changing world. Many wanted to stay with Classical (Greek), while some wanted to revive the medieval Christian style (Gothic).

Romantic Period Architecture

Mass production became possible for Glass, Iron and Steel.
Machine tool precision made it quicker and easier to erect larger safer structures.
In the US, this lead to skyscrapers in the later part of the time period.
1839-1846 = Trinity Church dwarfed all buildings around it at the time.

Trinity Church

View from the Courtyard
View from Wall Street

Skyscrapers

Chicago’s Home Insurance Building
1st steel frame skyscraper 1885
Guaranty Building Buffalo, NY 1896
RO Quiz #1

1) Name 5 events that happened during this time period.
2) What is the Trail of Tears, and why is it important?
3) Name 3 inventions that happened during this time period.
4) Why is this period called the “Romantic Period?”
5) Describe what was going on with Architecture during this time?

Fast and Friendly Guide to Romantic Era

Romantic Music Overview
(a little more in-depth)

Compositions became more expansive (longer and bigger), much more expressive and inventive.

Expansive symphonies, virtuosic piano music, dramatic operas, and passionate art songs (Lieder) took inspiration from art and literature.

Famous Romantic composers include Tchaikovsky, Brahms, Berlioz, Schubert, and Wagner— to name but a few!

Romantic Music Changes...

Chromatic music - music in which the melody or harmony is built from using all 12 notes inside of a particular scale.

A Diatonic Scale consists of 8 notes within a Key and has a tonal center or a home note making the melodies pleasing to the ear. The Major Scale generally conveys a “happy” emotion. The Minor Scale generally conveys a “sad” emotion. This is one “rule” that is broken in the Romantic Era.

The Chromatic Scale includes notes that lie outside of the Diatonic Scale. Let’s listen to a short example of their difference!

Romantic Music...

Romantic Period was essentially a “revolt” against the “truth” of the Classical period.

Composers wanted control of the listeners’ emotions. It was all about drama and getting listeners to experience the emotions that the composer wanted them to experience.

Introduction to “Chromaticism” to help bring drama and emotion to forefront.

Romantic Music...

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Diatonic vs. Chromatic

In the Classical Period, its function is limited. *Accidentals* (symbols that raise or lower a note by ½ step) were used for a specific function - such as changing keys, or just for an effect (like a trill).

In the Romantic period, composers experimented with chromaticism, and began to use "non chord tones" to breathe new life and color into music.

Chromaticism's function

Franz Schubert

The 12th child of a school teacher!
House that Schubert was born ---->

*Salieri*: a "talent scout" so to speak, found Schubert, took him to the Imperial Seminary to learn singing, violin, and music theory from Salieri.

Franz Schubert (1797 - 1828)

Early painting of Schubert ------>
Composed his first String Quartets, songs and piano pieces under Salieri.
Schubert began to make a name for himself with his piano accompaniments for songs:
*Gretchen am spinnerade*
Gretchen am Spinnrade

Schubert wrote his first masterpiece at 17 – a setting of Goethe’s ‘Gretchen am Spinnrade’ (Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel). Already the composer was making the piano part an integral element of the song. The accompaniment mimics the revolving wheel, speeding up and slowing down in response to the text.

Franz Schubert (1797 - 1828)

In 1815 alone, Schubert wrote more than 20,000 bars of music, including nine church works, a symphony, and some 150 songs – including eight in one day in October 1815.

Franz Schubert (1797 - 1828)

As a 19-year old in Vienna, Schubert began both a law degree and composing his Symphony No.5. This might well have been the work that prompted the composer to drop out of studying law.

Franz Schubert (1797 - 1828)

It is the perfect piece for anyone who wants to get into his music – fresh, light, full of youthful exuberance and bursting with tunes.

Schubertiads

Schubert enjoyed a good time and, in his day, he was famous for his musical parties known as ‘Schubertiads’ when he would gather with his friends and fans and showcase some of his latest songs. Sometimes they would go for a picnic or on a river trip.

Franz Schubert (1797 - 1828)

Schubert was only 5’1” tall, and because he had a plump body, he earned the German title: Schwammerl
Which means little mushroom.
Schubert made no secret of the fact that he was absolutely in love with Mozart’s music.

"O Mozart! Immortal Mozart! What countless impressions of a brighter, better life hast thou stamped upon our souls!"

Schubert wrote his popular Trout Quintet when he was just 22. It got its name because the fourth movement is a set of variations on an earlier Schubert song called, funnily enough, The Trout.

The song was originally a warning to young women against being ‘caught’ by ‘angling’ young men. But Schubert didn’t set the final lines of the poem, preferring to concentrate on evoking the image of the trout in water and the reaction to it being caught by a fisherman.

Schubert’s Unfinished Symphony was discovered more than three decades after the composer’s death when an old man claimed he had a work that Schubert had sent him 43 years earlier. Some believe the symphony’s missing fourth movement is actually the Entr’acte from Schubert’s incidental music to the play, Rosamunde.

He contributed much to the music world during his short life, but his greatest contribution was his "Lieder" (songs). He wrote 600+ lieder that expressed every emotion possible, including tenderness, drama, and even recalling the countryside.
An anxious young boy is being carried home at night by his father on horseback. The lack of specificity of the father's social position allows the reader to imagine the details. The son seems to see and hear beings his father does not; the father gives him naturalistic explanations for what the child sees – a wisp of fog, rustling leaves, shimmering willows. Finally the child shrieks that he has been attacked. The father makes faster for home, there he recognizes that the boy is dead.

There are 3 characters, and 3 different tones of voice needed: the child, the father, and “death”.

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**Die Erlkonig**

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**Der Erlkönig**

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**Franz Schubert’s Death**

Schubert died in November 1828. In 1872, a memorial was erected in Vienna’s Stadtpark (pictured). In 1888, both Schubert’s and Beethoven’s graves were moved to the Zentralfriedhof, where they can now be found next to those of Johann Strauss II and Johannes Brahms.

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**RO Quiz #2**

1) Who were some of the most famous Romantic Composers?

2) The Romantic Period continued adding emotion that started in the Classical Period, but revolted against what?

3) What is Chromatic Music?

4) Franz Schubert did a lot for the Romantic Period, but what was his greatest contribution?

5) Who was Schubert’s first teacher?

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**Richard Wagner**

Born on May 22, 1813 in the Jewish quarter of Leipzig. (Ironic!)

Wagner showed little aptitude or enthusiasm for music as a child, and so was the only one of his siblings to not receive piano lessons.

When he was just 13, though, he wrote a play entitled Leubald that he insisted should be set to music - which is when he started music lessons.
Richard Wagner

One of Wagner’s greatest gifts to music was the Leitmotif - a musical “signature” designed to represent a character or theme in an opera, and he uses them throughout his operas.

Modern film composers have since adopted the technique, and you’ll find countless examples across many Hollywood scores. e.g. Darth Vader, Superman, Jaws...

Wagner’s Greatest Contribution

Wagner’s music is bold and rich, but his greatest contribution to music was much more simple. The Leitmotif is a recurrent theme throughout a musical or literary composition, associated with a particular person, idea, or situation.

He took Beethoven’s knack for writing themes a bit further, and tied them to specific characters.

American Film Composer John Williams became very notable for this as well...

Williams - stealing the Leitmotif idea...

Richard Wagner

One of the most famous pieces by Wagner has to be his Ride of the Valkyries, from the opera Die Walküre.

But where do we know it from apart from the opera itself? That’s right, the terrifying opening helicopter scene from Francis Ford Coppola’s Apocalypse Now...

...and the terrifying Elmer Fudd...

Wagner the Polemicist

A polemicist is someone that expresses opinions about very controversial subjects. Wagner was an opinionated man when it came to matters of artistic expression.

In fact, he published several essays on his vision of a ’Gesamtkunstwerk’ (‘complete artwork’) and his strong views on how they should be presented.
Much of Wagner's controversial reputation comes from his association with Nazism. In fact, Hitler allegedly said the following: "Whoever wants to understand National Socialist Germany must know Wagner." Controversies still rage today around performances of Wagner’s work in modern-day Israel in particular. Here we can see Hitler laying the first stone at a monument to Wagner.

**Hitler and Wagner**

Late in his life, while Wagner was in exile, he completed several key works including his opera *Lohengrin*. However, unable to stage the work himself, he wrote to his friend Franz Liszt in the hope of getting it produced. Not only did Liszt get the work staged, he also conducted the premiere in the city of Weimar.

**Richard Wagner**

Wagner's Greatest Hits

The Ride of the Valkyries - we've already heard...

This is the Bridal Chorus from *Lohengrin*.

Wagner’s Greatest Hits

This is the Overture from *Der Fliegende Holländer* (the Flying Dutchman)

Wagner’s Greatest Hits

Siegfried’s Death and Funeral March from *Gotterdammerung.*

RO Quiz #3

1) What is Wagner’s greatest contribution to music (aside from all of his great works)?
2) How is his greatest contribution still being used today, and what current composer uses it the most?
3) What important Historical figure loved Wagner’s music?
4) Who produced the Opera *Lohengrin* for Wagner?
5) What is a polemicist?
Wagner designed his own theater.

The Bayreuth Festspielhaus is still used to this day for the Bayreuth Festival, which celebrates Wagner’s music.

Among other quirky features, it has a recessed orchestral pit which makes the musicians invisible to the audience - apparently so that viewers are not distracted from the drama on stage.

Bayreuth Festspielhaus was built for one event: the Bayreuth Festival.

Continuous showing of 4 operas (15 hours) based on Norse Mythology:

1) *Das Rheingold*
2) *Die Walküre*
3) *Siegfried*
4) *Götterdämmerung*

**Der Ring Des Nibelungen**

Estimated time of completion for the 4 operas spans from 1848 - 1874.

First performance in its entirety was 1876.

It is loved, despised and admired for its sheer size and depth.

The Ring Cycle

Very Brief Synopsis...

**Das Rheingold** - Alberich, a dwarf, denounces love to gain control of a magic ring giving him ultimate power and is the most desirable object in the world.

**The Valkyries** - deals with the deep but difficult relationship between the Norse gods and mortals.

**Siegfried** - Siegfried, a cocky young mortal, kills a dragon hoarding gold, and comes into possession of the cursed ring. He falls in love with Brunnhilde and gives her the ring to show his love.

**Götterdämmerung** - Anyone who has come into possession of the ring is destroyed. Alberich’s evil son, Hagen, finds the hero Siegfried and kills him.
Very Brief Synopsis...the video

Debt...
Wagner spent a large amount of his professional life in debt, until King Ludwig II came to the throne of Bavaria at the tender age of 18 in 1864. The young king was a massive fan of Wagner’s work, so he arranged for his debts to be completely wiped out and even paid for someone to take dictation for Wagner’s autobiography.

Controversies...
Wagner published many essays voicing his opinions. His writing style is verbose, and unclear, which lead to a lot of misconception about his opinions. Sometimes, even his own words seem to disagree with each other.
He wrote controversial essays on the topics of anti-semitism and racism.
The popularity of his operas and themes of German Nationalism also brought on Nazi Appropriation, which adds to the controversy.

Anti-semitism...
Before 1850 - no record of him expressing anti-semitic views.
When he struggled to develop his career, he began to resent Jewish composers that were successful.
He published several essays bashing Jews and Jewish composers.

Racism...
There is evidence to suggest that Wagner was very interested in Gobineau’s idea that Western society was doomed because of miscegenation (mixing of races) between “superior” and “inferior” races.
However, he does not seem to have subscribed to any belief in the superiority of the supposed Germanic or “Nordic race”.
In one essay, Wagner proposes that Christianity could function to provide a moral harmonization of all races, preferable to the physical unification of races by miscegenation.

Nazi Appropriation
Hitler was a personal friend of Wagner’s son Siegfried’s wife.
Hitler loved Wagner’s music so much that he wanted to incorporate it into the heroic mythology of the German nation.
Wagner’s music was performed so often under Hitler, that Germany, as a nation, began to favor Italian composers as a result.
Wagner’s Music in Israel

Wagner’s operas have never been staged in the modern State of Israel, and the few public instrumental performances that have occurred have provoked much controversy.

He was known to be an anti-semitist, and so when his works are performed it causes huge reactions and protests.

Many scheduled performances have been cancelled, and even unpronounced encore performances have received lots of protests, and walkouts.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Tchaikovsky is a Russian Romantic Composer that is most famous for writing music for Ballets. His most famous work is called The Nutcracker.

The story of the Nutcracker takes place at Christmas time and is still performed a lot around the world today, especially at Christmas!

Storyline: A young girl receives a Nutcracker for a Christmas present. That night, she dreams that she is captured by a Rat King, and Nutcracker soldier becomes real and rescues her.

Tchaikovsky - The Nutcracker

French Impressionism

Elements often termed impressionistic include static harmony, emphasis on instrumental timbres that creates

1. a shimmering interplay of “colors”
2. melodies that lack directed motion
3. surface ornamentation that either obscures or substitutes for a melody
4. an avoidance of traditional musical form.

Impressionism can be seen as a reaction against the rhetoric of Romanticism, disrupting the forward motion of standard harmonic progressions.

Impressionism Example

Clair de Lune by composer Claude Debussy produces watery smooth, flowing music that gives impressions of what he names his works.

Impressionism Example

Frédéric Chopin is most known for his piano music. Piano Sonata #2 - more commonly known as the Funeral March was written as early as 1837 and is the 3rd movement of the sonata completed in 1839.
Frédéric Chopin's Impromptu in C# Minor. Very characteristic of Chopin’s flare for piano music.

RO Quiz #4

1) Why does Wagner’s Bayreuth Festspielhaus have a recessed orchestra pit?
2) What is Der Ring Des Nibelungen, and why is it significant?
3) What did King Ludwig II do for Wagner?
4) What are the 4 features of French Impressionism?
5) What is Tchaikovsky most known for AND what is his most famous work?